

Your Chum Jack Wants to See This Paper. Show It to Him!

THE VANGUARD LIBRARY. $\frac{1}{2}$



No. 21.

PUBLISHED EVERY TUESDAY.

14

TWO MERRY MIDDIES : A Tale of "MIDSHIPMAN DICK."

By ERIC STANHOPE.

TWO MERRY MIDDIES!

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Sure, and what's the matter with ye, Dick?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are ye grinning at, lively?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Pat Malone, midshipman on board his Majesty King George's frigate *Edipea*, at that moment gliding under full sail through the blue waters of the Mediterranean to join Nelson's fleet with despatches, stared at his friend Dick Redmond, as the latter laughed loud and long.

Dick had just come up from below, and he had come up laughing, and he was laughing still on the quarter deck: an offense which would have opened upon him the visit of the first lieutenant's wrath, had Mr. Quill been on the spot.

But, fortunately, the costly first lady of the *Edipea* was below.

"What's the matter, Dick, me boy? Speak, can't ye?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Pat Malone did not ask any more questions.

He seized Midshipman Dick by the shoulder, and ran him riotously against the bulwarks, and jostled him there by sheer force.

"Now tell me what ye're giggling at, ye gossamer!" he exclaimed, severely. "Quick, before I knock ye're head against the wood—the other wood."

"Let go—"

"What's the joke, this?"

"Let go, and I'll tell you."

Pat reluctantly released him.

"Now, then, what is it?" he demanded.

Dick Redmond broke into a fresh paroxysm of mirth.

"Ha, ha, ha! No, hands-off!" he exclaimed, as Pat showed strong disposition to seize him again, "I'll tell you."

"This go ahead."

"It's Cruise again."

Cruise was the oldest midshipman on board the *Edipea*, and had been cock of the snail's berth before the coming of Dick Redmond.

But Dick, soon after joining the frigate, had stolen Cruise in a fair stand-up fight, and ever since that time the erstwhile bully had had to hide his diminished head.

But he recruited a bitter hatred of Dick, and whenever a chance came to pay off old scores, he was never found wanting.

"He's up to his tricks again," said Dick, grinning. "I just went down to the berth, and he didn't see me coming, but I saw him."

Pat looked interested.

"What was he doing?"

"Plying up a little tarp for me," said Dick, grinning.

"He knew I was just coming down off duty, of course, and he rigged up a cord across the berth, just inside, and a heap of old nails and iron for me to



Without a second glance at him, Redmond dashed on to the companion.

fall on me, I caught my feet in it."

"The baste!"

"He was too busy to see me coming, and I came up again

You Know Your Friends Would Be Pleased With This Paper If They Saw It.

without his seeing me—and then—ha, ha, ha!"

"What did you do?"

"Didn't do anything, but—ha, ha, ha—Garry, the second lieutenant, passed me as I was coming up, and I expect he'll do what was meant for me."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Pat.

Garry, the second lieutenant, was Crane's cousin, and very chummy with that middy, and, consequently, down on Midshipman Dick and his friends.

As second lieutenant, he had it in his power to make himself very obnoxious to the middy when he chose, and he had done so more than once.

The thought that he was going to fall into the trap which the crafty middy had laid for Dick Redmond was exasperating.

"Pat!" muttered Pat, "we must see this!"

"Come on, then. It'll be over in a minute, and we mustn't miss it. Garry stopped to speak to the purser, but I know he's going to speak to Crane, for he asked me if Crane was in the berth."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I told him he was, but I didn't give any particulars."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Come on, then."

"But I say, I mustn't leave the deck——"

"Stuff! Old Quill's below, leaving to the captain about those eternal French printers, and you won't be missed."

"I'll risk it, anyway," muttered Pat, "that's no good to me, if it comes off."

And he slipped below with Midshipman Dick.

They were in no two seconds.

Garry had fished his chest with the purser, and they caught sight of him as he strode to the middy's berth.

"There he goes!"

"Look—ha, ha, ha!"

There was a crash.

It was followed by a yell of pain.

The second lieutenant had caught his foot in the tent cord, and gone down with a thump upon the heap of old rubbish collected for Crane for Dick to fall upon.

There were nails and crockery in the heap, and the second lieutenant's hand came down upon them with a clap, and he was "out."

To judge by the noise he made he was considerably hurt.

Crane uttered an exclamation of horror.

"Garry! I never——"

The second lieutenant of the *Edipse* screamed to his feet.

His face was crimson with rage.

"You young hound!"

"I didn't——"

"You laid this trap for me—your officer——"

"I never——"

"You insolent young scoundrel! I'll have you court-martialed for nothing."

"I thought——"

"I'll teach you to think," howled the second lieutenant.

"I'll teach you to think twice before you play a trick like that on me."

And he rushed at the dismayed midshipman.

"I say," yelled Crane, "I didn't—didn't mean—I—oh! you! Dick!"

"Take that, and that, and that!"

Garry had got the unfortunate practical joker's head in chockery, and he was pounding him like a mangle.

Crane struggled frantically to release himself.

But it was in vain.

The muscular second lieutenant held him as in a vice, and thumped away with all his heart.

"Take that! and that! and that!"

Crane took these blows, because he couldn't help himself. He struggled and yelled like a demon, but the second lieutenant was too inflated to listen to his explanations, and too muscular to be thrown off.

"Leave! Leave alone! I——"

"Take that!"

"I didn't——"

"And that!"

"I never——"

"And that!"

"Oh! Oh! You're killing me! Leave me go!"

"And that!"

"Help! Help!"

"And that!"

"Oh! Help!"

Crane's frantic yells rang far and wide. They reached the ears of Mr. Quill, the first lieutenant, who had been on deck. With a frowning brow the first lieutenant of the *Edipse* made his way to the middy's berth.

"Look out!" roared Dick Redmond.

He dragged Pat out of sight as the fat first lieutenant came down the ladder.

"What is the meaning of this uproar?" shouted Mr. Quill. "I say, what is the meaning of this uproar?"

Mr. Quill had a way of repeating his words when he was excited.

"Did you hear me?" he roared. "I say, do you hear me? I——oh!"

He broke off, as, stepping into the berth, he caught his foot in the cord, and went sprawling on the floor.

His hands came slipping on the broken crockery, and he squirmed with pain.

He was upon his feet in a moment.

His fat face was simply purple with rage.

"Marine," he roared, "Marine!"

The nearest marine hurried towards the spot.

Well-disciplined as he was, he could hardly conceal a grin at the sight of the infuriated first lieutenant.

"Marine! Arrest those two scoundrels!"

Garry released Crane as if he had become suddenly red-hot. The badly-used midshipman staggered away and collapsed on a locker.

"Marine! Seize them!"

The marine came in, and caught his foot in the cord, and went down with a yell. His musket clattered on the floor.

Mr. Quill turned on him in a fury.

"You clumsy fool! How dare you perform these ridiculous antics in my presence?"

"I am sorry, sir——"

"Dolt! Why did you fall over?"

"There's a cord here, sir——"

"Do you think I am blind?"

"Well, I didn't see it."

"You ought to have seen it."

"I couldn't help falling——"

"You ought to have helped it."

"But you fell down yourself, sir——"

"Don't be insolent," shouted Mr. Quill. "I say, don't be insolent, sir, or I will have you ordered three days, as soon as look at you."

The marine relapsed into silence. That was the safest plan when Mr. Quill was in his present mood.

"Now, you young scoundrel—Mr. Garry. You, sir, the second lieutenant of this ship, fighting in the midshipman's berth like a raffish boy. You, sir," exclaimed Mr. Quill, majestically.

Mr. Garry looked as if he wished the floor would open and allow him to drop through into the hold.

"I was not fighting, sir——"

"Do you ask me to doubt the evidence of my own eyes. Mr. Garry? I say, do you ask me to doubt the evidence of my own eyes?"

"But I was——"

"Not a word, sir. Prevarication will not assist you."

"I——"

"Go to your cabin at once, and consider yourself under arrest, sir——"

"May I——"

"To your cabin," roared Mr. Quill.

"But I——"

"Marine, remove the man."

The second lieutenant thought it best to quit the berth, casting a furious look at Crane, he strode away in a suppressed rage.

"Crane, you have dared to struggle with your superior officer——"

"I did not——"

"Don't lie to me, sir. Your offence is worthy of death, or at least of hanging, and if I were a severe officer I should order you to be shot, sir."

"Will you allow me——"

"I will allow you to go to the mast-head, and not come down until I give you permission, sir," shouted Mr. Quill.

"But——"

"Marine, arrest that midshipman."

Crane dodged out of the cabin.

He passed Dick and Pat on the ladder.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Dick Redmond. "It hasn't worked out well, has it, Crany?"

Crany nodded on each, and passed on.
"Mumsey, what are you grinning at?" It was Mr. Quill's voice from the berth. "I say, what are you grinning at?"

"I, sir?"

"Was I grinning, sir?"

"Yes, sir, you were grinning. I say you are grinning like a hyena, sir. Arrest yourself—I mean, you are under arrest, my man."

"Aye, aye, sir!"

Mr. Quill stamped out of the berth. On the ladder two midshipmen were doubled up with laughter.

The first lieutenant stopped and stared at them.

"Redmond! Malone!"

"Aye, aye, sir!"

"What are you doing below, Malone? I say—what are you doing?"

"I came to—to—"

"Go to the cross-trees, and stay there till sunset, sir."

"Aye, aye, sir."

"Redmond, what are you laughing at?"

"I was thinking—"

"You have no right to think. You are not on board this ship to think, sir. How dare you think in the presence of your superior officer. Go to the masthead—"

"But, sir—"

"Marine!"

Dick Redmond scuttled away. Mr. Quill stamped on deck in a fury, swearing at everybody he passed, as a first lieutenant was entitled to do.

Midshipman Dick scuttled up to the mainmast cross-trees and joined Pat Malone. The two midshipers did not seem cast down by their punishment. They laughed so much that they were in danger of falling off the cross-trees.

A HOT CHASE.

"I say, Pat!"

Pat yawned.

"What is it, Dick?"

"Can you see anything on the horizon yonder?"

And Midshipman Dick pointed away over the blue waters of the Mediterranean in the direction of Corsica, whose mountains could be seen dimly in the clouds.

Pat Malone followed the direction of the pointing finger.

He strained his eyes across the rolling waters.

"Yes, I can, Dick. It's a sail."

"You, sail not a big ship," said Dick Redmond. "I can't make her out very well so far, but I should say she was a schooner."

Pat's eyes gleamed.

"Then perhaps it's the privateer we've heard so much about."

"That's what I was thinking."

But the Irish midshiper looked east down the next moment.

"Those waters are crowded with schooner-rigged craft," he said. "It's a hundred to one against its being the one we want."

"Still there's a chance. I know that Captain Cleveland is looking especially for the *Toules*, and he'll be glad to look at her, anyway."

"That's true."

Dick Redmond hailed the deck.

"Schooner in sight."

There was a commotion on the deck of the *Edipus* at once.

Of late the French privateers had been very troublesome to the English shipping in the Mediterranean, and most troublesome of all was the *Toules*, a French schooner which sailed under the privateer's flag, but was, as a matter of fact, little better than a pirate.

The war between England and the French Republic was then at its height, and the *Edipus* was on her way to join Nelson's fleet, but Captain Cleveland had instructions to keep a keen look-out for any sight of the *Toules* schooner.

