

RIFT AND SPRAY, OR, LOVE AND VENGEANCE AMONG THE SMUGGLERS.

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

CHAPTER XVIII.

ALMOST A MUTINY AMONG THE SMUGGLERS.

Already are our readers familiar with that little bay and its far-reaching promontories—land-locked almost as it was bounded southward by the heaving seas of the English Channel—northward, by the tall beeching cliff—one that resembled that celebrity,

—"whose high and bending head
Looks fearfully in the confined deep."

By the side of that cliff is a narrow cutting or gorge, which, with many interruptions from fallen portions of its chalky sides and tangled masses of wild prickly vegetation, leads to the upper land. At about a quarter of a mile distant from the tallest portion of the cliff there had been one of those land-slips so common round the coast of England; and, amid the fallen mass which had, in picturesque confusion, made a varied scene of hill and dale, there nestled, looking on to the beach, some half dozen fishermen's cottages.

One of these cottages belonged to Dolan, the master and owner of the Rift. There, ostensibly, he carried on the trade of a fisherman, and there was rather an ostentatious display of black-looking nets hanging over the fence of the neglected garden. A couple of well-formed and perfectly seaworthy boats, though, were drawn up on to the beach in front of the cottage.

It was not often that smoke curled up from the rude chimney of Dolan's supposed home, and it was not often that the door swung freely on its hinges. "Not at home," would have been the general answer of the very old woman, who was usually nearly bent double with decrepitude, crawling about the place.

But there were times when Dolan found it politic and necessary to affect to sit down by his own hearth, and then that woman, whom we have already seen and heard endeavoring to exercise a control over Grace, would be there, and there would be the affected bustle of a little household.

The other cottages—hovels they might be called—were occasionally in the occupation of various members of Dolan's gang of desperadoes. In fact, this pretended little group of fishermen's dwellings was but a blind, to be used occasionally by Dolan and some of his crew, to account for their being in or about that spot at all.

A narrow road led from this cluster of cottages into a high road that went direct to the town.

At the top of this narrow road was a little, low, whitewashed dwelling, in which resided a man with a wooden leg, who pretended to live by making nets, and those lumpy combinations of rope and oakum by which partial collisions between the fishing cutters were staved off and rendered innocuous.

This old man, though, had hanging in his hut a very curious old horn, with many twists and convolutions, such as one sees occasionally in some old French print of sportsmen, in some of the ancient forests of that land of political mutations, and when any strange footstep wandered down toward the beach, past his cottage, he would blow on his old-shaped horn three toots, which, in a strange way, would echo about the cliff and landslip.

And the way was so rough and rugged, the holes and pits so numerous, and the black mud so tenacious, that no one, unless persevering to an uncommon degree, ever went very far in that direction.

But it is not with the cluster of chance fishermen's cottages that we have now to do—nor with the old man at the top of the lone road, with his curious convoluted French horn—nor with the beeching cliff, so far as its outside conformation is concerned; but it is away from the light of day—away from the dancing sunlight, the scudding clouds, and the deep green sea, that we would conduct our readers.

Dimly lighted by a huge old lamp, suspended by a heavy chain, from a hook buried deeply in the chalk ceiling, there is a huge, irregularly shaped cavern. Take it altogether, its superficial area must have been some thousands of feet, although the many irregularities of its shape and the deep indentations that made up its full dimensions, presented the effect of the huge actual size being appreciated.

The walls were green and moss grown in some cases—that first kind of vegetation, which is rather a stain than anything that can actually be defined by the eyes. Flintstones and fossils of many different varieties projected from the chalky rock, and the ceiling, which was an irregular dome overhead, presented many jagged masses, which seemed ready at any moment to fall upon the floor below, or upon the head of any one who might be in the cavern.

Blackened was the ceiling by smoke, and, in some cases, where a fire of logs had been kindled against the wall of the cavern, the flames and the smoke had gone right up to the ceiling, crackling, charring and blackening the chalk in a singular fashion.

