

RIFT AND SPRAY,

OR
AND VENGEANCE AMONG THE SMUGGLERS.

THE MOST FASCINATING OCEAN ROMANCE SINCE THE DAYS OF
COOPER AND MARYATT.

CHAPTER II.—(CONTINUED.)

He clenched his hands till the pressure was painful and forced an involuntary cry from his lips. His eyes were congested and became bloodshot and the boy spoke. Then, without a warning or angry preparation, he stepped across the deck and with the heavy heel of his foot on the breast as he knelt and sent him, stunned and reeling, across the deck.

"Why do I kill?" yelled Dolan. "Why do I kill?"

For a moment that the boy lay motionless, beneath the savage hand that had been upon him. Pale with his dark hair dashed by the breeze across his brow, while his eyes, expressive of affection and confidence, flashed a new light, he looked up and confronted Dolan and

the clear, unclouded voice of the boy rang through the air. Dolan, henceforward, between them there is neither affection, peace or love, before Heaven, I defy you! You may kill me!

"I will not aid you in your crime. I will denounce you and where I can! Dolan, never shall I have your name on my lips in my mouth. I have but one father now and he is in heaven. It is 'Our Father' which is in heaven."

These last words were uttered with such a gentle smile, and the eyes of the boy, retaining their tenderness and affection, danced with ineffable love and confidence. That the pirate crew shrunk back and cast their looks, and the

light of his head for a moment in the wintry sky—a rift among the clouds, right overhead, at this point the softest ray from the Windows stream down upon the world, and that ray encircled in its bright, gleaming embrace the boy who so gallantly man to put trust in God!

"There was a pause of irresolution among the crew of the Rift and Dolan hastily added: 'They or us! They or us! If one is left to tell the tale, it will be told and a chessmate will go across to Falmouth with a flag of truce and the admiral of the station will know all about us.'

"It is an ugly trick," said Ben Bowline. "But they are only Frenchmen," remarked one of the crew.

"There's something in that," said Martin. "Are you all agreed?" cried Dolan. "Ay, ay, sir!"

said old Martin. "The captain is the captain, and when he says go below, why, it's only right to do it."

"I will go," said Gerald. Still with the hatchet, to which he clung with a tenacity that sufficiently showed he looked upon it as a needful defense, Gerald, stepped across the deck and slowly descended backward down the companion way to the cabin.

Then Ben Bowline spoke to Dolan in his growling, bear-like fashion: "Captain Dolan, you had better let the boy alone; one volunteer, you know, is worth a dozen pressed men and I don't know that a pressed boy is worth anything at all, seeing that a volunteer of that sort always wants two able-bodied seamen to go after him and see what he is about. Ain't that it Martin?"

"Ay, ay!" "Well, then, Captain Dolan, you'd much better let the boy alone and put him on shore next voyage, d'ye see? for he will never be of any use on board the Rift."

"Never," said Martin. "Well, well," growled Dolan. "Don't bother about it; only it's hard lines that a man mightn't do as he likes with his own flesh and blood. Keep her off a bit."

"Ay, ay, sir." "You know, my men, that this is to be our last voyage, hereaway if so be we are successful in what we agreed to do."

The crew murmured an assent. "You see the Coquette there? Well, you know that she trades with us, bringing us French goods and money both, for which we give her English goods and money. Now this time, she brings an extra cargo and with a good round sum for English goods she expects of us. Well, as this part of the coast is getting too hot to hold us and as I know, for certain, the admiral of the station, Sir Thomas Clifford, has brought down here a schooner, well armed and manned, on purpose to lay out for us and to follow us into shallow water, why, I propose that we be off to another coast, up by the north sea, where, from Dutch ports, a good trade can be done."

The crew assented with various expressions of satisfaction, while the steersman baffled the French lugger, the Coquette, which evidently wished to come to close quarters with the Rift.