Immediately the call was heard on deck from the cross-trees, there was a buzz on board the English frigate.

Captain Cleveland was on deck in a moment, and both he and Mr. Quill surveyed the schooner through their glasses from the quarter-deck.

The course of the *Edipus* was slightly changed, so as to bring her in a direct line with the stranger.

Dick and Pat watched from the cross-trees with eager eyes.

They longed, like the rest of the crew of the frigate, to get to close quarters with the privateer, which had wrought so much destruction, and carried home so many prizes to the port from which she took her name.

"By Jupiter!" exclaimed Dick. "I feel certain it's the *Toules*, Pat. I had a description of her from a fellow who was a prisoner on board her once, and I know her lines. It's the *Toules*! It's the *Toules*, boys!"

The English seamen gave a cheer.

"I hope it is, anyway, or I shall get a wipping for saying that," murmured Pat. "It will be your fault if it isn't, Dick."

Dick laughed.

"I feel certain of it."

There was a call from the deck, for the two midshipmen to descend. They went down willingly enough. The deck was in a haze of sail but orderly movement. The drummer was beating to quarters.

If the *Edipus* were close near enough to the privateer to see her big guns, the *Toules* would not have much chance of escape, but it was quite possible that the sound of firing would bring up French cruisers to the scene, but Captain Cleveland was prepared for everything.

The schooner soon became clear to the view.

The *Edipus* was one of the fastest ships in the English service, and though the smaller vessel was crowding on all sail, the frigate steadily overhauled her.

"Sure and we shall have her now," cried Pat, nearly dancing in his excitement. "Whether she's the *Toules* or not, she's French, or she wouldn't be trying to scrape, and as she's a prize anyway."

"If we take her, she'll be," Dick asserted.

"Sure, and we shall take her."

"I hope so."

"There's no doubt about it," exclaimed Pat. "Can't you see that she's shut in by the coast of Corsica. Their only chance of getting away from us is to run aground, and if that do that we shall round them to pieces with our guns."

"They may have something else in mind."

"And what's that, ye goodman?"

"To run into some inlet where the water's too shallow for a vessel of our size, and where they'll be out of the reach of our guns."

"Aren't then it will be a cutting-out job."

"That's it."

"Well, I'm ready for one."

"So am I," said Dick. "I only hope they will let us go in the boats, that's all."

It looked as if Midshipman Dick's surmise was correct.

The French privateer was pinned in against the long rocky Corsican coast, and had no chance of escaping to the open sea.

With every sail set and drawing, she was speeding on directly towards the shore, which grew higher and closer to view every moment.

The privateer's intentions was evidently either to run ashore, or to seek the shelter of some inlet as yet invisible to the men of the *Edipus*.

If they could gain such a shelter, safe from the big guns of the *Edipus*, they could only be attacked in boats, and would have a good chance of holding their own.

Captain Cleveland realised as much, and he strained every nerve to overtake the fugitive.

"There is no doubt now that she is the *Toules*," declared Mr. Quill. "I have seen her before, and I know every line of her."

The captain nodded.

"I am not in doubt as to her identity," he remarked, "but as to catching her. How captain Peter Dexter, it said to be the best of running, and indeed he must be able to take care of himself, to have engaged our cruisers for so long."

"But we shall have him now."

"I am afraid it will prove a cutting-out affair, which is always costly in lives," the captain said, knitting his brows.

"We might try the how-chasers, sir."

"Good."

Mr. Quill called out an order to the forward gunners. The bow guns of the *Edipus* opened upon the schooner, which was now within easy range. But with both vessels in rapid motion aim was not easy to take, and the lead flew wild.

Mr. Quill ran forward, and sighted the gun himself, and again the boom rattled over the blue waters.

Then there was a cheer from the *Edipus*.

A big, ragged hole had been torn in the mainsail of the schooner.

"Good," cried the captain. "If you could hit one of her guns, she is sure."

"Boom!" went the bow gun again.

"Boom! boom!"

Another cheer!

The foremast of the schooner received the ball, which narrowly missed the mainmast, and it was seen to reel and stagger.

Then it came down with a crash, bringing a cloud of canvas with it.

"Hurrah! hurrah!"

The dying privates lay wet as ever.

But her men could be seen swarming into the rigging, and in a few minutes the topmast and the torn and wet rigging went away, and the schooner was flying on as before.

The work had been swiftly done, but the frigate had gained considerably, and now her gun boomed out again and again, and each shot went over the deck of the schooner, and the swaying mainmast had more than one narrow escape.

But now the coast was close at hand!

The schooner looked like a great white bird against the towering rocks of the coast.

Captain Cleveland's glance went anxiously to the water cutting past the sides of the frigate.

A leadman was ordered into the chains, and the frigate slowed down, reefs being taken in the sails.

Reefs were glimmering through the water here and there, and the sailing beams indicated where sunken rocks lay like heaps of prey in wait beneath the blue waves.

The slackening of speed by the frigate gave a new lease of life to the smaller vessel, speeding on far the rugged line of rocks.

The white sails of the schooner showed up against the rocks in the sunlight, and then suddenly disappeared.

Dick Redmond rubbed his eyes.

Where was the schooner?

For a moment he thought she must have struck a rock and sunk, with every sail set, and every hand aboard her.

But a moment more and he saw the truth.

In the rift of the coast opened a large fissure, in which the sails could be seen flying disordered, and into which the schooner had evidently vanished.

An arm of the sea, extended into the cliffs, and the schooner had sailed up the fissure, in sight one moment, and completely gone the next!

The pace of the frigate slackened still more.

"By the mark six!"

The call came from the leadman in the chains.

The *Edipor* rounded to.

It was not safe to follow further in the shallow water, and the rocks which sheltered the schooner were still half-a-mile distant.

The frigate's anchor went down, and found a hold, and the *Edipor* rode the waters, and every eye was turned upon the captain in expectation of the next order.

It was still in coming.

"Lower away the boats!"

A CUTTING-OUT EXPEDITION!

All was activity in a moment.

The captain rapped out orders sharply, and the men of the *Edipor*, eager for the fray, obeyed promptly.

The longest and two quarter-boats were lowered and manned, and the sails shaken out.

Each of the boats had a ramarole mounted in its bows, and the longest contained thirty men, the two cutters twenty each.

Dick Redmond managed to slip into the longest, and Mr. Quill, who was in command of that boat, allowed him to remain.

Garry, the second lieutenant, was in charge of the first cutter, and in that boat went Pat Malone.

The other cutter was commanded by Miles, the third lieutenant, and Dick's old enemy Crane was ordered into it.

The sails shaken out, the three boats quitted the frigate, followed by a cheer from the ship, to which the boats' crews replied with another.

Of the brave fellows who cheered so heartily, many were never to return, and they knew it.

They were going on a dangerous expedition, and one in which certain death was to be the portion of many.

But they never hesitated.

They had left old England to find their country's foe on the wide sea, and to fight them to the death, and they were ready for anything.

Steadily the three boats kept on through the shallows and reefs.

As they drew nearer to the fissure in the cliffs, it was seen to be a channel something like a dozen cables' length in width, circumscribed by high rocks.

The water washed the base of almost perpendicular cliffs, and after the first turn of the channel, they came in sight of the schooner.

The *Proton* was at anchor, on the further side of the rocky channel, right under a high cliff, which towered thirty feet above her masts.

Thus only one side was prepared for attack, and that side had been elaborately prepared for defence.

Everything that could aid the ascent of boarders had been removed, and boarding-nettings had been fastened down, while several of the guns from the opposite side had been dragged over to command the channel on the side where attack would come.

Dangerous indeed looked the moored schooner to the English boats come round the turn of the rocky channel and sighted her.

Mr. Quill took in her position at a glance.

A yell of defiance and derision greeted him from the French privates, of which he took not the slightest notice.

"Mr. Garry, you will pull to the stern of the schooner, and attack there," he said. "You will attack the bows, Mr. Miles. My men, pull for her amidships. Forwards!"

The first lieutenant's orders were at once obeyed.

The sails were lowered in a twinkling, and a few strokes of the oars brought the boats right on to the schooner.

A deadly fire greeted them.

The heavy guns, to a large extent, wasted their fire, as they were not sufficiently depressed to allow for the speed of the boats, but the masonry from the schooner's deck was more accurate.

Men fell to right and left in the exposed boats.

But in a few moments the bows were grinding against the sides of the schooner, and the boarders were springing to the attack.

Right at the bow went the English seamen like blood-hounds.

Crack! crack! crack! crack!

From the French deck volleys of masonry rent the air with noise, and the din was added to by the yells of the privates as they cut and thrust at the boarders, through the nettings.

Difficult as their task was, the *Edipor's* men did not allow themselves to think for a moment of failure, but went at it as if they were certain of success.

But not till they were fairly launched upon it could they see how extremely difficult a task they had set themselves.

The defence had every advantage, and the assailants had to contend against odds of numbers, weapons, and position.

Gallant fellows, swarming up the side of the schooner, were met by bullet, slash, or thrust, and went groaning down again.

They dashed at the boarded-nettings with their cutlasses, but at the same time the defenders cut and thrust at them with sword and pike, with fearful effect.

Five dead men, and as many wounded, lay in the longest when the first lieutenant's party succeeded in gaining a footing on the deck of the *Proton*.

There the French crew rushed to meet them with savage shouts.

Less than a score of Englishmen sustained the onslaught of fifty Frenchmen and Spaniards, the crew of the privateer being very mixed.

Meanwhile, the second lieutenant's venture at the stern had met with worse luck.

All attempts to gain a footing were repulsed, and finally a pig of lead was hurled into the boat from the taffrail, mowing in the planks at once.

The boat went down like a stone, and the men in it were left swimming.

The attack in the stern being thus ended, the defenders were left free to reinforce the men opposing the first lieutenant in the waist.

At the bows, Miles and his men were in vain endeavouring

to gain a footing. The third lieutenant had lost half his men, and still could not get aboard. And presently a shot from a topside struck him in the chest, and he fell back dead into the boat, and then the latter drifted away from the schooner's side, defeated.

A yell of defiance followed it.

Only in the waist of the schooner the attack persisted. But with the whole force of the schooner's crew to resist it, it relaxed, and the first lieutenant and his men were driven to the side.

There they made a gallant effort to hold their own.

But the odds were too great.

Many had fallen, many were suffering from mortal wounds. Mr. Quill himself was staggering with a pile wound in his side. Back they went, and were hurled into the longboat. Dick Redmond, who was clinging to the chains, dropped into the sea just in time to escape a suicidal thrust from a boarding-pike, which would certainly have otherwise finished his career for him.

He splashed into the water, and clambered into the boat again. He found it full of wounded and defeated comrades.

Mr. Quill sank down in the stern-sheets, white as death, and gasped out an order.

Slowly and solemnly the two boats drew off.

The privateers hurled yells and execrations after them, and the musketry recommenced the tone of death.

But the two boats quickly passed the turn of the channel, and were safe from the rangeling fire.

There, in security, they passed, while the deamen scouted their boats.

Of the seventy men who had passed up the Channel a quarter of an hour before, twenty were gone, and as many more lay dead or grievously wounded.

The rest were in a savage humour, while willing to turn back and try conclusions again with the Frenchmen if Mr. Quill had given the word.