There were leading to and from this huge cavern many cuttings or openings—jagged and uneven—some tall and narrow—others of a nearly circular shape, which it would require some stooping and some skill to pass through; and, throughout the whole, there was at times a rushing, moaning sound, as the wind from the bay forced its way through the masses and hollows of the cliff.

This cavern, then, occupied a good portion of the centre of the huge cliff we have spoken of.

By narrow, tortuous passages, which required care to ascend them, other minor caverns could be reached, as well as various lookout places on small plateaux in the face of the cliff, where a human being would have looked, from seaward, like a piece of fluttering weed, or some bird prowling about the face of the cliff.

This, then, was the real home of Dolan, the smugglers, and of his lawless crew. It was reached in two ways—there was a secret passage to it from the gorge in the cliff, there was another passage to it from the bay.

Looking from the sea toward this portion of the cliff-bound coast of England, numerous black, irregular rocks could be seen about the base of the chalky promontories; and these indicated washings away of portions of the cliff, into which the sea, on occasions of unusual storm and commotion in

the Channel, had rushed, enlarging by degrees the hollow, until it becomes a veritable cavern of, in some cases, thirty or forty feet in depth.

There is nothing curious or peculiar in these cliff caverns. Row into one at half tide, and you find it gloomy, and with a decided odor of sea weed.

A freak of nature, however, had made one of these openings in the cliff serviceable to Dolan. By some subsidence of the chalk, or by some "fault" in the original construction of the cliff, when upheavings and slips of the coast were probably frequent, almost the whole of that tall cliff was honey combed into numerous caverns, one of which was the large one that we have introduced the reader to, where hung the lamp.

A very rugged kind of flight of steps—broad and steep—for they had been only roughly cut down the steep declivity of a natural passage—led from this huge cavern to the level of the sea in the bay, but still within the cliff; and there was a black looking pool of sea water—a subterranean lake of about three hundred yards across—and which only slightly heaved to and fro on its surface, as it sympathized with the swell of the water in the bay, with which it had communication.

Torches stuck in different parts of the cliff around this sea-lake gave a sort of twilight appearance to the place, and showed a roof about a hundred feet in height from its surface.

On this lake, with an idle motion, stem and stern, rested the Rift.

Dark looking boats were silently rowed over the surface of this inland piece of water, and now and then there was a hoarse cry from some human voice, as an order was given or responded to, the echoes of which would die away in strange gibbering noises through the old cavern.

But it is in regard to how the Rift got into this place that we have now to do, and we will no longer conceal that from the reader.

At one portion of this lake—that towards the south—it seemed to be lost in the gloom of a narrow channel, which, although its ceiling was as high as the rest of the place, or nearly so, was very much contracted at its sides. This narrow channel led directly to one of those crevices or openings in the cliff which we have mentioned and which led out to the open bay.

In effect, then, this lake of dark sea-water, in which lay the Rift so securely, was but an extensive cavern, into which rushed the waters of the bay and in which the level rose or fell, according to the state of the tide without.

The only difference was in the extent of the cavern and in the fact that the opening from the face of the cliff into it was not visible from the bay.

And yet that opening directly faced the south, and had it been visible, would have presented a jagged aperture of about fifty feet in width and the same in height.

And now for the simple means by which all observation of this opening was baffled.

A couple of old mainsails achieved everything. By a clever system of cordage, managed by half a score of pulleys from within, these two old mainsails could be stretched over the outer face of the cliff, completely hiding the opening from view. They were daubed with chalk. The weather had stained the canvas; sea-water and seaweed had stained it with color resembling the cliff, against the sides of which it flattened itself, and, unless actually suspected and looked for, it might well baffle the closest observer.

Many an eye—many a telescope had run over this canvas covering; but what was there to pause at on the face of a cliff? Nothing. And so it escaped just that closeness of searching which might have defined it to be something unusual.

No vessel with more draught of water than to the lightest ever came into the bay at all, and there was no temptation to go close to the cliff, which had a reputation for now and then sliding down a ton or two of chalk into the bay.

At half-tide, then, or beyond it, the Rift could be sailed into the opening, and safely moored in the lake in the cavern; and in five minutes, or less, the canvas covering could be drawn over the aperture in the cliff and gradually, as the tide receded, it could be lowered to meet the level of the sea.

