

RIFT AND SPRAY

OR,
LOVE AND VENGEANCE AMONG THE SMUGGLERS.

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

CHAPTER XV.—(CONTINUED.)

"You are a good sort of dear, you are," said Joseph, in a contemplative tone, as though reflecting aloud.

"You will take care that Mrs. Wagner don't know that I ever go, Joseph; because, if you and Tom did not help me I could not do so, you know."

"All's right, Miss Grace—all's right. I only hope that if I am ever laid up in ordinary, like poor old Jabs Hutchins, miss, some good angel, as like you as possible, will look after me a bit."

"I will, Joseph."

"Lord bless you, miss! you will be a grown up lady by then, and be getting married."

"Oh, no—no! I mean to stay with Gerald all my life, Joseph."

"Well, miss, that's as it may be; but you was a-going to tell me something."

"Yes, I did not see Hutchins, but at the door of his hut a gentleman met me, and took the basket from me, and while I was talking to him I saw a green rocket and made sure the Rift was close in, so I ran off at once and made Tom row back."

"Well, miss, it was all right enough about the rocket, and the Rift is coming in, but she is beating on and off a little, for some reason or another. That's all you see, my dear Miss Grace. Captain Dolan has a reason for all that, you may depend; but the Rift will soon be in, I take it, and then you will see Gerald again, poor lad."

"Yes, yes," sighed Grace. "I will hope that. You do not think, Joseph, that there has really been a battle?"

"I don't know; but I will own that it looks like it."

"But—but—"

"What is it, miss?"

"Nobody would think of hurting Gerald!" Joseph shook his head.

"Bullets and shot, my dear, don't much mind who is in their way; but there may be a good many shots fired at such a little scudding vessel as our cutter and not one hitting her."

"Yes! Oh, yes! And so she has escaped?"

"I hope so."

"Oh, dear! Oh, dear!"

"Now, what makes you sigh in that sort of way, miss?"

"I was thinking—"

"About what?"

"That gentleman I saw at the door of Hutchins' cottage. And it was so strange, too, Joseph, that after Tom had rowed the punt quite round the rocks, I thought I heard some one call out my name."

"What name, miss?"

"Grace! Grace!"

"Well, that's odd; but you see it couldn't be, so there ain't no sort of good in worrying about it. There we are—there we are."

"Another rocket at this moment came high into the air and, as the others had done, sent down its shower of green fire."

"Now, miss, the Rift will soon be in and Captain Dolan will expect to find the cliff open."

"Yes—yes," sighed Grace. "Oh, that gentleman, it seems as if I could lie upon his breast and go to rest so sweetly and so safely. But I shall see Gerald now—my own dear brother, Gerald! Oh, Joseph, he must not be made go again on board the Rift."

"Hush, hush! I will speak to you about that another time, Miss Grace."

"Oh, you will, will you?" muttered a female voice from some dozen paces distant, down a rugged staircase in the body of the cliff. "Dolan shall hear of this!"

The voice was the property of Mrs. Wagner, a woman of half Dutch and half German descent, and who had been the housekeeper if the expression may be used in regard to the cavernous house of the smuggler Dolan for the past five years, and who was deeply in his confidence.

Mrs. Wagner now stepped forward, saying as she advanced:

"Come, Grace, it is high time for you to retire!"

"No—no!"

"No! But I say yes!"

"No, Mrs. Wagner; I ventured to stay up to see my brother Gerald come back."

"Your brother Gerald!" sneered Mrs. Wagner. "A pretty brother, indeed, who had to be carried on board his own father's ship!"

"Gerald does not want to be a smuggler!"

"Oh, dear, no! That is too good for any gentleman; but perhaps he will have to do something worse if he does not get cut off at the prime of his days."

"What do you mean, Mrs. Wagner?"

"Just what I say, and neither more nor less; so come in at once, will you?"

"No, Mrs. Wagner!"

"Certainly not. I intend to stay here and see the Rift come in."

"Then you won't?"

Mrs. Wagner made a movement to take her by the arm and force her away; but the young girl stepped up close to Joseph and said:

"Protect me! I will not go!"