But the first lieutenant had no idea of doing anything of the kind.

The attempt was too hopeless, and too many lives had been thrown away already.

Dick looked round with dismay.

Crane, who had clambered into the longboat when his own was sunk, lay soaked and growling, but Pat Malone's eyes met Dick's cheerfully from the other outlier.

The first lieutenant stifled a groan.

Dick, the only other officer in the boat beside Crane, knelt beside him.

"What are the orders, sir?"

"We have failed," said the first lieutenant, painfully.

"Back to the *Edgipe*, Redmond."

"May I make a suggestion, sir?"

Mr. Quill ground.

"Certainly. Have you any idea for retrieving this disaster?"

It was plain that the first lieutenant was deeply disturbed by the thought of returning to the frigate with only wounds and death to show for his expedition.

"Yes, sir," said Dick, eagerly.

"What is it, Redmond?"

"You observed where the schooner was moored, sir?"

"Yes, where we could hardly get at her, being there."

"Just under a perpendicular cliff, sir," said Dick. "It occurred to me, sir, that if we landed a party, we could pepper them from the top of the cliff, and so give the boarders a chance."

Mr. Quill started.

"By Jupiter, Redmond, you put an old hands to shame," he exclaimed. "It is a good idea."

Dick flushed with pleasure.

Mr. Quill was not given to commending except where commendation was deserved, and praise from him was justice indeed.

"It shall be tried, at all events," exclaimed Mr. Quill.

"Mr. Garry!"

"Aye, aye, sir."

"You will take your men ashore, locate the cliff under which the schooner is anchored, and fire upon them from above."

"Aye, aye, sir."

"The Midshipman Redford with you."

Dick stripped into the cutter.

The latter pulled to the side of the channel, and moored

there. The men, such as were able to move, landed with the second lieutenant, and Dick followed.

Mr. Quill raised himself upon his elbow.

"My lads," he said, "are you willing to have another try, before going back to the *Edgipe* and confessing that we have been thrashed?"

"Aye, aye, sir."

It was a shout from every throat, in which many of the wounded joined.

The first lieutenant's eyes sparkled.

"Bravo, my lads! We have a good chance this time. Remove the wounded into the cutter, and pull up the Channel again."

The wounded were placed in the cutter.

Then the longboat swung round in the Channel, and waited for the signal from the cliffs before advancing once more to the attack.

There were still a score of brave British seamen in her, ready for any desperate attempt to retrieve their first failure.

"Crack! crack! crack!"

It was a yell of firing from the cliff.

The first lieutenant's eyes flashed.

"Forward!"

And the long boat moved on swiftly to the attack.

THE CAREERS OF THE PRIVATEERS!

Midshipman Dick had carefully noted the large cliff in the shadow of which the schooner lay moored, and he led the way to it as soon as he landed with the second lieutenant's party. Garry followed him in silence, a far from amiable expression upon his face.

It was not pleasing to him to see Dick Redmond taken as much notice of, and he was inclined to be sullen and captious.

"Here we are," exclaimed Dick, halting on the cliff-top.

"Here we are, lads."

George Garry assented.

"And how are you so mighty certain that this is the cliff?" he asked.

"I noted the shape of the brow of it, from the Channel," said Dick. "But I will soon see, anyway."

He dropped on his hands and knees and crawled to the edge of the shore cliff.

With keen nerve he looked over into the Channel.

He was right!

There below him, as directly below that he could have dropped a biscuit upon the deck, lay the anchored schooner.

He turned back his face towards the seaman.

"Here she is, just below."

"Very well," greeted Garry. "Get to work, my lads!"

The seamen were eager for the work, and were not long in finding spots where they could fire upon the schooner without peril of troubling boarding of the cliff.

Turn the cracking of the muskets sang out on the still air.

"Bravo!" yelled Dick. "Go it!"

"Hold your tongues, Redmond," snapped Garry.

"Shut it," exclaimed Dick, forgetting for the moment that the second lieutenant of the *Edgipe* was his superior officer.

"Shut it, Garry!"

Garry dashed with rage.

"I shall report you for insolence," he exclaimed.

"Report your grandfather," said Dick. "Go it, lads! Give it 'em hot!"

Hot indeed the seamen were giving it to the privateers.

From the high rocks they were able to load and fire as fast as they could without giving the Frenchmen a chance of replying.

There were only a dozen of them, but they were good marksmen, and had plenty of ammunition.

The bullets hailed down on the deck of the privateer.

The Frenchmen were taken absolutely by surprise at first.

They were crowded on their deck, attending to the wounded, and dropping the dead boarders into the inlet, when the fire from above rained down.

But they soon forgot everything but attending to their own safety.

As they dodged higher and thicker, gun after gun was struck down, till at last the crew scuttled below to escape the inevitable fire.

Dick was watching them from the cliff top.

He gave a shout when the schooner's deck was clear of living men.

"Come on, lad! Go it, Edgus!"

His shout did not reach anywhere near the long boat.

But the latter was coming on, nevertheless.

It swept on up the channel to the attack, and was seen by the privateers, and they came on deck again with a rush.

Then crack, came the fire from the cliffs, crack, crack, crack!

The privateers yelled with rage.

There was only one chance left, and with hasty hands they cut the schooner loose, and she drifted away from her anchorage.

But it was not easy to get out of range of the muskets above, and now, too, the English longboat was able to come up on her side that was unprotected by boarding-nettings, and more accessible to attack.

Twenty-five men lay dead or wounded on the deck of the schooner, struck down by the fire from the cliffs, and the rest were almost in a state of panic.

The British boat steamed alongside.

"Forward!" shouted Mr. Quill.

With a sniping hurrah the seveners sprang to the attack.

The privateers were too disorganised and reduced in number to offer an effective resistance.

They fought bravely at first, but the bullets from the cliffs were still bowling over men after men, and soon the resistance broke down, and the Frenchmen called for quarter.

Quarter was granted, and the privateers surrendered.

Lead and long came the hurrah of triumph from the British throngs. So loud was it, that the echo floated as far as the Edgus, telling anxious comrades there of a victory won by pluck in the face of odds!

The schooner was captured!

The victors soon secured their prisoners, and got the craft under way, and brought her out into the channel with the longest towing behind.

Then the party from the cliffs were taken aboard, and the prize brought out into the open sea to rejoin the Edgus.

Mr. Quill lay on the deck on a heap of hammocks, white and worn, but looking extremely satisfied with himself and things generally.

"I have to report Midshipman Redmond for insolence, sir," said George Garry, saluting.

Mr. Quill stared at him.

"You are aware, Garry, that Midshipman Redmond's suggestion was extremely valuable to us in the hour of need," he said.

"However——"

"I am sure Redmond did not mean to be insolent."

"Certainly not, sir!" exclaimed Dick.

"Three, you see, Garry! Pray don't make a mountain out of a molehill."

"Aye, aye, sir."

The second lieutenant gritted his teeth as he turned away.

The moment had certainly been ill-chosen for reporting the matter to whom, more than to anyone else, the capture of the schooner was due.

Pat tapped Dick on the arm and grinned.

"That's one for his nob," he whispered. "I say, Dick, alanna, Mr. Quill seems to love you very much just now. See if you can get him to send us with the prize crew on board the schooner to take her to Gibraltar. I'd like a cruise, to be jabber."

Dick's eyes sparkled at the thought.

"By Jove, I'm like that, too," he exclaimed.

The first lieutenant caught the words.

"What's that, Redmond! What did you say you would do?"

Dick coloured a little.

"Malone and I would like to be in the prize crew put on board the *Toulon*, sir," he replied.

The first lieutenant smiled.

"Well, you deserve something at my hands, Redmond, and Malone, too, has behaved gallantly to-day. I will speak to Captain Cleveland, and I have no doubt that he will allow you to have your wish."

"Oh, thank you, sir!" said both youngsters together.

THE PRIZE CREW!

The men of the Edgus cheered loudly as the schooner was brought alongside.

The privateer which had been a corsair to British shipping in the Mediterranean, was captured at last, and though the job had been heavy, the victory was a compensation for it.

The captured vessel came alongside, and the first lieutenant was carried aboard the frigate.

Captain Cleveland looked grave when he learned the extent of the British loss.

"But we had to expect to pay dear for capturing a cunning rascal like this Peter Danton," he remarked. "Is the privateer captain among the prisoners?"

"No, he is not," said Mr. Quill. "I presume that he was among the fallen. I saw him in the first attack, but in the second he does not appear to have made himself prominent." Among the dead and wounded the privateer captain was not to be found.

His appearance was well-known, a black-bearded, black-eyed seaman of Southern France. But his body was not there.

The prisoners were questioned, and it was elicited that Peter Danton had been shot in the first attack, and had been dropped into the channel with other slain members of the privateer's crew.

The prisoners were retained on board the frigate. Midshipman Dick and Pat Malone were standing by while the captain questioned the prisoners in French about their commander. There was something in the looks of the men as they answered that made Dick curious.

"I say, Pat," he whispered. "I believe they're lying, and Captain Danton is not dead at all." "Begorra, and I was thinking the same thing intirely, Dick."

"I suppose he has escaped ashore, and they're afraid we shall send after him and capture him," Dick observed. "Captain Cleveland would not be likely to take the trouble."

"Hardly."

"See how they're grinning near Captain Cleveland has turned his back! They've been telling his barefaced lies."

"You're right," Danton is alive, I expect. Still, I suppose we shall never see him again."

The prisoners having been removed, a prize crew was put on board the schooner.

It was necessary for the Edgus to keep straight on her voyage to join Nelson's fleet, and the prize crew were to take the captured schooner to Malta.

To their extreme satisfaction, Dick and Pat were assigned to the schooner, the first lieutenant having evidently mentioned their wish to the captain.

They carried their belongings on board the *Toulon*, twenty seamen being occupied in doing the same, that being the number of the prize crew.

But the satisfaction of the two merry middlemen was considerably dashed when they learned who was to take command of the schooner for the run to Malta.

Crane came over the side, followed by two seamen slinging his chest, and Dick looked at Pat with dismay.

"That brute!"

"I suppose he's coming too."

"Are you coming with us to Malta, Crane?" asked Dick. Crane grinned spitefully.

"Yes, I am, Redmond, and I shall be your superior officer on this cruise, and I'll thank you to address me with proper respect."

"But you're not in command."

"No, I'm not in command."

And Crane passed on.

"Hang it," said Dick, "I wonder who's in command, it's not a midshipman, as Crane is senior middy of the Edgus, and he would have the command if it were given to a middy."

"It would have been the third lieutenant, I expect," said Pat. "But he was killed by the French yards. As Mr. Quill is wounded, he can't come. I'm afraid it will be the second lieutenant, Dick."

Dick granted.

"That brute Garry!"

"I fear so."

"Then this cruise won't be so jolly as we expected," said Dick, sadly. "George Garry will make it hot for us, especially with Crane on board to back him up."

Pat smiled.

"We shall have to look out for squalls, begorra."

"It's no good complaining now, or asking to stay in the Edgus. We shall have to stand it," said Dick.

"That's so."

"Maybe they'll behave themselves. Anyway, we shan't put up with any nonsense," said Dick, determinedly.

"It would be a serious business resigning your commanding officer, Dick. He could have us put in irons if he liked."

Dick nodded a gloomy assent.

The outlook was not an attractive one.