"Now," added Dolan, "what I propose is, to take the Coquette, and all in her." "That'll do," said Ben Bowline. "Clear her out!"

"Ay, ay!" "And then scuttle her." There was a pause of irresolution among the crew of the Rift and Dolan hastily added:

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"It is an ugly trick," said Ben Bowline. "But they are only Frenchmen," remarked one of the crew.

"There's something in that," said Martin. "Are you all agreed?" cried Dolan. "Ay, ay, sir!"

"Then you see it is just as well that Gerald should not be on deck," added Dolan, while the strange, malignant look flashed from his eyes.

By this time the French lugger apparently had begun to suspect that the Rift, for some reason or another, was dodging her and she shortened sail and lay to, making only a little headway with the tide and surface wind.

A brief order, then, that altered the trim of the Rift to a limited extent and her course a point or two, brought her down rapidly toward the Coquette and when within hailing distance Captain Dolan sprang on one of the guns and shouted:

"Coquette, ahoy! What cheer?" A light, active, little old man leaped with the agility of an ape on to the bowsprit of the Coquette and screamed out:

"Captain Dolan, vat for you—vat you call?—make one game at our Coquette? Capitaine Doolan, sis l'homme—le saque du Francais, bah! I was mooch mad!"

"Wind and currents," shouted Dolan. "All's right. Any news?" "Ma foi, non! What you shall call common—much usual. Plus de gloire pour la Grande Nation!"

"Oh, of course. Smashed the English fleet." "Oui, certainement." "What does the animal say?" Growled Ben Bowline.

"That the French have beaten the English fleet." "Does he? Does he? The lying old—well, it don't matter. He's a going—"

Ben pointed into the sea and the crew of the Rift grinned at each other as the lugger now slowly drifted alongside the Rift, which had lain to within a couple of hundred yards of the Frenchman.

These two vessels, long engaged in smuggling transactions, were adapted in every way for the rapid interchange of cargoes. Slowly they were allowed to drift broadside to each other and then, by apparatus which was produced on both vessels, they were locked together, so that they heaved and rolled in the tide as one.

The little French captain leaped on the deck of the Rift and lifted his cap with great grace to Captain Dolan and then to the mate; Ben Bowline, and then to the crew, and each time that he did so he gave an amiable grin, similar to that which is adopted by very polite people at public dinners when they take wine with some one.

"Well, Captain Mocoquet," said Dolan, "will you step below?" "Oui, Capitaine Doolan, oui, I shall step below; but I shall, if you shall please, captain, bring goods."

"All right!" The French captain, then, with great volubility, gave some orders to the five men that made up the whole crew of the Coquette, and they commenced transferring to the deck of the Rift various barrels and packages, not one of which was of sufficient

size or weight to exceed the power of a single man to lift and deal with. The object of this was that, should it become necessary to do, the smuggled goods might be easily flung into the sea, without much fuss or observation.

The French captain then descended with Dolan to the cabin of the Rift, where the first person his eyes fell upon was Gerald, who was close to one of the small ports, with the hatchet still grasped in his right hand.

"My son," said Dolan, gruffly. The French captain lifted his cap and gave his usual amiable grin. Gerald bowed with a sad look upon his face.

"Le petit monsieur is not—what you say?—good—well—eh?" "Not very well," said Dolan. A whispered conference then took place between Dolan and the French captain, which seemed to have reference to a sum of ten thousand francs, and to some cases of English cutlery, and marine chronometers, and nautical instruments, but the particulars of which Gerald did not catch.

Then they went upon deck, the French captain not forgetting, as he left the cabin, to bestow upon Gerald the inevitable grin again, and the lift of the cap.

"Francois!" cried Captain Mocoquet, "apportez." One of the crew of the Coquette appeared then on the deck of the Rift with a square box, around which some canvas was carefully sewn. Then Dolan took the Frenchman by the cuff of the coat, and on the pretense that he had something to say to him, he led him close to the skylight that looked down upon the swinging table in the cabin.