And what, with the shadows from projections, and all the artifices that Dolan and his crew used to give the canvas a natural color, you might have rowed to within a hundred feet of the artifice, and not observe it.

Hence was it, then, that the Rift escaped the Spray; hence was it that the Rift, when apparently close on to the cliff, fired those guns, in order that, sheltered by their smoke (which could not escape except by slowly rolling up the face of the cliff), she might have the opening in the face of the rock cleared for her and sail in, and so disappear, as she had, from before the astonished eyes of those on board the Spray.

With her cargo of smuggled goods the Rift would thus make a good port; and then, at night, boat load after boat load would issue out of the cavern and make for the land-slip, where there would be plenty of assistance to carry them off to a market somewhere inland.

And now we resume the thread of our narrative.

Pale and trembling Dolan stood on the deck of the Rift and the faint light from the torches of the sea cavern fell upon his restless eyes. There was a wildness of expression about the face of Dolan that he had never worn before and had his crew been adepts in physiognomy they might well have expected that the events of this last voyage of the Rift had gone far to unsettle the brain of their bold and unscrupulous commander.

There was a quiver of the muscles about the mouth; an uneasy, restless searching here and there about the eyes; and, now and then, a short, sharp, sudden turn of the head, as though he expected something that it would be terrible to see was close to him and with more than mortal rapidity likely to glide behind his back on his attempt to see it.

Truly, the imagination of Dolan was in anything but a healthful state.

It was the vision in the cabin of the Rift that had been the proximate cause of this

mental condition on the part of the smuggler and pirate.

It frequently happens that men like Dolan will, so far as conscience and remorse are concerned, clamber over the wickedness of life; and then does some one circumstance that in itself will seem of less value than many which have preceded it will, like a spark rushing through a train of powder, awaken all dormant fears and dormant consciousness of guilt and shatter all the confidence or indifference of the perpetrator.

It was thus with Dolan.

He thought that he had seen, in his cabin a vision; the vision—delicate, gentle, and beautiful—of that young and innocent girl whom he had left to perish on board the Coquette; the vision of that child-like creature, whose sweet smile and gentle eye had rested upon him for a moment, when he was plundering the lockers of her father's cabin.

Many a strong man had fallen before the vengeful arm of Dolan. He had heard the death-shriek, as drowning wretches, who owed their fate to him, sank amid the waste of waters to rise no more; but nothing had seemed to touch him so much as the heartless abandonment of that young girl in the cabin of the Coquette.

And now he believed that he had seen her, now he fully believed that she had presented herself to him for the purpose of driving him to madness; and, with the superstition which is so frequently the concomitant of such minds as his, he looked upon the appearance as a warning—a warning of death!

Then all the sum of a life of sin—all the iniquities of a life of crime rose up before him; and, as he gazed about him in the sea-cavern, the translation of his expression might have been:

"I am going from life, and then how will it fare with me?"

But it was not likely that such a man as Dolan would wholly succumb to feelings such as these without some struggle.

He roused himself to action, and although there was craven fear at his heart, he strove to speak in his usual tone.

"Now, my men," he shouted, "look alive. The Rift has beaten off the Spray, and in our old home on the cliff we may yet defy all the power that can be brought against us. Bustle now, my men. We have a full cargo, and the night will be just the one for us. No moon, I take it, Martin?"

"None till the twenty-fifth," said Martin, shortly, and, as Dolan thought, with an expression very different from that in which he usually spoke.

Dolan would fain have asked what change had come over him, but he dreaded now to do so, lest the reply should be one that would increase his fear.

Then, from the various deep indentations of the sea cavern, issued boats, and they surrounded the Rift. It was into these boats that the cargo was to be stowed, and then, in some secure hour of the night, they were to be rowed out of the bay, and round the promontory, to the group of cottages in the supposed occupation of fishermen, but the real tenancy of Dolan and his crew.

When there, they would be met by an agent, who would buy all the goods and take all further risks attendant upon them.

This agent, though, knew nothing of the secret cavern in the cliff.