"Avast, there, Mrs. Wagner!" said Joseph. "Can't you let the young thing alone?"

"You mind your own business or perhaps you mean say something to Captain Dolan that she won't like."

"Well, then, Mrs. Wagner, since you say you can just go and say and do what you please, and I won't have the young thing interfere with. I don't care about Captain Dolan. What is he to me, or any of us? We all row in the same boat. It happens to be his, so we go out with him; but he has no more power or right to come or any of us: Do this or do that we have to him."

"This is mutiny!"

Joseph laughed.

"You stay here Miss Grace, and you will see the Rift come in, whether Mrs. Wagner likes it or not."

"I will—I will! Oh! thank you, Joseph!"

"Very well," said Mrs. Wagner, in a tone of suppressed rage—"very well, you will see that with Captain Dolan!"

"Ay, ay!" cried Joseph. "And there's

Plainly now visible from the cliffs was the Rift, about half a mile from the shore, and apparently heaving to, while in the offing, and, so to speak, shutting the Rift up in the bay, was the Spray.

This was the position which these two vessels held at the commencement of our narrative, and which it has been our duty to follow them to, through the many adventures and hair breadth escapes of the smuggler and pirate.

We shall now see how it was that the Rift so mysteriously disappeared before the eyes of the astonished officers and crew of the Spray.

CHAPTER XVI. THE CAVERN IN THE CLIFF—THE RIFT DISAPPEARS IN SMOKE.

To all appearance, the Rift was slowly drifting either straight to the beach or right on to the cliffs that rose so abruptly from it. Abutting out into the bay some couple of hundred yards was a huge mass of cliff of about a quarter of a mile in total width, although irregular in its surface and presenting every possible variety of indentation and jagged outline that a chalk mass is susceptible of. So far did the greater portion of this cliff extend into the bay that the lowest tide still left a good depth of water laving its base; and when the sea ran high, the waves roared and lashed themselves to fury upon the storm-beaten natural battlement.

The rains of ages had dashed upon the face of the cliff; and from above there had poured in long, devious rivulets, little rills of water, bringing with them various dyes from the scanty soil on the cliff-top, so that the face of the rock next the sea presented not only a most disorganized mass in regard to shape, but almost every possible color in the way of paint-stains that could be found in the earths above.

It was right on this chalky mass that the Rift seemed drifting to her own destruction.

Apparently commencing at the surface of the sea, but in reality going deep down into the chalk formation, there had been an open cavern—a sort of cleft in the cliff of about fifty feet in height from the sea-level at half-tide and some forty or more feet in width. Into this cavern the waves had been in the habit of dashing with a wild fury that would have appalled any persons who might have been seized with a desire to penetrate its depths; but yet, it was evident that there had been persons adventurous enough for the purpose, and but that there were some special circumstances that made that particular portion of the cliff avoided, no doubt the cavern would have been much better known than it was.

The cliff above was undercut to such a depth that a notion had taken possession of the country people and fishermen that it was dangerous and would come down in a mass some day; and this being represented to the lord of the manor, whose jurisdiction extended to the verge, he had put up a railing and a warning—which, for a considerable distance inland, kept people from approaching the cliff's verge.

All this helped Dolan and his crew. It was many years before the time of which we write that he had thoroughly explored the cavern and found out, no doubt, its great capabilities as a refuge for a small smuggling vessel. But that was not sufficient.

Not only was the cavern to be adopted as a refuge for so small a vessel as the cutter—if hard pressed by any pursuit in the Channel—but some means must be adopted by which the character of the refuge should be unsuspected entirely. This was accomplished ingeniously and successfully.

Several old mainsails were procured by Dolan, which, when sewn together, were sufficiently large to cover up the whole entrance to the sea-cavern. By strong eyebolts fastened deeply in the cliff, and some cordage, this canvas covering to the cavern could at any time be made secure or unshipped at pleasure. It was well daubed with chalk, and the stains of the Winter rains upon it assimilated it to the color of the cliff most exactly. It wrapped itself round the projections and fell into the hollows; and at half a mile distant, no one could possibly—unless specially informed that there was something to discover—have detected this canvas covering from solid cliff.