The skylight was half off and left a considerable space by the side of it. "My dear Mocoquet!" said Dolan. The Frenchman looked curiously in Dolan's face, with his head on one side.

"My dear Monsieur Mocoquet you must know—"

"Eh?" "That there you go; for you are not wanted here."

As he spoke, Dolan clutched the French captain by the collar and his waist, and with one effort plunged him down the portion of the skylight of the cabin which was open. He fell with a crash on the table beneath.

"Batten down!" shouted Dolan, then, in a voice that rang through both vessels. "Down with them! Quick—quick! That will do! Ha, ha!"

The five Frenchmen were seized by as many of the Englishmen, and dashed headlong down the fore-castle-hatch of the lugger on which they immediately placed its foul-weather covering, which they fastened in a moment.

The Coquette was taken and rode side by side with the Rift, at the mercy of Dolan and his crew.

"A strange sail to the north-west!" sang out Martin, who was sweeping the sea with a glass, at the direction of Dolan, to find if any vessel was sufficiently near to observe his proceedings in regard to the Coquette.

"What is she?" "Don't know, sir. She looks foreign." "Not likely that; but be quick! Follow me, my men. You six, I mean who are carpenters. Follow me with your tools."

"Ay, ay, sir!" cried six of the crew of the Rift, who had been privately spoken to by Captain Dolan, and whose duty now was to scuttle the Coquette, while he repaired to Captain Mocoquet's cabin, in order to see if any small valuables could be found there which it would be a pity to let go down with the lugger.

So completely taken by surprise were the crew of the Coquette, that scarcely one of them uttered an exclamation, when they were seized and flung down the fore-castle hatch of their own vessel.

Now when Dolan and his six men went on board the Coquette, all they heard was subdued knocking on the other side of the hatchway covering.

"Let them knock," he said. "It will be short work with them. Ben Bowline, ho!"

"Let them pray." Once more Captain Dolan turned to the cabin of the Coquette and cursed his eyes slowly around it, to be certain that he had escaped nothing, when, he almost uttered a shout of surprise and fright to see a portion of the paneling of the wall suddenly slide aside, and the most charming of faces appear at the opening—while, in the silvery accents of childhood, a young girl of not more than twelve years of age, said:

"Bon jour, mon cher pere. Ou sommes-nous?" Captain Dolan stood aghast, while with a look of unmitigated surprise, into which fear was each instant growing, the young French girl fixed her beautiful eyes upon his face. The Coquette rocked a little from side to side and the water gurgled and rushed into her hold.

"She's going by the board, sir!" cried one of the crew of the Rift. "Tumble up, sir! She's going!"

CHAPTER IV.
THE STARS AND STRIPES ARE UNFURLED.

So thoroughly surprised was Captain Dolan to find that there was any one on board the Coquette but the French captain and her crew that although warned of the sinking state of the lugger, he was for a few minutes transfixed and incapable of action.

But the utter selfishness of the nature of Dolan was not likely to keep him for many moments inactive, when personal peril to himself was at hand. He recovered from his faculties with a shout of fear, and flew towards the companion-way, only pausing for one half instant to cry out:

"Who are you? Who are you?" The girl made some reply which he did not understand; and as he fled to the deck, he just saw her glide out of the little berth in which she had been sleeping.

"Let her go! Let her go with the rest!" he said, hoarsely. "I did not place her there. He should not have brought her. It is his doing, not mine. Let her go! Let her go!"

There was a faint stream from the cabin, and then the Coquette visibly settled in the water.

Which Dolan made but one leap on to the deck of the Rift, and then he shouted: "Let go! Let go! she is going down! Let her go! Keep all clear fore and aft, there."

The fastenings that held the two vessels together were hastily removed, and the Coquette slowly surged away down from the Rift.