"Look sharp!" said Dolan, with an affectation of firmness, although his voice cracked as he spoke, and several of the crew started, for they could scarcely, at the moment, recognize it, "look sharp, for all must be done to-night, and there is no time to lose."

"Ay, ay, sir," growled one. "I don't think there is, now, as we have fired on a king's ship."

"Who is that?"
"Me—Job Lines. Here I am."
"What no you mean?"
"Just what I said, Captain Dolan, which was that there was no time to lose. Hoy! shipmates—ho! No time to lose!"

At these words from this man a ringing shout rang through the cavern and the work of unloading the Rift was at once suspended as by a common agreement among the men, which those words were the signal.

"Who, is this?" shouted Dolan.

"Oh, there will be no harm, captain."

"Mutiny!"

"We don't know the word here. There is no time to lose, mates, is there?"
"None!" shouted the crew.

"What is it? What is it? Are you all mad?"

"No," said one, standing up in one of the boats "but we should be if we went on in this kind of way any longer. It was all very well before a king's ship was in commission against us and before we fired on her. We were smugglers, so far as they knew, and if caught, why the worst that would have befallen us would have been that we should have been clapped on board a man-of-war; but now—now, my mates—"

"It's the yard-arm!" cried half a dozen voices.

"Aye, it is."
"What do you mean? What do you want?" said Dolan. "I do not understand you. I share with you all perils—perhaps more than any of you know of. What do you want then of me? What can I do?"

"Share and share alike and let this be the last venture!"
"Ah!"

"Yes, the last; no more of it! Let each go on his own cruise and there's an end."

"I think I understand you."
"Of course you do," laughed one, and then the laugh became general; and Dolan felt that his authority was gone and that his career as captain of the Rift was over.

"I do understand you," he said.
"Silence, fore and aft, for the skipper!" cried one. "He's going to tip us a yarn now, mates."
"Hurray!"

"Silence all!" shouted Dolan in a voice that awakened every echo in the cavern, for his passion was now roused. "Silence all and hear me, or by the heavens above us I'll finish the cruise by sending to his reward a couple of you!"

From the capstan top, close to where he stood, he lifted a heavy pair of the ship's pistols and held them threateningly. There was a profound stillness among the crew.

"If," he added, "it is your wish that the cruises of the Rift should end, be it so. I keep no ship's company together against their will. I may, or I may not, try to get together another crew. I don't say now one way or the other; but the share of the plunder of our cruises, to which you are all entitled, you shall have freely and honestly; and for your satisfaction, I can tell you that, by the care I have taken, each share will be much more than any of you anticipate."

A loud shout arose from the crew, and one-half of the popularity of Dolan had come back to him.

"I say to you all," he added, "that you will be surprised at what you will get."

Dolan was turning sarcastic.

"And I feel convinced that it will be sufficient to settle you all for life."

"Hurray!"

"And, now, I have only in the first place to recommend to you all, if you don't want to bring suspicion and the Philistines upon you, to make less noise."

"Ay, ay, captain."

All were hushed.

"And, in the second place, let us get rid of this cargo, which is the cheapest we ever had, since we did not pay Captain Mocoquet anything for it, and the money it will produce will add to the general stock largely."

"Ay, ay, sir. That's good—oh, that's all right—fair play all the world over!"

Such were the various expressions elicited by the speech of Dolan, who bent his malignant eyes from one to the other of the crew, while a sneering smile curled the corners of his mouth.

"Then all's well," he said.

"Ay, ay, captain, all's well."

"But when," said one, "will the division of the spoil take place and where?"

"To-morrow night and here!" promptly cried Captain Dolan.

"That will do."

"But, until then, my men, unless you consent to one thing I will leave the cavern at once."

"What is that! What thing?"

"Obey me cheerfully and promptly, as you have been in the habit of doing; for I work for the good of all."

"Yes, yes," cried all present, "that will do."

"Now to work."
(TO BE CONTINUED.)

PEARLS OF TRUTH.

History is the revelation of Providence.