But it was, as Dick said, too late to think of that. They were looked for the cruise, and they had to stand it. After all it was but a short distance to Malta, and in a couple of days, or less, it would be over.

The schooner's sails were set, and she parted from the frigate, the crew of the latter lining the side and sending a loud cheer after her.

The *Edgwa* disappeared under a cloud of smoke to the east.

George Garry stood on the deck of the schooner, watching the frigate till she was out of sight, and talking in a low tone to a mate.

Frequent glances they cast towards the two midships showed that Dick and Pat were the subject of their conversation.

The course of the schooner was set for Malta, but she was not put up at her fastest speed. Perhaps Garry was not anxious to reach port and deliver up his brief spell of authority.

"Redmond!"

He turned suddenly on Dick and rapped out his name sharply.

Dick asked:

"What do you mean by loazing about the deck like that?"

Dick dashed red.

The eyes of all the crew were upon him in a moment at Garry's bullying tone, and some of the women were groaning.

"I was not aware that I was loazing, sir," said Dick, quietly.

"Don't answer me!" rapped out the second lieutenant.

Dick was silent.

"I intend to keep discipline on board this vessel," said Garry. "How can you expect the men to be smart if you show them an example of slackness?"

"I was not doing anything of the kind."

"Do you dare contradict me, sir?"

"Aye, aye," said Dick.

Garry gritted his teeth.

"Go to the masthead, Redmond, and stay there till I call you down."

Dick stood motionless.

He was accustomed to being mastheaded on board the frigate, but to perch at the top of the little mast of the schooner was another matter.

He knew how ridiculous he would look, and he knew that it was George Garry's object to make him look ridiculous.

Garry aimed at him.

"Do you hear me, Redmond?"

"Aye, aye, sir."

"Then obey me at once, or I will have you clapped in irons, by George, sir!"

There was no help for it.

Under the King's flag the commanding officer was monarch of all he surveyed, and the navy regulations would uphold him in that or any other order that he chose to give.

Dick stepped slow to the mainmast of the schooner.

"Quicker than that, Redmond," rapped out Garry. "Are you going to take all the afternoon about it?"

Dick ascended the mast.

Pat Malone gave him a glance of sympathetic wrath.

He fully understood that Garry and Crane were putting their heads together to make the two comrades uncomfortable while the voyage of the schooner lasted.

"Malone!"

"Sir."

"Get to work. You did not come on board this schooner to idle about."

Pat's eyes blazed.

"What am I to do, sir?"

"Supersized the men scrubbing up that blood fegard, and help to get things shipshape. I'll have no idlers on board my craft."

"Aye, aye, sir."

"Keep a good look-out, and call me if there's a sail."

"Aye, aye, sir."

"Come below, Crane."

And the two worthies descended into the cabin of the schooner. Like most of the vessels of France, the privateer had a good supply of wine on board, and neither Garry nor Crane was of a temperate nature. They intended to signalize their release from restraint by a drinking-bout.

Pat, as he took charge of the deck, heard the popping of cork as the clinking of glasses through the open skylight of the cabin.

"The blaggards!" murmured the Irish midde, "that's all they care for, bellying us two, and guzzling. I wish Captain Cleveland could see them now."

He hailed the masthead.

"Masthead there!"

Dick Redmond looked down.

"Aye, aye."

"Report the first sail you see. Mind, any kind of a sail."

Dick grinned.

"Aye, aye."

And he kept his eyes well about the expanse of blue sunny waters. Ten minutes later there came a hail from the mast-head.

"Sail ho!"

"Aye, aye," shouted Pat, and he strode to the cabin skylight, and looked in:

"Sail ho, sir!"

Garry, who was lifting his glass, was so startled by the sudden shout that he let it fall, and the liquor splashed in the face of Crane.

The latter jumped to his feet.

"Look out!" he yelled. "What the dickens do you mean?"

"That Irish brute's fault," growled Garry. "He started me."

"Clumsy fool!" marked Crane, who had already taken more wine than was good for him. "Why can't you be more careful?"

Garry flamed with wrath.

"Take care how you address your superior officer," he shouted. "I'll have you clapped into irons for mutiny, by George!"

"Bah! Precious superior officer you are, Cousin George."

"I'll have you ironed, I'll—"

"Sail ho!" roared Pat through the skylight.

Garry, recalled to himself, scowled at his been companion and quitted the cabin, going on deck rather unsteadily.

"Where's the sail?" he growled.

Pat pointed it out, and Garry directed his glasses upon it. Then he gave a hoarl of anger.

"It's only a fishing boat."

"It carries a sail, sir," said Pat, gravely. "You ordered me to report every sail to you, sir."

"You know I did not mean you to disturb me when a fishing boat come in sight."

"How was I to know, sir?"

"Fool!"

"If I'm a fool I couldn't be expected to know, could I?"

"This is delibatic insulence!"

"I can only carry out your instructions, sir."

"Don't call me again unless there's something of consequence," snapped out Garry. "If you're not careful you'll be sent to join Redmond at the masthead."

"Aye, aye, sir," said Pat, cheerfully.

He would not have cared much, for that would have exonerated either Garry or Crane coming on deck to take command of the vessel.

"Don't eye, eye me!" roared Garry. "I've had enough of your sneer, Malone."

"Aye, aye, sir."

Garry stamped his foot.

"Go to the masthead."

"Aye, aye, sir."

"Go at once! By George, I'll have you flogged, sir, I'll—"

"Aye, aye, sir."

Pat skipped up the mast. The second lieutenant of the *Edgwa* went below.

"You can go on deck, Crane," he said.

"What for? We haven't finished this bottle."

"I've mastheaded those two midships."

"Better call one of 'em down again," said Crane, without moving.

"Go on deck," roared Garry, who was always quarrelsome in his cups. "Go on deck, or I'll have you put in irons."

Crane sulkily obeyed.

George Garry, growing to himself, sat down at the table again, and proceeded to finish the bottle. He found it so good that he finished another, and then another.

Then he rose, but to his surprise he found that the floor was rising unwise against him, and the table was spinning round him.

"Whatever matter?" he murmured. "I'm not drunk."

"I'm certainly not dr-d-d-runk. There's something the matter with the ship."

He grasped his way to the companion, and went on deck holding at every step with his hands. As his flushed and excited face engaged into view, there was more than one shudder visible on the deck of the schooner.

Garry caught the sounds, and he staggered on deck red with wrath. He was, as a matter of fact, almost helplessly intoxicated, and exceedingly quarrelsome. He held on to a stanchion, and surveyed the deck of the schooner with a savage glance.

GARRY CAUSES TROUBLE:

The schooner was gliding along through the sunny waters under easy sail, and the pipe crew were still busy on deck getting things shipshape. They ceased their work, however, and looked on with great curiosity as Mr. Garry stood holding on to the stanchion, and glaring about him as if in search of a victim upon whom to vent his drunken wrath.

"Crane!" shouted Garry.

"Aye, aye, sir."

"Put the schooner before the wind."

Crane hesitated.

The captured craft was beating up towards Malta, with the wind on her lee quarter, and if she were put directly before the wind, her course would take her far from the direction she should have followed to reach port.

"Do you hear me, Crane?"

"Aye, aye, sir."

"Then why don't you obey me, confound you?"

"Helmsman!" shouted Crane.

"Aye, aye, sir."

"Put her before the wind."

The helmsman obeyed. The schooner fell off from her course, and the seamen grinned and muttered to one another.

"Brace!" howled Mr. Garry. "What were you grinning at?"

The man nearest touched his cap.

"I, sir!"

"Yes, you! You were grinning."

"I didn't mean to, sir."

"I'll teach you not to grin at your superior officers. Go below, sir. Your grin is stopped to the end of the voyage."

"Aye, aye, sir."

And Brace went into the fore-cabin.

Garry cast his dirty eyes around him.

"Crane!"

"Aye, aye, sir."

"You have altered the ship's course."

"Your orders, sir."

"Don't answer me! Are we making Malta, or are we not?"

"No, sir."

"Then make Malta at once. How dare you change the course?"

"You ordered me to, sir."

"Insolence!" howled Mr. Garry. "Marine, arrest Midshipman Crane."

The marine hesitated.

The infuriated second lieutenant of the *Edipus* drew his sword.

"Marine! obey my order, or I will run you through the body."

The marine had no choice but to obey. He stepped towards Crane.

"What shall I do, sir?" he whispered. "I must arrest you."

Crane smiled sardoniously.

"Yes, I suppose so."

"He's drunk, sir."

"Don't make remarks about your superior officers, marine," snapped Crane.

The marine's eyes gleamed.

"What am I to do with him, sir?" he asked Mr. Garry.

"Take him below and confine him to his cabin. If he attempts to escape, shoot him dead," exclaimed Garry.

The marine grinned.

"Aye, aye, sir."

Crane was taken below and locked in his cabin.

The second lieutenant of the *Edipus* staggered along the deck. He cast his eyes upwards, and observed the two midshipmen, who were watching him with great interest.

"Midshipmen Redwood and Shaker, come down at once."

The midshipmen marched down.

"How dare you stalk at the mast-head!" demanded Garry, fiercely.

"You ordered us there, sir."

"Don't tell lies to me, Redwood. Down on your knees."

"What?"

"Down on your knees," shouted Garry, waving his sword.

"Down on your knees at once, or I will run you through the body."

He really looked as if he meant it.

Dick Redwood gave a glance at the flushed, savage face, and another at the glittering blade. But he made no movement to obey the order.

"Do you hear me?" roared Garry, shortening his sword to lunge at Dick.

"Yes, I hear you."

"Then obey me."

"You have no right to give such an order, and I will not obey it."

Dick Redwood spoke with perfect calmness. There was a suppressed anger from the seamen.

"Mutiny!" roared Garry. "Mutiny, by Jupiter! Die!"

He made a savage lunge at Dick's breast.

There was no doubt that Garry, with his brain muddled by liquor, believed himself to be dealing with a mortician, and that he meant to run Dick through the chest.

Dick knew his danger, but it did not scare him.

His sword was out in a moment, he parried the lunge, and the sword of the lieutenant was sent whirling and clanking along the deck.

Garry staggered back.

He was taken quite by surprise, and was blind with fury.

With a curse he rushed upon Dick with his open hands.

Dick dropped his dirk, and closed with him.

It was a struggle of a man against a boy, but the boy was sober and in good condition, and quite able to hold his own.

"Faith, I'm in this," cried Pat Malone, and he rushed to the aid of Dick.

"Better keep out of it, Pat," Dick muttered. "It may mean a court-martial for me when we get back to the *Edipus*."

"Then it will mean one for me, too," said his true-hearted Irish share.

And he seized Garry by the back of the collar, and jerked him off his feet.

The lieutenant went down with a crash.

Dick, who was firmly in his clutches, went down with him, falling on top of him, and Garry gave a gasping grunt.

"Mutiny!" he yelled. "Men, seize those midshipmen."

The seamen did not stir.

"Now, I order you to seize those midshipmen," screamed Garry.

Still there was no movement on the part of the seamen.

Dick pinned the lieutenant down to the deck.

"Mr. Garry," he said, "you have forced this on us. I had to resist you or be murdered by a drunken fool. The man will bear me out in that when we rejoin the *Edipus*."

"Aye, aye, sir," came a shout from the seamen.

"Thank you, my lads. Come a-shore this man below."