Then it was that Ben Bowline stepped up to Captain Dolan and said, in a low voice: "Sir, I don't like the look of things."

"What things?" "The craft there-away."

"Ah!" So absorbed had been Dolan in his interest in the fate of the Coquette, that he had forgotten the two announcements that had been made of sails at hand; but now he turned his gaze in the direction indicated by Ben Bowline; and at about three miles in the offing he saw a small vessel, yacht-built and rigged, and evidently bearing down upon him; while, at about the same distance from that again, but in a slant line, which brought it within five miles of the Rift, was a schooner with St. George's ensign flying.

"I know her," cried Captain Dolan. "Which, sir?" "The schooner. It's the Spray. She is sent after by Sir Thomas Clifford. I told you of her."

"And the other?" "Oh! a mere yacht." "She has no colors, sir." "Of course not."

"Ah, yes! Look, sir; look! I began to think that—"

"What—what?" Slowly and gracefully as the yacht-like vessel altered her point of sailing a little, a flag unfurled itself, and shaking its folds out to the breeze, presented the stars and stripes of the Great Republic.

"American!" cried Dolan. "No doubt of that, sir; and a clipper. Look how she cuts her way, with scarce a ripple in her wake!"

"What's that?" Boom came the report of a gun from the schooner. And, as if the elements had only awaited that as a signal, a dense fog came whirling from the French coast, and in a few minutes began to encircle the Rift in its misty embraces in such a manner that it was quite clear, if it did not soon dissipate, her captain, would not be able to see from stem to stern.

Boom came another report, and Captain Dolan cried out:

"How is it? That's a big gun for a schooner!" "Special service, sir," said Martin. "Lord bless you, Captain! I was once aboard of one that was rigged out for special service, and they took a couple of twenty-fours with them, and blazed away like a good one."

"What special service?" "After a pirate."

"In-deed. Ha! Well, my men, the example has been followed; for I happen to know that the schooner Spray is on special service, and that special service is to hunt down the Rift."

A suppressed execration burst from the smuggler crew, and then Dolan cried out:

"Is she gone—the Coquette?" "There she goes, sir!"

Through the thickening mist, just faintly visible, as though it had been miles away, could be seen the low-lying hull and light spars of the French lugger—spectral-like she gloomed through the fog; and what of her could be seen appeared to sway about as though she were in the grasp of a tempest while, in reality, the little soft breeze that had been stirring was almost entirely quenched by the mist.

A shriek—one shriek—uttered in tones that Captain Dolan felt that he recognized, came upon the light wind; and he felt his heart grow cold as he listened to it.

"The girl in the cabin," he said. "The girl in the cabin, no—no! It was not safe to rescue her—not safe. I could not. Will she cry again?"

A rushing noise now took place, and no longer was to be seen the shadowy form of the French lugger. Captain Dolan drew a long breath. The girl had not uttered another cry, and he was saved the terror of its remembrance.

But the one was enough! He—events—that man steeped in iniquity and sin; that man, whose hands were the red ones of a murderer, could not forget the

gentle look in those child-like eyes, and the soft cadences of the voice, as she spoke the few words, the meaning of which was unknown to him. He passed his hand over his brow, and a cold perspiration settled upon his face, and he shook in every limb.

"Gone! gone! I know she is gone. Why did she move the panel? Why did she look at me? Why did she speak to me? Gone! gone!"

"The lugger, sir, I mean." "Eh?" Dolan started as if from a dream; and then, in a voice of rage, he said:

"I know she has gone! Don't speak to me—and be hanged to you all! I know she is gone! Keep her off there; we drift in—I am sure of it; the fog thickens!"

"Ay, ay, sir! it does!" said Martin. "And it won't clear away till midday, I should say."

"Cutter ahoy!" shouted a voice evidently through a speaking-trumpet, at this moment, although through the dense masses of white mist there could not now be seen anything of the American yacht or the king's schooner.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Ventriloquism.