It was by the firing of her guns at the Spray for some few minutes, and by the smoke made by the Spray in answering that firing, that the Rift got up sufficient obscurity on the night in question to enable her to slip into the cavern and have the canvas covering replaced again securely.

All was darkness in this home in the solid cliff, with the one exception of a gleam of light in day-time that straggled down through a hidden opening about half way up and toward which rude steps had been made.

This served for ventilation to the cavern. It was on the little plateau on the face of the cliff at the top of these steps that Joseph and Grace had stood during the progress of the talk they had together, and it was upon these rude steps that Mrs. Wagner had come to order Grace to retire for the night.

A couple of the crew of the Rift were always kept at home in the cavern to manage the canvas covering; and when the green rocket was reported as having been seen in the offing, it was the understood signal that the Rift was coming for shelter.

And so, amid the smother of the smoke from her own guns and from those of the Spray, the Rift disappeared bodily from before the astonished eyes of the officers and crew of the government vessel.

Slowly did the last remnants of the smoke curl up over the brow of the cliff, and sweetly now did the moon look down upon the waters of the little bay.

With slackened sails and beating off and on with a heaving, restless motion, the Spray slowly drifted into the bay.

Surprise, not unmingled with a superstitious feeling, sat upon the countenances of the crew of the Spray.

There was, indeed, a look of no small astonishment on the weather-beaten countenance of Mr. Royle, and it was some few minutes before he spoke to the lieutenant, Mr. Green, who was by his side, and who had only by strong swimming saved himself

when the Spray's boat was swamped by the small Ben Howline and flung into it from the deck of the Rift.

"Have I lost my eyesight, sir?" he said; "or is it true and real that the chase is gone?"

"Come, indeed," said Mr. Green, with a strangely puzzled look.

"But she was there."

"She was—yes, she was there."

The crew of the Spray had gathered to the port bow, which lay toward the shore, and in silence gazed into the waters of the bay, which sparkled now in the moonbeams, and looked calm and placid—land-locked as they were to so considerable an extent.

It appeared to them as if she had run into the bay, not with the object of avoiding capture—for that was too absurd—but to land her crew, and the fixed opinion of every sea-man on board the Spray was that they would just have to take possession of the Rift, which would be abandoned, and that a shore hunt would have to be made for the crew and for Captain Dolan, her commander and owner.

Hence it was that when the smoke disappeared and they saw nothing but sea and cliff they were both disappointed and astonished.

"Mr. Royle," said Lieutenant Green, "he has sunk his vessel."

"I don't know, sir."

"What else can have happened?"

"Well, Mr. Green, I never did till now give way to these ideas."

"What ideas?"

"About phantom ships, sir, and those sort of things; but if it be possible that a phantom ship show itself on the blue water I should say that was one with whom we had a running fight for the last six hours."

"Pho—pho!"

"It's all very well to say 'pho—pho,' sir, but where is she?"

"At the bottom of the bay."

Mr. Royle shook his head in evident incredulity on that point, and it was equally evident from the strange and anxious manner of Lieutenant Green that he did not feel quite at his ease on the subject. After a further pause of some few moments he said:

"We have a boat left, I fancy."

"Ay, ay, sir; but it is the small one."

"Never mind; let her be launched and manned. I will go myself to see what I can of this mystery."

Mr. Royle gave the order and in a few moments the only remaining boat of the schooner—which was a small one that would not conveniently hold more than four rowers—was dancing on the waves by the side of the Spray.

Lieutenant Green leaped into his place and took the tiller-ropes in his hand, as he said:

"Pull in, my men."

With slow strokes, the four sailors pulled into the bay; and then one who had grown gray in the service, and who was always put forward as spokesman when anything had to be said to the officers, gave a pull to the grizzled locks of hair that hung beneath his hat and said:

"I beg your honor's pardon."

"What is it, Joe?"

"May I be so bold, your honor, as to make a hobservation to your honor?"

"Yes, yes; what is it?"

"Why, then, your honor, it ain't lucky."

"What is not lucky?"

"To pull in after the craft as has gone up into the air away yonder. Lor' bless your honor, I've been to sea, man and boy, a matter of forty-nine year, and I ought to know, by this here time, what's lucky and what is not."