"I'm ready."

"I order you—"

"You shut up, Garry," said Pat. "It's no good your giving any orders here, ye spalpeen."

"I'll have you both hanged for mutiny."

"Ho, ho!"

"I'll have you shot."

"Bring him along."

The lieutenant struggled desperately.

But it was of no avail. In the grip of the two stalwart midshipmen he was dragged along to the companion, and huddled down the steps. In that awkward spot his frantic struggles served the soldiers to let go, but that was unlikely for the lieutenant, for he went down the stairs with a rush, and landed in a heap at the bottom, with a vengeance that pleased an ache in every separate bone in his body.

"Oh! Oh! Ow!"

The midshipmen came tumbling down after him. They gripped him again, and he was dragged into the nearest cabin, and Dick locked the door on him.

A loud hammering was heard at the door on the inside the next moment.

"Open this door!"

"Don't make that row!"

"I'll have you shot for mutiny!"

"Oh! shut up!"

"I'll have you hanged!"

"Back!"

"Open this door!"

No reply. The midshipman ran gone on deck again.

Garry hammered and kicked at the strong oak door till he was tired, and then, there being no help for it, he desisted. By this time, too, the liquor he had consumed was overpowering him, and ere long he sank on the floor of the cabin and went to sleep there.

"Fuss!" said Midshipman Dick, as he stood on the schooner's deck again. "Warm work."

"And may be warmer for us later."

Dick nodded.

"I don't know, though. When he's sober he may decide to say nothing about it. We have the men on our side as witnesses if he complains on board the *Edipus*."

"What about Crane? He's shut in one of the cabins, you know?"

"Arrah! He's got out."

HIDDEN FOES!

Pat Malone was right.

Crane had got out!

He had heard all that passed in the scene between the midshipman and the second lieutenant of the *Edipus*, and knew just how matters stood.

He guessed accurately enough that the comrades would not release him, and so he had taken the law into his own hands. A stool in the cabin had crashed the lock, and he had walked out of his confinement.

He came on deck scowling savagely.

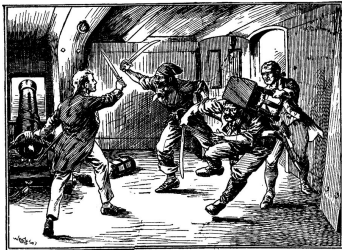
"Why did you not release me?" he exclaimed.

"Couldn't disobey orders, sir," said Dick, saluting.

Crane snapped his teeth.

"I'm in command of this ship," he said. "I'll teach you—"

"Only till your superior officer becomes sober," said Dick.



The heavy stool descended with fearful force upon a human skull.

Dick grinned.

"Let him remain there."

"Begorra, and I don't see why we should trouble our heads about him," said Pat. "He was shut up by order of his superior officer, and he can remain there till his superior officer becomes sober again."

"Ha, ha! That's the idea."

"And that won't be for a long time, I expect."

"Exactly. We are in command now. Helmsman, make in Malta again."

"Aye, aye, sir."

There was a crash below.

"Hallo! What on earth's that?"

"Sounded like something being crashed on a door—hallo!"

Pat Malone broke off as the savage face of Crane looked out of the companion way.

"That's enough for me. Hold your tongue, Redmond!"

"Certainly."

"You can go to the masthead and see a look-out, Redmond. You're no use on deck, and no servant either."

Dick hesitated.

The senior midshipman's manner was very hard to bear, but Crane was sober, and Dick had no excuse for disobeying his orders.

He ascended the mast slowly and reluctantly, Crane watching him with an ugly sneer.

Dusk was settling now over the Mediterranean, the schooner's lanterns were lighted. Dick disappeared in the dusk at the top of the mainmast.

"I leave you in charge of the deck, Malone," said Crane. "Call me if I am wanted."

"What's that, Malone?"

"Nothing, sir."

"You were muttering something."

"Was I, sir?"

"Yes, you were," sneered Crane. "It was some nonsense."

"Shall I go to the main-deck, sir?" asked Pat, in a silky voice.

Crane scowled and turned away. He was getting hungry, and he wanted to look for something to eat, not to remain on deck. So he let the Irish lad's remark pass unanswered.

He went below.

A sound of heavy snoring came from the cabin in which Lieutenant Garry had been lodged by Middlemissen Dick.

Crane grinned. He was not in the least inclined to release his victim. The responsibility of shutting him up rested upon the shoulders of the two midshipmen. The advantage of it fell to Crane. He was in command now, and would remain so till the lieutenant was released.

He went into the lazaretto to look for provisions. He carried a light, which he flashed round the little room.

"Hallo! I wonder if there's anything down there," he muttered.

His eye had fallen upon a circular trap in the floor of the lazaretto, evidently giving entrance into the hold of the schooner.

It was quite probable that some of the cabin supplies were kept there, space above being extremely limited, and Crane determined to satisfy himself.

He knelt down and pulled at the ring in the trap.

It did not budge.

"Hallo! what's the matter with that?" muttered the midshipman.

He set the lantern down on the floor, and took a grip on the trap with both hands, and pulled with all his strength.

The next moment he was rolling over on his back.

The trap had come up without the slightest resistance.

Crane gave a sharp cry of startled amazement. He was surprised as much as he was hurt. The trap had come up so easily at the second pull that he could not imagine what had held it fast down in the first effort.

But for the impossibility of Dick or Pat being in the hold, he would have suspected some trick of the two angry midshipmen. He took the lantern in his hand and flashed the light into the dark opening below.

A flight of wooden steps dimly revealed themselves.

Crane stepped into the opening, and descended. The hold was extremely dark, and he could hear the sounds of rats scurrying away in the gloom.

His narrative had been correct; part of the after-hold had been used as a store room, and there were plain traces of the stores having been recently used.

Crane looked about him.

Upon a small stamped table a knife lay beside a smoked ham, and it looked as if it had been left in the very act of being cut. Close at hand was a candle, and to the midshipman's amazement he saw that a slight curl of smoke still rose from the extinguished Dick.

He gave a violent start.

Someone was in the hold!

Someone had been there, cutting the ham by candle-light, and had had the trap door from the lazaretto so that he could not open it and surprise the unseen party there.

Who was it?

The hatches were fastened down, and none of the prize crew could be in the hold.

Crane felt a spasm of fear at his heart.

The hold of the schooner had not been searched by the victors, that being left till the prize should arrive at Malta.

Was it possible that some Frenchman, seeking to escape or postpone capture, had hidden himself in the depths of the ship, and was lurking there in the darkness now?

Crane cast a wild, hurried glance round him.

He stepped back quietly towards the lazaretto ladder.

But if he was being watched from the darkness, his look and motions convinced the watchers that he suspected all.

His foot was on the first step when there was a sudden sound behind him.

Fear lent the midshipman speed.

He sprang wildly to the ladder, desperately, frantically, a gasp of terror upon his whitening lips.

He was half-through the lazaretto hatch when a grip was placed upon his ankle from below.

He struggled frantically, but before even a cry for help could leave his lips, he was plucked back into the room below the lazaretto.

He fell in a heap, and the lantern crashed on the floor and went out.

The broad edge of a knife pressed against Crane's throat.

"Fairez-vous!"

The words in French were hissed in his ear.

It was a command for silence that could not be disobeyed. Crane gasped, and made no other sound. He was dumb with fear.

"Close the hatch there," Debrand," said the same voice, still in French.

There was a click as the trap leading up to the lazaretto was closed. Then a light glimmered out. Crane's terrified eyes made out the forms of three heavily bearded Frenchmen. It was the lieutenant of the three that held him in an iron grip.

"Who—who are you?" gasped Crane.

His center smiled grimly.

"I am Peter Dantes, the captain of this ship."

And Crane trembled.

He was in the grasp of the privateer captain!

THE PLANS OF DANTE!

The French captain held the midshipman fast, and the keen edge of the knife was still at his throat. It required but a jerk of the hand to send Crane into stony, and his knee it, and shaped his course accordingly. He knew how light a value these privateering ruffians attached to human life.

The three Frenchmen looked at Crane and then at each other. It was evident enough to them that he was not of the stuff of which heroes are made.

Dantes compressed his grip a little.

"Who are you?" he asked, speaking in very good English.

"Senior officer on board this prize," replied Crane.

"Speak lower."

"Yes, yes."

"You are in command here?"

"At present, yes."

"How many men have you?"

"Twenty."

"Where are they?"

"On deck."

"Where is the schooner making for?"

"Malta."

"Under full sail."

"Under easy sail."

Crane answered every question without hesitation. The edge of the Frenchman's knife to his throat prevented him from even thinking of deception.

There was a pause of silence.

"I will be frank with you, monsieur," said Dantes, at last.

"I am the captain of this ship, and I was determined not to lose her. When capture was inevitable, I concealed myself here in the hold, with six companions. If we had been discovered we should have been no worse off, but—perhaps—we were not discovered."

"We never suspected—"

Dantes chuckled.

"I suppose not. Else you would never have walked blindly into our hands like this. Mind, you, monsieur I am going to retake this ship, or die in the attempt."

"It is impossible."

"Why impossible?" demanded Dantes, fiercely.

"There are twenty English seamen on board, besides—"

"And only seven of us, all told."

"Yes. You see that it is impossible, I advise you—"

"Well, what do you advise, monsieur?" asked the Frenchman, ironically.

"Surrender to me, and I—"

"No, no, no!"

"It is your best course," said Crane, more boldly. "You cannot keep me a prisoner. If you murder me my comrades will not spare one of you when you are captured."

"We shall never be captured, monsieur."

"You will be if you attempt to take the ship. Twenty men—"

"May be conquered by seven with a little strategy," said the Frenchman, interrupting him. "You are in our hands to commence with. It would be easy to stretch you dead at our feet—"

Crane shuddered.

"If you give me quarter you will receive none," he stammered.

"Alas! I know that, and for that reason, and others, I

spare your life. You are my prisoner, and bound and gagged in the hold you will be as harmless as if I had driven a knife to your heart, incoherent."

"But—"

"Enough. Have you arranged your crew into watches?"

"Yes."

"How many will be on deck in, say, an hour?"

"Only one watch, ten men and a midshipman."

"Was I thought so?"

The French captain turned to his companions. Four more men had come out of the shadows of the gloomy hold. Their eyes were glittering in the glimmering light of the candle. They were armed to the teeth. Each man carried a cutlass, a knife, and three or four pistols. It was evident that Captain Dante had laid his plans carefully for the recapture of the schooner. The men were picked men, cool and determined, and armed for desperate work.

"You hear me, *mes enfants*," murmured Capitaine Dante.

"There will be ten men and a boy on the deck of the schooner."

"And we are seven," said Bertrand.

"More than enough, taking them by surprise as we shall do."

"True, *mon capitaine*."

"We shall rush forth suddenly, and while the rest of us are engaging the English, Bertrand you will dash forward to the fore-castle and fasten in the watch below."

"Easily done."

"Then the ship is ours. We can keep the fore-castle closed until we arrive at a French port. Comrades, it needs only courage."

Captain Dante spoke in French, but Crane understood him well enough.

It was a plan for recapturing the schooner which seemed destined to succeed. The English were so utterly unprepared for anything of the kind, that it was pretty certain that the risk of the desperate would overcome the watch on deck.

Crane knew what he ought to do. To give his own cry to warn his men, was the knife of the Frenchman stretched him dead.