Men will never cease to wonder over ventriloquism, though the accomplishment has often been explained, and is mastered without great difficulty. In former times the people stood in awe of the ventriloquists. Comte, a famous French prestidigitateur, was exceedingly fond of mystifying country people, and once caused a pig, which a peasant woman was trying to sell, to talk. The pig was accused of sorcery, and led by the ears before the judge, terrifying the man who led him by calling him an "idiot" all the way.

At Tours Comte caused the people to break in the front of a closed shop, from which cries for help seemed to proceed. At Nevers he made a donkey accuse the peasant who rode him of cruelty, and the peasant, believing the donkey bewitched, leaped off the animal's back and took to flight. At Fribourg Comte was accused of witchcraft, and taken to a furnace by an excited crowd to be burned alive. But he caused a dreadful voice to issue from the doors of the furnace itself, and the frightened people ran away.

Although people nowadays are in no fear of witchcraft, some clever ventriloquists are practised. An Englishman counterfeits so skilfully the noise made by doors creaking, and windows rattling in a draught, that people draw up their collars and button their coats to save themselves from taking cold. Most of our ventriloquism, however, is done with puppets and manikins, which one man apparently causes to speak in different voices.

La Nature, a French scientific journal, explains the art of ventriloquism in a recent article. It is based on a well-known acoustic phenomenon, the difficulty which the ear experiences in locating the precise point from which a sound comes. We have only to lead the mind to suppose that a sound comes from a certain point to make it seem to the ear to do so.

The chief difficulty in the art is the keeping of a perfectly straight face, and speaking without moving the muscles. The deception is assisted by the ventriloquist's moving his lips and face in a very apparent manner when he asks his questions in his own proper voice, and then restoring his face to a perfectly motionless state, or one in which the lips seem to move only in a slight smile.

Ventriloquists fill their lungs very full of air, and expel it slowly and gradually in speaking. Facility in imitating various sounds is obtained by practice. Saint Gilles, a Parisian grocer, who became celebrated as a ventriloquist a century ago, and whose fame has come down to the present time, mastered his art in eight days of steady practice.

"Steering Straight For Home."

BY NORA LAUGHER.

[A thoughtless young gentleman when crossing the Atlantic had his attention called to the bright, happy look of one of the common sailors—a man of some sixty years—who, upon being questioned as to why he always appeared so cheerful, replied promptly, as he reverently bared his head and looked up to the clear, blue sky "I don't know, sir, unless it is because 'I'm steering straight for home.'"

What an eloquent sermon do not these few words convey!]

In storm or shine I'm happy, sir, As o'er the waves I roam, I'll tell you why if you like, sir, I'm steering straight for Home.

I do not mean my home on land, I lost that when Bess died, She and the young 'un too, sir, They both lie side by side.

She was my wife, the bonniest lass You'd see upon the main, That's why I always try to steer Straight Home to Bess again.

Oh! I shall ne'er forget the night When I breathed thro' the foam To find my girl's life ebbing fast, For she was nearing Home.

I was a careless chap, sir, then, Just thirty years ago; But my life changed with her last words, Uttered so soft and low.

She said, as she clasped our little 'un And her head lay on my breast "I'm drifting from you, Jack, my dear, And oh! I cannot rest."

Until you give me your promise That you will try and come Where I shall wait you, near the Sea, Say, Jack, you'll steer for Home."

The bitter tears rolled down my cheek, I knelt beside the bed, And since that day, sir, I have kept My oath, made to the dead.

'Tis easier every day, sir, I look across the foam And hear my Bessie calling me To steer right straight for Home.

Since the earthquake we are beginning to suspect that the South is not as solid as represented.

"She did wrong to look back; didn't she, Bessie?" "Yes, mamma. And what do you think Lot thought when he saw his poor wife turned into a pillar of salt?" "I don't know, mamma; I s'pect he wondered where he could get a fresh one."