The other sailors looked at each other and nodded, as though they would intimate their opinion of the incontrovertible character of the argument or hobservation just made by old Joe.

The lieutenant smiled.

"So, Joe, you really believe we have come across the Flying Dutchman?"

"No, your honor—no; because your honor sees, as we have all heard of him, and his was a square-rigged vessel, and not a bit of a cutter like this, as we have been bowling along after ever so long. It isn't the Flying Dutchman, but it's one of the same sort."

The men pulled so lazily at their oars while this little dialogue was in progress, that it was evident they calculated upon some impression being made upon Lieutenant Green's mind, so as to induce him to discontinue the expedition.

In that they were much mistaken.

"Well, Joe," he said, "is that all?"

"No, your honor, I rather thinks, if we goes on in this moonbeam, and gets to where we last saw the cutter, we shall come to a bad end."

"Very good, now: I rather think, if you don't all of you pull with a will, I shall report every one of you as soon as I get back to the Spray."

This threat had its desired effect; for if it pointed to nothing else, it certainly did to certain very uncomfortable stoppages of grog—which was not to be thought of with any degree of calmness.

So the boat from the Spray shot through the water; and although the men tried to keep it as clear of the ray of moonlight as they could, Mr. Green most provokingly would steer into it; and old Joe kept up a perpetual skaking of his head, as a kind of continual protest at the foolhardy character of the lieutenant's proceedings.

And so the boat made its way, until it was about a hundred and fifty yards from the cliffs, and evidently as near as possible over the spot on which the Rift had been last seen.

The lieutenant made a sign with his hand, and the men rested on their oars, only now and then giving a light pull to keep the boat from drifting.

"This is where she was, Joe?"

"Ay, ay, sir."

"Over with the grapple and pull slowly."

A barbed hook was cast over and let drop about twenty feet into the sea, and then the boat was slowly pulled over the spot twice.

"If the cutter had been sunk surely that grapple would have touched her."

"No," said Lieutenant Green, half aloud, "if she has sunk she must lie very much over."

Old Joe shook his head.

The lieutenant now looked to the right and to the left, but there was nothing but the tall cliff visible—not an opening of any sort through which the cutter could have slipped and found shelter.

"The mystery was complete."

"I cannot make it out," said the lieutenant.

"In course not," whispered Joe to the man next to him.

"Pull back, my men."

This the men set to work upon with a grapple and hook, and despite of the tide which was running they would have got the schooner's boat out of the little land-locked place with much greater speed than they brought it in had not a circumstance happened which induced the lieutenant to pause in his progress.

Just as the boat of the Spray crossed the beams of the moon again, something appeared to be floating in the water which looked like a small keg—such as a man might sling around his waist or across his shoulders if taking a journey where refreshment would be scarce, or impossible to get.

"What is that? In with it!" cried Lieutenant Green. "That will do."

The boat was heeled a stroke or two and one of the men, leaning over, caught the little keg and dragged it into the stern at the feet of Mr. Green.

"What is it?"

"A keg, sir."

"It is metal, surely?"

"Hold, sir—hold hard, ahoy!" shouted Joe, as he suddenly snatched the little keg from the lieutenant and flung it into the sea.

Joe was not one moment soon with this movement, for scarcely had the object touched the surface of the water than it exploded with a loud report.

The fragments of it flew over the men, but no one was hurt with the exception of Lieutenant Green himself, who got a slight graze upon one temple.

The confusion which this little incident excited was soon over; but the men still kept the boat in the same position.

"This is diabolical," said Lieutenant Green, as he stretched the blood from his forehead with his handkerchief.

"Are you much hurt, sir?"

"Oh, no. A mere scratch. It was a shell."

"A sort of shell, sir."

"But what made you know it or suspect it, Joe?"

"I heard it make an odd noise, sir, and I all of a sudden recollected I had seen such a thing in the Spanish Main, sir, when the pirates came into a town called Gyaquilla, or something like that, sir."

"There is something more in all this than I can make out," added the lieutenant.

"Pull back at once."

"Ay, ay, sir!"