That was his duty.

But Hank and blood could not be blamed for hesitating. And he did not have long even for hesitation. Two of the Frenchmen gripped him, and he was gagged and bound hand and foot in a twinkling.

Crane did not attempt to resist. That was useless with the odds against him, and the loose blade was still very near his throat.

Bound, helpless, silent, he was tossed away into the darkness of the hold, to lie there while the prisoners carried out their desperate plan.

Desperate it was, for it was quite possible that the English might come to look for their officer, and if the Frenchmen were discovered too soon, they might be penned up in the hold and kept prisoners there without difficulty.

Captain Dante raised the trap of the lanterne about an inch.

With his ear to the opening, he listened keenly.

There was no sound from the cabin. Nothing upwards was suspected as yet. The caddy was dark. Through a porthole he caught a glimpse of starlight on the sea.

"Come!" murmured Dante. "At least, if we are discovered let it be where we can make a fight. But I think we are secure."

It had been the French captain's intention to wait till the sound of eight bells told the hour of midnight, before making his attempt.

The intrusion of Crane into the hold had precipitated his plans.

It was impossible to wait so long now, for long ere eight bells the British seaman were certain to miss their officer and search for him.

The Frenchmen stole one by one up the ladder into the fore-castle.

There they waited, in the darkness, sword and pistol in hand, for a word from their leader.

"Hut!"

It was a whisper from Captain Dante.

"Someone comes! Silence!"

In silence, with fiercely beating hearts, the hidden prisoners listened to the sound of footsteps on the companion ladder.

THE RECAPTURE OF THE SCHOONER.

Little dreaming of what was passing below, Pat Malone

stood on deck, watching the sea and the stars as the schooner fled through the dusky night.

He was getting extremely hungry, but he did not care to go below without permission from Crane, and Crane showed no sign of returning to the deck.

The seaman led their notions forward, and half of them had not gone to their quarters.

The prize crew had been divided into two watches, and the starboard watch remained on deck with the Irish midshipman under the stars.

Midshipman Dick was still at the masthead.

Pat went to the companion way several times and looked down, and at last he made up his mind that if Crane did not come on deck, he would go below and speak to him.

"I say, Dick, honey," he called out.

"Aye, aye!" answered Dick Robinson, from the masthead.

"Aren't ye hungry, ailsure?"

"No."

"Well ye ought to be, I am."

Dick Robinson laughed.

"I had some biscuits in my pocket, and I've had a feed up here," he replied.

"Oh, I see. Well, I'm in a state of famine, and I'm going to get something to eat. Crane seems to have gone to sleep below; I can't hear him moving. But sure I'm not going to perish of hunger to please him or anybody else."

"I should say not."

"I'm going down for some vittles."

And Pat descended the companion ladder.

All was dark below.

Neither in the cabin nor in the caddy was there a gleam of light.

Pat was puzzled.

It seemed strange that Crane should have gone to sleep and left himself in the darkness, yet, that was the only explanation he could think of.

He stood on the lowest step of the companion and called out.

"Crane?"

There was no reply.

"Crane! Sure and its high toime ye relieved me watch, my boy," exclaimed Pat. "Its as hungry as a hunter I am."

Still dead silence.

Pat gaped his way into the caddy with outstretched hands. His fingers came into contact with a moving form.

"Hallo, Crane—arrah this! What are ye at?"

He gazed out the words as he was seized by the throat and borne to the floor.

His first thought was that Crane had become violently intoxicated and attacked him there in the darkness.

But the next moment he knew his mistake.

The edge of a knife was placed against his throat, and a voice with a strong French accent hissed: "Silence!"

Pat Malone was utterly astounded.

He was in the grip of a Frenchman, and he had not believed that there was one on board the schooner.

He was made of sterner stuff than Crane, however, and he would have called out to the man on deck, in spite of the knife, had he had a chance.

But he had not.

While one hand held the keen edge to his throat, the other compressed his windpipe hard, and he could utter no sound save a faint gasp.

"Have you him safe, Bertrand?"

"Yes, my captain."

"Good. Bind him fast, men, and gag him. Not a sound." Many strong hands laid hold of Pat Malone, and in a few minutes he was bound hand and foot, and a gag was thrust into his mouth and fastened there.

He writhed with rage and dismay.

Where were Frenchmen on board the schooner, and he had fallen a helpless prisoner into their hands? Doubtless Crane had done the same. What was to be the fate of the captured *Zeolus*?

"He is safe," muttered Captain Dante, with satisfaction.

"Fling him into the hold beside the other one. Do not hurt him."

Pat was gripped and carried to the lanterne hatch.

There he was slid down the ladder into the lower store-room, and dropped on the floor. He heard a faint groan beside him, and knew that he was close to Crane.

The hatch was closed above.

Once more the gang of desperate prisoners gathered in the caddy.

"That is their officer," said Captain Dantes. "He came out to speak to the one who is already in our hands."

"Ah! so!" said Bertrand, "the task will be easier than we thought for. The watch on deck are without a leader now."

"True."

"Let us attack them, captain."

"Follow me."

Captain Dantes led the way up the companion ladder. He put his hand out cautiously and surveyed the deck. In the dim starlight he could see the watch, and he could see that they had not the slightest suspicion that anything untoward had taken place off.

"He grined with satisfaction.

His desperate task seemed to be favoured by fate.

He turned his head to whisper to his men.

"Remember, Bertrand and Laroche, make for the fore-castle and close in the watch below, while the rest of us are attacking the watch on deck."

"Yes, captain."

"The rest of you follow me."

"Lead on."

"Cut them down without mercy, unless they cry for quarter. We must not risk failure for a little bloodshed."

The privateers chuckled grimly at the idea. They were not likely to run risks for the sake of saving bloodshed—the blood of their enemies! It was not their way!

Captain Dantes sprang on deck.

"Forward!" he cried.

The Frenchmen scrambled rapidly after him.

The watch on deck started up in amazement at the sight of them.

But the surprise was sudden and complete.

Before the English seamen could grasp their weapons, the Frenchmen were upon them with cutting and thrusting steel.

Bertrand and Laroche dashed along the deck, avoiding the watch, and in a few seconds reached the fore-castle scuttle.

To raise it and secure it was the work of a minute or two.

Then they faced round, sword in hand, to join in the fray. There were ten English on deck, and only seven Frenchmen in all. But the surprise was so utter that the prize crew had not the ghost of a chance.

Six of them were mercilessly cut down before they fairly had weapons in hand, and the other four found themselves the butt of the attack of five desperate ruffians, joined the next minute by Bertrand and Laroche.

They fought gallantly, but their resistance lasted less than half-a-minute.

Captain Dantes had a pistol in each hand, and two shots laid two of the English seamen dead on the deck.

The other two were overwhelmed by a savage rush, and went down under a shower of fierce blows.

The whole affair had only lasted seconds.

Midshipman Dick, on the main-head, heard the scuffling and clattering of steel, and strained his eyes below to see what was going on.

That Frenchman could possibly be on board the schooner did not enter his mind.

But the reports of Dantes's pistols, and the terrible cries of the falling seamen, warned him that something terribly serious was the matter, and he commenced to sling himself down the rigging.

That Garry had broken out of the cabin, drunk himself to a furious state, and "run amuck" on deck, was his natural thought.

But as he reached the deck he heard a sound that petrified him.

It was a ringing yell of triumph; such a yell as could only come from the throat of excited Frenchmen!

The French!

The schooner had been recaptured!

Lead came the voice of Captain Dantes.

"The ship is ours!"

Midshipman Dick stopped his descent. He was ten feet up the rigging; the French had triumphed. It was useless to descend and throw himself into the hands of the enemy.

He clung to the mainmast, his heart beating wildly.

The deck was in the possession of Frenchmen; and even yet he could not divine how they had come on board the Yankee.

But certainly they were on board; and the midshipman's

position was one of extreme peril. At present they did not know that he was on the mast, but they might make the discovery at any moment. And then?

Where were Evans and Pat Malone? Was Pat Malone slain? Dick felt a moisture in his eyes at the thought. Brave, cheery Pat, was he no more?

Then a gleam of rage and resolve shone in the young middy's eyes.

He, at all events, was living yet, and free, and he would not be captured alive!

He had his dirk and a pair of pistols, and in his present position the French would find it hard to get at him, and bullets would not be of much use against him so long as darkness lasted.

There was a sound of furious hammering on the deck. He heard a laugh from the Frenchmen. Captain Dantes strode towards the fore-castle.

The imprisoned seamen had been awakened by the commotion, and they were hammering excitedly on the scuttle from within.

"Hallo there!" called out the privateer captain in English.

"Hallo there, my good friends. Cease that noise."

"Let us out!"

"Not until a couple of days, I am afraid, my excellent friend."

"Who are you?"

"I am Peter Dantes, captain of this ship."

Midshipman Dick heard the words, and he gave a gasp of amazement. Amusement, too, seized in the fore-castle. It was a moment or two ere the voice of Evans was heard again.

"Where did you come from?"

"From the hold."

"The hold?"

"Yes, my dear fellow."

"Have you been hidden there all the time?"

"Yes."

"You hangard, treacherous frog-eater."

Captain Dantes gave a roar of laughter.

"Anything else you wish to ask, my good friend?"

"Open the scuttle."

"I am afraid that I cannot at present comply with your reasonable request, my good friend. I regret it very sincerely."

"Open the scuttle."

"Ha, ha! Adieu!"

Crash, crash, crash!

The exasperated seamen within were raising blows on the scuttle.

Strong as the wood was, it groaned and strained under the attack.

"Listen to me," called out Captain Dantes. "You are to cease attacking the scuttle."

"We won't froggy."

"If the door shows the slightest sign of giving way, I shall train the heaviest gun I have upon it, and blow it and you to fragments!" cried Dantes, menacingly.

The hammering ceased.

Captain Dantes laughed mockingly.

"You had better keep calm, my friends. You are in our hands."

"You hangard Frenchman!"

"Ha, ha!"

Captain Dantes walked away from the scuttle. He was satisfied that his threat would have its due effect, and he was safe.

The imprisoned seamen gave a knock or two in anger on the scuttle, but there was no further attempt to force a way through.

Captain Dantes joined his comrades.

His dark, swarthy face was glowing with triumphant satisfaction.

"The ship is ours," he said, "and without the loss of a man. Throw those bodies into the sea, and change the course for France."

The dead seamen were soon hurled overboard.

Dick Redmond heard the dull "splash, splash," the skin jackets were dropped over the side, and the castles would not a shill to his heart.

How soon it might be his fate to be dropped lifeless into the glimmering, starlit waters!

Splash! splash!

The last dead body was gone, floating away dimly in the glimmer. Then the Frenchmen brood the mainmast and the

boom, and the helmsman steered the course for the north-west for the coast of France.

Dick Redmond had carefully counted the splashes in the sea. There were two of them, and ten only. Ten men had been slain in that brief but terrible conflict.

Besides the watch below, and the drunken lieutenant in his cabin, there must be two others living. Undoubtedly Crane and Malone, captured below. That they were living seemed certain, for had they been slain, there was no reason why their bodies should not have floated the coast.

Dick's brain was working quickly. If only the English still on board could be freed, they greatly outnumbered the French. He could make out in the dim starlight, as he strained his eyes below, that there were but seven of the prisoners.