Love one human being with warmth and purity, and thou wilt love the world. The heart, in that celestial sphere of love, is like the sun in its course. From the drop in the rose, to the ocean, all is for him a mirror, which he fills and brightens.

The fact is that a certain class of men love to be quiet, and are ready to sell their country to the evil one himself, that they may live at ease and make no enemies. They have not the manliness to plead for the right, for it must cost them a customer or a friend, and so they plead a superior holiness as an excuse for sulking.

No cowardice is so great as that found in truth. Belief in the rightness of a cause, in the value of a high moral standard, in the supreme righteousness overruling man, self-respect and moral dignity—all go by the board when we condescend to a lie, either spoken or acted, either by suggestions of the false or suppressive of the truth. What ever it may be that we are called on to testify or acknowledge we should stand up openly and without wincing.

The Coming of the New Year.

"I am coming, I am coming!" says the glad new year;
I am coming 'mid bright smiles, and the sad falling tear."

I am coming to the cottage,
And to the lordly hall;
To loving homes, to lonely hearts—
Coming to one, to all!
No wish can shut me from your door,
No prayers my step delay;
To high and low, to rich and poor,
Comes the glad New Year's Day.

To happy homes and happy hearts
A welcome guest I prove,
Bringing choice gifts and wishes kind
From those we dearly love;
And children from their little beds
Will watch this morning's ray,
And laugh, and shout about for joy,
That this is New Year's Day.

To saddened hearts and mourning homes
I come with gentle tread,
And over hearts most desolate
A hallowed radiance shed;
Whispering of hope to hopeless ones,
Joy to the joyless heart
Telling of Him whose life and light
A heavenly peace impart.

Oh, thank God for the glad new year!
His gift, direct from heaven;
And by our lives let us declare
It is in mercy given;
Whether we greet it with a smile,
Or with the falling tear,
Thank God for all—and from our hearts
Welcome the glad new year.

An Admirer of the Beautiful.

Young Lady—"Are you an admirer of the beautiful, Dr. Slasher?"
Dr. Slasher (a young sawbones)—"Oh, yes, indeed."

Young Lady—"What is the most beautiful thing you ever saw?"
Dr. Slasher (contemptively)—"Well, I think the most beautiful thing I ever saw was the way in which Prof. Deepcutter took a man's leg off at the hospital last week."

Getting Some Satisfaction.

"What's the matter, Bobby?" inquired his mother, as the boy floozed into the nursery.
"Pa sent me out of the l-library e-cause I made too much n-o-ise."
"I hope you didn't say anything rude to your papa?"

"N-o," replied Bobby, who knows better than to be rude to the old man, "but I slammed the door."

An Insinuation.

An excited individual rushed into a schoolhouse and asked for the teacher.
"What is the cause of your excitement, my dear sir?" queried the teacher.
"I was just passing the schoolhouse, when I was set upon and insulted by a gang of young blackguards, and I have come to see you about it, as I understand you are the principal."

Really Quite Recent.

"Do you know that short mustaches like mine are all the rage now?" asked a Soho youth of his girl.
"No; are they?" she replied.
"Yes; they are the latest things out."
"I might have known, that too, for if they are like yours they have't been out long."

Every piano should have a waterproof covering. If this cover is kept on while the young lady amateur is above the instrument will last a very long time.

A HAPPY NEW YEAR.

"Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
The flying cloud, the frosty light;
The year is dying in the night;
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die."

"Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow;
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true."
—In Memoriam.

Thus do we greet the Janna, two-headed god of the Romans, deity who presides over open doors, standing, as thou dost, on the threshold of the New Year, with a face of regret for the past clouded by the touching sadness of a parting, sent with the sunshine of hope irradiating the countenance of thy other and brighter self.

Ever thus it is, as the scythe of time sweeps the full heads of ripened grain into the storehouse of our lives; thus do we pause and sigh, as we reckon up the results of the year's harvest, over the "might have been," and involuntarily arise to our lips, "God's pardon rest upon the dying year, God's blessing fall like dew upon the young, new months ahead." Tenderly do we whisper, in Tennyson's touching words:

"But tho' his eyes are waxing dim,
And tho' his feet speak ill of him,
He was a friend to me.
Old year, you shall not die.
We did so laugh and cry with you,
I've half a mind to die with you,
Old year, if you must die."