The men soon traversed the distance now to the Spray and Lieutenant Green at once dived into the captain's cabin, to report what had occurred to the Honorable Charles Minto Grey, who was lolling as usual upon a sofa and smoking.

"Sir, I would report to you."

"Oh, well, sit down. Take a weed."

"Thank you, sir. The Rift has slipped through our fingers."

"Very good."

"Good, sir?"

"Ah, yes! I suppose now we can make sail to Ryde, or Cowes, or some of the yacht squadrons' places; for I never was so tired out in all my life of this den they call a state cabin. My man, too, says that all the Moselle is gone."

"Well, but, sir, it's the most singular circumstance."

"So I say; for, by Jove, I haven't drank it."

"But I mean about the Rift."

"Oh! ah—well?"

"Perhaps you did not pay much attention."

"Oh! by Jove, I did, though, for I fully expected another shot into the cabin. Why can't they take better aim. They must know where the captain's cabin is; and what is the use of plaguing him? Upon my word it is too bad! What is the use of having a great uncle in the admiralty, I should like to know? What is the use of everything and everybody? I'm bored to death!"

After giving utterance with unusual energy to those patriotic sentiments, Captain the Honorable Charles Minto Grey lifted his feet on to the sofa and made two or three plunging kicks, to signify how disgusted he was with society in general.

"It is provoking, sir."

"Oh! by Jove! yes."

"But still, sir, the best and the shortest way out of it is to capture the Rift."

"Go and do it then. You have my free leave. As long as I can have my weed and my Moselle, sitting in peace, I don't care what you do."

"I will report to you then, sir, what happened. We chased the Rift into the bay and thought we had her quite secure, when she disappeared in a wreath of smoke."

"What?"

"She disappeared in a wreath of smoke."

The Honorable Charles Minto Grey puffed out a volume of tobacco smoke, and as it curled up to the ceiling he said:

"Like that?"

"Something like that, sir."

"What then?"

"Why, sir, here we are and the Rift has gone!"

"Very good. Pass the bottle—help yourself."

"Thank you, sir. I would, therefore, respectfully ask what you would wish done?"

"Well, I tell you what I will do."

"Yes, sir."

"I will play you at cribbage for a half guinea a game for one hour, the winner to consent to play again for one hour whenever the loser likes."

"But about the Rift, sir?"

"Well, didn't you say it was gone?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then enter in the log that the Rift is settled and had gone off in its own smoke—I don't know what the admiralty require further—and then make for Portsmouth."

"Were not the orders, sir, to report to Sir Thomas Clifford, the port admiral, at Falmouth?"

"Oh! by Jove, yes! Well, make for Falmouth."

"Yes, sir."

"And let them be smart about it. I shouldn't a bit wonder if old Clifford don't keep a good cellar. Those old muffs often do. Make for Falmouth at once."

"And give up the chase, sir?"

"Why, good gracious, where is the chase? Have you not just told me she has gone off in a puff of smoke or something of that sort? Foundered, of course. Foundered at sea. You can enter in the log that after an engagement, lasting six hours, the Rift was halted on a sand of times and at last hit between wind and water and down she went with all hands. That will do. I take it."

"Very good, sir."

Lieutenant Green went slowly upon deck. There was sufficient of the sailor about him to make a great noise, and he was engaged with the white-water of the sea as he did not factorily submit to his own mind the disappearance of the Rift, it was with great

reluctance that he gave the order to steer for Falmouth.

"Can you make out anything, Mr. Royle?" he said, as the sailing master took his glass from his eye, with which he had been taking a long observation of the coast and the bay.

"No, sir. Only some people on the top of the cliff."

"Oh, that's nothing."

"It ain't much, sir—only the odd thing is that they seemed to come this way over the edge of it, and they got out of sight somehow that I can't make out."

"Let me look."

Lieutenant Green took a long look and he saw the same phenomenon that had surprised Mr. Royle. Along the top of the cliff he saw a man come in somewhat of a crouching position, and when he got to the extreme verge, he seemed to disappear over it, or into it, in some way.

For the moment the lieutenant thought that he must have fallen over, and he shifted the glass down to the sea, expecting to see the splash of his fall; but such was not the case.

"I can't make that out," he said.