If he could have slipped down to the deck and opened the fore-castle. With ten brave blue-jackets at his back, how gladly he would have attacked the prisoners!

But it was not to be!

There was a sound of hammering on the deck again, from the scuttle, but it came from without, not from within. Dick strained his eyes to see. The prisoners, evidently determined to run no risks of their prisoners breaking out in an unguarded moment, were nailing planks across the scuttle. Dick gritted his teeth.

That idea was knocked on the head. What could he devise now? There was a sudden shout from the deck in French. He heard Captain Dantes's voice inquiring the cause in the same language. A man was standing near one of the boats, and pointing up to the main-top.

Dick felt a shiver for a moment!

He had been seen!

Captain Dantes entered an exclamation of amazement. He threw back his head and stared up at the main-top, and caught some faint glimpse of the midship there.

"Aho!" he shouted. "Who is that?"

Dick drew his dirk.

"An English midshipman," he called back, "and one who will never be taken alive!"

The prisoner captain laughed hoarsely.

IN THE SHADOW OF DEATH—SCOTTISH SAVINGS AND SWEET!
The Frenchman gathered round the captain, all of them staring up towards the main-top, where the figure of the boy could be seen dimly. All but the helmsman came quickly at the alarm, cutlasses or pistol in hand. Their task was not finished yet!

The prisoner captain did not take the matter very seriously. He had only a powerful midshipman to deal with, and he did not know Midshipman Dick yet!

"Curses!" he called out. "We will spare your life if you come down at once and surrender."

"Kewer!"

"Feed! What can you do if you remain there?"

Dick had an idea in his mind that there was a chance yet of recapturing the ship, but he did not intend to tell the Frenchman so.

"I can sell my life dearly," he said.

"Ha, ha! You will make a mouthful for us."

"You will find it a mouthful hard to digest, I think."

"Bah! enough of this. Are you coming down?"

"No."

"Then I will bring you down with a bullet."

"I have pistols too."

The captain raised a long pistol.

"Will you come down?"

"Heave."

"Then die."

Crack!

Dick Redmond fastened himself against the mast, and the bullet did not come within a foot of him. The next moment he fell in return.

Crack!

The Frenchmen were a good deal more visible in the starlight than Dick was.

There was a groan and a heavy fall following the shot.

One of the prisoners was stretched on the deck.

A yell of rage burst from the others, and a general run was made to grab the mast and get to close quarters with the sedulous midship.

Dick Redmond set his teeth and waited.

Four Frenchmen came swarming up the weather shrouds, with fury in their eyes. One of them came alight upon the lee side.

Dick waited till they were closer, and then fired his second pistol.

The bullet struck one of the prisoners full in the breast and with a groan he relaxed his hold upon the rigging, and slid downwards.

The schooner gave a slight roll at the same time, and the prisoner, missing the deck, plunged into the sea with a splash.

The other three on the weather side hesitated a moment. But the man on the lee shrouds, who happened to be Captain Dantes, came on bravely.

Dick took careful aim, and hurled his heavy pistol at the Frenchman's head.

It struck Dantes on the forehead, and he gave a sharp cry, and almost lost his hold.

Half-stunned, he clung blindly to the rigging, swinging away in imminent peril every moment of being dashed down to the deck.

It was more by instinct than anything else that he preserved his hold, clinging convulsively to the railings.

"Come on," said Midshipman Dick. "Why don't you come?"

The three Frenchmen on the weather side were still hesitating.

Had Dick any ammunition he might have rebounded his pistol and poked them off with ease, but unfortunately he had none. They realized it, as he did not fire, and after a few minutes they came savagely on again.

Dick took careful aim, as before, and hurled his second pistol full at the head of Bertrand. The Frenchman saw it coming, and dodged it desperately, but in doing so he lost his hold. He slipped from the rigging and went whirling downwards, to fall with a fearful crash on the deck of the schooner. One fearful cry; and then he never moved or spoke again!

That terrible crash had broken nearly every bone in his body, and he lay lifeless in the pale starlight.

Dick had his dirk in hand now.

The glimpse of the clear start intimidated the prisoners, whose nerves were already shaken by the terrible fate of Bertrand.

They turned and slowly descended to the deck.

Then Captain Dantes joined them.

The prisoner captain's face and head were fearfully bruised, and he was reeling furiously in French.

Dick Redmond drew a deep breath.

He was safe for the moment.

But unless he could hold his own, he had no navy to expert now. If the Frenchman gained the upper hand of him, he had only instant death to look for.

Three of the prisoners had fallen in the attack.

Captain Dantes's crew was reduced to four now, including himself, a small enough crew for a vessel the size of the *Toucan*.

The captain was mad with rage.

The debutant at the hands of a boy, the loss of three men, and the injury to himself, combined to throw him into an un-governable fury.

"Take your muskets!" he said, in a hoarse voice. "Keep on firing till you bring me down! You must hit him in the leg too."

The prisoners obeyed.

One of them mounted the fore-castle, and the others went aft, and from different directions they opened fire upon Dick Redmond with their muskets.

Captain Dantes went to the wheel, and relieved the helmsman, and the latter took a musket and joined in the firing.

Midshipman Dick found his position a terrible one.

He crouched low in the top, close against the mast, but several of the balls went very close, and once his shoulder was grazed, and again his ear, and then a lock of hair was cut away from his temple.

He cast a desperate glance down to the deck.

The companion way was open, and with Dantes at the helm, and the other three prisoners scattered to fire at him in different points, it was quite possible, by a rapid descent, to make a dash below.

Lieutenant Quary was still in the cabin, and there were two prisoners below, also. With these three might be a chance of turning the tables.

Two of the Frenchmen were on the fore-castle firing, and certainly those two could not stop him. Dantes could not leave the wheel. If he made a rush, there was only one man to be immediately reckoned with. It was Larocq, who was near the helm, loading and firing with tireless persistence.

To stay where he was was to court death; he could not see worse on deck! The brave lad's mind was made up. He snatched his dirk, and swung himself to the rigging.

The movement was quite unperceived by the privateers. Larocbe caught sight of him swinging down the rigging, and thought that he had been hit and had fallen. He gave a yell of glee.

"He is down!" he shouted, in French.

And he did not trouble to reload his musket; which cost him dear ere long. Dick was on the deck in a twinkling, and he ran for the companion. It dived upon Larocbe then that he was not wounded, and he darted forward, loading his musket as he went. Dick Redmond saw that he would not get past, and he changed his direction, and dashed straight at Larocbe.

The Frenchman thrust forward the musket in a desperate attempt to parry, but the blow was too rapid!

Right into his heavy breast went the flashing dirk, and the burly Frenchman yelled screaming on the deck at the midshipman's feet.

Without a second glance at him, Redmond dashed on to the companion.

He plunged into it, and tore down the ladder.

Larocbe made no attempt to rise, but sank back again with a heavy groan. A shudder ran through his limbs, and he expired.

Darwin gave a yell of rage.

"Pierre! Escort!"

The two men with the muskets came running from the fore-castle. Darwin dared not leave the helm, for the schooner was under full sail, and the wind was freshening.

"Find him! Kill him!" he yelled.

The privateers gave an answering yell.

They knew nothing of the presence of Lieutenant Garry in the cabin, the drunken men having as yet made neither sound nor movement, and the privateers having been too occupied to think of searching the vessel as yet.

As for the two midshipmen, bound and gagged in the hold they would avenge Dick Redmond long before he could get to them.

They dashed into the companion way.

Dick had darted rapidly to the cabin where Lieutenant Garry had been belted in. He drew the bolts, dashed in, and slammed the door, and turned the key in the lock. A few moments later the Frenchmen were hammering at it.

"Wh-wh-what is it?"

Dick had stumbled over the recumbent lieutenant in the darkness, and mumbled voices were heard. Dick stooped over George Garry.

He shook the lieutenant violently by the shoulder.

"Garry! Wake up! Listen! Wake!"

The lieutenant sat up.

"Where am I? What has happened? Oh, I remember! Redmond, I'll have you hanged for nothing! Oh! my head! I'll have you shot."

"Garry! The ship has been retaken by the French—"

"What?" yelled Garry.

The words were enough to completely sober him. He started staggering to his feet, pressing his hand to his burning forehead.

"What is that, Redmond?"

"The French have recaptured the schooner."

"Good heavens! And I—I—my God!"

He was scarlet with shame.

While he had lain there in a drunken sleep, the enemy had recaptured the ship. He was disgraced for ever; and if he ever came to the *Edipus* again, was very likely to be court-martialed and shot!

He groaned aloud with misery!

Hammer, hammer, hammer, came the blows of the two Frenchmen at the door of the cabin. Dick Redmond grasped the lieutenant by the arm.

"Do you hear them, Garry?"

"What is it?"

"Listen! A gang of the privateers were hidden in the hold—they've killed half the prize crew, and recaptured the ship! But I've had luck—there are only three of the Frenchmen left, and one is at the helm. Two are hanging on the deck there, and will be upon us in a couple of minutes."

"Yes, yes."

The lieutenant's brain was clearing rapidly.

"There's a chance yet," said Dick, in a shrill whisper.

"We are two to two, when they break in, if you feel up to a fight."

"I have no weapon."

"There's a heavy steel here. Don't speak loud; they don't know you're here. When they rush in, you can attack them behind."

"By heaven, and I will. I do not care if I am killed, so long as I wipe out this disgrace."

"We may win. If you can brain one of them, I fancy I can account for the other with my dirk. I shall try, at least."

The lieutenant grasped the heavy steel.

His face was white and determined.

"God bless you, Redmond! If you have helped me to save my honor, I'll beg your pardon on my knees for the way I have treated you."

"That's all right; our little differences don't matter at such a time as this."

"You are right."

Crash! crash!

The cabin door was yielding under the furious blows from without.

Lieutenant Garry, with the heavy steel in his hands, stood close to the wall, so that he would be behind the privateers when the door flew open and they entered.

In the darkness they were not likely to see him.

Midshipman Dick stood on the opposite side of the cabin, where a glimmer of light through a port-hole showed on his uniform.

Crash! crash!

The door swung splintering in. The lock snapped. It rushed the two Frenchmen, cutlass in hand, fury in their faces.

They caught a glimpse of Dick across the cabin and rushed on.

Thud!

A dull, sickening thud, as the heavy stool descended with fearful force upon a human skull, and the stricken privateer dropped dead to the floor.

The other stopped, just as he was crossing blades with Dick Redmond.

The stool was whirling aloft again, and the Frenchman caught a glimpse of it, and tried to dodge, and the midshipman saw his chance.

He sprang forward, and drove his dirk almost to the hilt in the breast of the privateer.

The man collapsed upon the floor with a terrible groan.

Dick Redmond gasped with relief.

"Victory!"

Garry was all himself now. He knelt by the slain Frenchman, and secured a cutlass and a couple of pistols. Dick Redmond secured a couple more, and stuck them in his belt.

"Come," he said. "You say there is only one other."

"Yes, Captain Darwin."

"Come on, then. If he suspects the state of affairs here he might batter down the hatch, and keep us prisoners below."

"By George! He might! I'm with you."

They rushed up the companion-ladder to the deck.

As they darted out into the dim starlight, Darwin threw them an anxious glance, and for the instant mistook them for his own two men.

"How you caught him—Garry!"

He saw his mistake!