But the chasm between the old year and the new is bridged by the flashing rainbow of expectancy and hope, over which our spirits travel from the past, which is ours forever, into that mystic country of the future.

The observance of the New Year dates far back into historic times. China, the oldest child of civilization, presses to the front with her "flowery kingdom" and almond-eyed people. Egypt follows, under the shadow of her pyramids, with the ibis of Thoth, the genius of the New Year, over the season of which, the rising of Sirius, the dog-star, cast its regulating beams; while the Persian exchanges his *nev-ruz* or presents of eggs.

The martial Roman, casting aside his sword and armor, arrayed himself in snowy white on the first day of the New Year, and in joyful procession hid to the temple amid clouds of incense and flaming altars, and peace and happiness cast their perfect glory over all the land. Later on, visiting became the order of the day, and grotesque masques wandered at will throughout the streets of the capital, with many quick and fantastic pranks.

Strenae, for luck, were exchanged, and all the vast possessions, over which watched eagles of Rome, were given over to peace and good-will toward all mankind. The Christian folk, forbidden to join in any of the pagan observances, spent their time in acts of charity, meditation, and prayer.

About the fifth century, when the 25th of December became acknowledged as the festival of the Nativity, New Year's day was recognized as the commemoration of the circumcision, and solemnly kept as such in the various branches of the Eastern and Western Churches; but it was not until late in the sixteenth century that the first day of January was universally accepted as the opening day of the New Year, Christmas Day, the Annunciation, (25th of March), Easter Day, and March 1st having equally shared with the 1st of January the honor of ushering in the bright New Year.

'Tis the great holiday of France, the *jour d'etrennes* being strictly observed by all classes.

Grotesque customs seem to have been the order of the day in "Ye olden tyme," and still keep their hold upon the present century, the ancient custom of watching the old year out and the new one in still existing, and touchingly appropriate does it seem that old and dear friends, who have stood side by side through good and evil, trials and happiness, should pass into the new order of things hand in hand. In the old town of Coventry, England, on New Year's Day, there sounds through the quaint streets the call of "God-cakes for the New Year," and young and old crowd to eat of the triangular little God-cakes, filled with a sort of mince-meat, and costing about a halfpenny apiece.

In more modern times, among the French, the observance of the New Year's Day is the great holiday of the year, and celebrated much in the same way as the English and Canadians keep Christmas, by interchange of good wishes, presents, and bonbons, reunions of families, and visiting among friends. Indeed, over all the world seems to hover the white wings of the Spirit of Peace and Hope, and the happy face of a whole world is uplifted to an equally happy heaven above.

Labor.

All labor well and worthily performed is in itself a direct means of elevating and improving the laborer. In the first place, it calls forth energy and force, and they grow by exercise. No system of self culture, however elaborate, can ever give that vigor and tone to the system, or that sense of power to the mind, which comes from regular, well-performed labor. To work with a purpose, whether it be at the forge or the shop, in the factory or in the office, in the field or the studio, in the kitchen or the schoolroom, gives a conscious ability that nothing else can produce, and that goes far to make the manly and the womanly character.

The Star.

Christmas Eve—and the mellow light
Of the Star in the East was aglow
Over the Magi, hastening through the night,
In the desert, long ago.

Christmas Eve, and the gentle light
Of the Star in the East was aglow
Over the lambs, asleep with their shepherds by night,
On the hillside, long ago.

Christmas Eve—and the golden light
Of the Star in the East was aglow
Over a Babe's brow, in the holy night,
In a manger, long ago.

Christmas Eve—and the blessed light
Of the Star in the East is aglow,
As it shone of old, through the sweet, still night,
O'er Bethlehem, long ago.

A Useful Domestic.

Lady—"What does the groceryman want?"
Bridget—"Shure, mum, he is after his bill, and it's thrubblesome that he is."
Lady—"You go out and talk to him. If he makes any trouble, you can Bridget over better than I can."