"Nor I, sir."

"It strikes me, Mr. Royle, that there is something more about all those cliffs and rocks than we know of."

"Sure of it, sir."

"And now we shall see no more."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Unknown Islands of the Pacific.

The fact that two islands of considerable size have recently been discovered in the Pacific Ocean shows that we have yet much to learn of this great watery expanse. The latest discovery is an island lying less than 100 miles from the northern coast of New Guinea. It has been named Allison Island, is nearly three miles long, rises from 100 to 150 feet above the sea, and has abundant timber. Several specks of fertile and inhabited land, some of them much larger than Allison Island, have been found within a few years at a distance of one hundred to two or three hundred miles from the New Guinea coast, and similar discoveries are made once in a while in various parts of the Pacific.

Oceania is so large that no map of it can be given in an atlas except on a minute scale. We see hundreds of groups and solitary islands huddled together on the maps, and get the idea that the Pacific is thickly studded with verdant bits of land. The fact is, however, that vessels may sail among these islands for many weeks without once coming in sight of land. Only a few months ago a crew that had been shipwrecked in the great island region of the Pacific rowed north for forty days before they reached Hawaii, the nearest land. Mr. A. R. Wallace, who has travelled widely in the Pacific, expressed the opinion some time ago that there are still a good many islands there that have never yet been seen by white men.

Once in a while a Pacific trader finds some new or little known island, and opens trade with its inhabitants. If business thrives, he keeps his secret as long as he can, so as to enjoy a monopoly. It was found a while ago, when the Woodlark Islands were explored, that an Australian firm had carefully charted the islands several years before, and had been quietly trading there, all unknown to the other Pacific merchants.

The English in Egypt

English influence in Egypt is of such a character that it is doubtful whether England will ever be able to withdraw. The quality of English justice is now so well understood, not only in Lower Egypt but all over the country, that the Fellahs of Upper Egypt are beginning to come long distances, in many cases even on foot, to Cairo for the purpose of seeing the "Englishman," meaning some British administrator whose assistance they seek against the tyranny of the Pashas. They appear to have perfect confidence that if they can only "see the Englishman" they will obtain justice and relief. On one Sunday recently no fewer than seven petitions were received from natives of Upper Egypt against acts of the Pashas. This feeling of the fellahs in favor of English administration and the confidence these poor people have that in any case they are safe from the vengeance of the Pashas is one of the most hopeful signs in Egypt. The Fellahs of Egypt like the Bengalees will always need the protection of a stronger race, and their appreciation of English administration will probably end in their becoming eventually recognized British subjects.

The French Navy.

There is no doubt about the French navy being in a deplorable condition, and the recent disclosures of Admiral Aube to the budget committee have directed a good deal of public attention to the matter. But, besides the inferiority of the French navy, not only to that of England, but also to that of Italy, the inefficiency of the French naval ports is also beginning to cause some uneasiness. Cherbourg, for instance, has been called by the minister of marine a veritable nest of bombshells, and any ships that would seek refuge there in time of war would be doomed to inevitable destruction. Other critics hasten to point out that England holds the Mediterranean in order to envelop France in an immense net which is spread from Gibraltar to Malta and thence to Cyprus and Egypt. Considering the dismal prospects conjured up by the Anglophobists at the present moment, it is surprising to hear them call out with all their might for the reorganization of the navy. The Gallic fleet will, however, have a long and arduous task whenever the duty is assigned to it of transforming the Mediterranean into a "French lake."

The Word "Ballot."

It is more than probable that nine out of ten readers, if suddenly called upon to give an account of the word "ballot," would put it down as the creation of American democracy, though nothing could be farther from the mark. A reference to Dr. Murray's English Dictionary shows that we are indebted for the word that at this moment is on every lip to the Venetian oligarchy. It was borrowed directly from the Italian, and makes its first appearance in English, both as noun and verb, so early as 1544, in William Thomas's *Histories of Italy*. The ballot was of course in the first place simply the actual ball dropped into the box in voting, so that naturally there was sound etymology as well as wit in the late Mr. Bernal Osborne's identification—the scene was laid in Ireland—of "vote by ballot" and "vote by bullet."