Garry and Dick Redmond were rushing at him with hanging blades.

"Take the wheel, Redmond, while I deal with him," panted Garry.

The French captain, to save his life, had released the wheel and grasped his cutlass. His blade crossed Garry's, and steel clashed and rang. Dick Redmond sprang to the wheel and grasped it just in time.

Crash! crash!

The privateer captain, amazed as he was by the appearance of Garry, was more enraged than excited.

He fought like a madman, and he was more than a match for Garry.

The lieutenant was driven back step by step.

Dick Redmond watched the conflict with anxious eyes.

If Garry fell, all might be lost again. He shifted one hand from the wheel to his belt, and grasped a pistol.

The pistol came out, and was levelled at the privateer captain.

Crack!

Dartles gave a sudden cry, and collapsed. The bullet had struck him in the side. In a moment, however, he was attacking Garry again furiously. But Garry could not supply the place of strength. The lieutenant was the master, now.

"Surrender!" he cried.
His useless hand down that of the French privateer.
Dartles replied by a savage curse.
His left hand grasped a pistol in his belt. He had no time to use it. Garry sprang forward, and ran him through the body.

With a terrible groan, Captain Dartles fell upon the deck. For a moment only he groaned. He had received his death-blow. With an impression upon his lips, he expired.
Garry staggered to the hatchway combings, and sat down, gasping. He was exhausted. Dick Redmond gave a ringing cheer.

Hurrah!
It was answered by a shout from the fore-castle.
Dick Redmond leaped the helm, and hurried forward, and ere long he had unfurled the scuttle and released the irrevocable seamen.

Then search was made for the two missing middies.
Crane and Pat Malone were discovered in the store-room below the lazarette, and released and brought on deck.

THE END.

They were white and worn and cramped, but overjoyed to find themselves at liberty again, and the schooner in English hands.

And when the story of the capture was told, Pat fairly flung his arms round Dick Redmond's neck and hugged him.

"Sure, and it's a breath of a blay ye are," he shouted. "Sure and I'm proud of ye, and so will all the old Edgips be when they hear the story."

And the seamen cheered Midshipman Dick to the echo.

The run to Malta was finished without further misadventure, and later on the lieutenant and the three midshipmen rejoined the Edgips.

Much of the story had to be told, of course, but the parts relating to the conduct of Garry were passed over.
Dick had no desire to get the lieutenant into trouble, and since the capture of the schooner, Garry had behaved very decently to him.

In fact, there was now a better feeling all round, even Crane being some of his diables of Dick Redmond and his crew.

And so ends our tale of midshipman Dick; but ere long we hope to take the pen again to chronicle the further adventures of the Two Muzzar Minnows!

NEXT
TUESDAY.

Taffy Llewellyn and
The Boy from Colorado.
A School Story, By H. Philpott Wright.

ORDER
EARLY.

THE CHUMS OF NORMANHEIGHT.

By S. CLARKE HOOK.

FOUL.

Freddy Barnes and Willie Williams had had a little dispute. They had it with their fists. Freddy, who was bigger, won; at least he said he did. It is true he received a black eye in the first round, and ended it up by sitting on the ground, but if Herr Behn had not stopped the fight just when Freddy was winning so nicely, he gave the fellows to understand that the probabilities were Willie would have required some flowers, a coffin, and a silent tombstone.

Willie said he did not mind, and that he was quite prepared to take another thrashing when his opponent's eye got better. "I don't care, you little brat," cried Freddy. "I'll pay you out, you see if I don't."
"You had better be careful," laughed Tom Lorn. "Remember how your last plot failed."
"This one won't. I'll have vengeance."
"You'll feel better after you've slept on that eye," said Tom.

"I ain't going to sleep on my eye," retorted Freddy, who did not understand metaphor. "I'm going to sleep on my back, but I'll bet he won't sleep on his to-morrow night."

Now, Willie was a remarkably sharp lad, therefore it seems strange that he did not notice a piece of box cord dangling from the band of his trousers when he put them on the following morning. At any rate, he went down to breakfast with it on.

"Don't say you fellows tell him," said Freddy. "I'm going to get him a licking. I'll spoil his holiday. He shan't see the swinging race to-day."

Tom, who had entered for that race, thought this rather hard on Willie, but as he felt perfectly confident that glibness youth knew of that cord, he said nothing.

The two enemies sat next to each other at breakfast, and the simple Freddy knotted the cord to the corner of the table-

cloth, Willie most obligingly turning his head the other way.

"Ha, ha, ha! Ain't he soft!" murmured Freddy. "It strikes me, Freddy, the thrashing will come all right," said Tom, "but I am not at all sure who will be the recipient of it."

"Oh, I shan't need that!"
"Need what?"
"The cypriat. I'm going to give him a prod, and when he springs up, he'll—ha, he!—pull the whole blessed boiling off the table and get socks!"
"Aren't I Praps?"
"Why, it's bound to come off—coffee and all."
"Oh, yes, it's bound to do all that. Willie will attend to that part of the matter. I think the thrashing is bound to follow. Hurrah!"

"My lads!" exclaimed Herr Behn, taking his seat at the head of the table, "as I witness to great race, I take my breakfast with you. Ye day is beautiful, ye sport should be good, and I hope my horses may win von of ye prize, ain't it. I fear, Lorn, you have not much chance against Snaggs, still you may come in second."

"He may come in first, sir," observed Bob, "I want to come in second. All he's got to do is to swim faster than Snaggs, then he'll come in first."

"Pur! You got on mat your breakfast."
"He's always saying and doing stupid things, ain't he, sir?" said Freddy, cautiously opening his pocket knife. Then he gave Willie a prod that would certainly have hurt him had not the blade shot down on Freddy's fingers and cut those badly.

Willie did not receive the prod, but he knew what he was expected to do. Uttering a wild yell, he leapt to his feet and went grinding across the room. Even Freddy had not antici-

gated such a pleasing result. Willie had taken the right direction to make the plot thoroughly effective; that was past Herr Bohn's luck. The tablecloth naturally fell over him.

A piled-up plate of bread and butter shot into the German master's face, and he got a regular deluge of coffee in his chest. "Dessert and Bismarck!" he howled, as his legs shot into the air and he fell with a crash amidst broken china. "Oh, were Tom and Freddy did all this come from? Oh, mein Gott! I am awfully!"

"Wishes! I'm out," howled Freddy. "I've gashed my hand."

"How did it happen?" howled Herr Bohn, straining to his feet and making an effort to hold his shirt front as far from his body, while he dived a little, as desperately hot coffee streamed down his front.

"I—I think it was an earthquake, sir," said Freddy.

"Keep still, you T-t-tail of a boy!" roared Herr Bohn, as Willie gave another leap which caused the saturated cloth to flop round the master's legs and very nearly left him sprawling again. "What did you do to your tail?"

"If you please, sir, I haven't got a tail," observed Willie. "According to Darwin my ancestors had, but I have not inherited it."

"Just! You have inherited ten monkey tricks, and you are ready as mead as Darwin. How did you cut yourself, Barnes?"

"With a knife, sir."

"And how did it? Do you think I suppose you cut yourself with a spoon? You did not rape."

"Oh, I say, sir! It's awful to hear you make such an—such an—"

"Nasturtium!" suggested Tom.

"Yes! Such a nasturtium as—I say, Tom, you are wrong. That's a flower. Nasturtium is the word I want."

"You made you jump up and fell?" demanded Herr Bohn, glaring at Willie, who was gazing at the card with an expression of wonder on his face.

"A knife, sir. And it didn't feel at all like a spoon."

"And! You see how it is. Barnes tried to do it to your back, but make you jump up."

"Well, I'm hoaxed!" growled Freddy. "How did he get all that?"

"Here's my case, and here's the key?"

Herr Bohn tossed them back. He fixed Freddy across the table and made him shiver at it.

"Are you here, Freddy?" inquired Willie.

"Hoarse! Ooh! Wishes! Oh, please, sir—yarrh—give him some as well. It is he—hoarse—certainly comforting to me, and I need some comfort. I feel as if I'd been sitting on a stalling lying pane."

"You deserved it."

"That may be. But he deserved a sight more. He did it!"

"You made him do it!"

"It don't matter, sir. He's the ag—the aggen—I mean—"

"You aggenic," whispered Tom.

"He's the aggenic, sir."

"Just! Don't you know what aggenic means, boy?"

"Yes, sir, a chap who upsets coffee mugs over a master, or anything like that."

This extraordinary definition was too much for the boys who knew. They howled with laughter, as did the little boys who were not quite certain.

"Dessert and Bismarck! To boy has no brains!"

"It 'ud rumb your brain, sir, if you had been whacked like me," purred Freddy.

"Ha, ha, ha!" howled Tom. "Herr Bohn did not hit you in your brain. He struck you in another place. But never mind, Freddy! It will be all the same next century."

"Yes! That's just the worst of it. Herr Bohn will smack me then. He doesn't care how big a chap is. I've known him smack Snags."

"Just! You're the boy talking about? Do you expect I shall be hurt?"

"I didn't know you were going to leave, sir."

Then Freddy scowled why all the boys roared with laughter, as Herr Bohn strode from the room.

Now the great race, which was causing the boys a good deal of excitement, was to take place in the sea that morning. There were a good many entries for it, but only three turned up. Giles declared he had a cold, and the others all had colds. The sea was rather rough, and they did not feel inclined to tackle such a long swim.

Tom and Rob, however, came up to the scratch, and the rough sea gave the latter a far better chance, for although he was not very speedy, he was a pretty strong swimmer.

Snags was quite confident of the first prize, nor did he forget to let the boys and masters know it. Tom and Rob said nothing, but they meant doing their best to make agreed race of it.

At the crack of the pistol they dived in from the starting boat. Although the boys are very sanguine, even Tom's adherents, who consisted of all the Lower House, thought he had scarcely a chance against Snags; their astonishment was considerable, therefore, when they saw that Tom held his own, while his stroke, if anything, was slower. The waves appeared to bother Snags, while Tom thought of nothing except winning the race.

Rob plunged along pluckily, but he was a considerable distance behind. They had swum about half the course when Tom began to lunge ahead and mighty cheers rang out from the shore. In vain Snags splashed his stroke. Tom gained a lead, and the boys knew he would never overtake him.

But now, as Tom struck out, Snags seized him by the ankle.

"You despicable cur," panted Tom. "Let go, or I'll hurt you. You won't. You can take that."

And wrenching himself round, Tom dealt him a blow in the face, then they grappled, and both sank beneath the surface.

A struggle in the water does not depend entirely on strength, as Snags discovered to his cost. When they rose Tom took a long breath, and dragged his opponent down once more.

"Go it, you heggars," puffed Rob as he came up. "You're doing immense."

They had the water into ears with their struggles, and every time Snags got the chance, he pulled for help, but Tom stuck to him, and kept forcing his head under.

"Getting on all right, Tommy?" shrieked Rob.

"Suppose! Go on! You'll get first prize. Go down, you beast!"

Dr. Inglesby, who was being rowed rapidly towards the spot, started to the combatants to assist, but Tom kept dragging the bully down.

"Boys! What is the meaning of this?" demanded the doctor, as they were dragged into the boat.

"Ah! Ah!" gasped Snags. "I am nearly drowned."

"Why did you catch hold of Barn's leg?" demanded the doctor.

"I did not, sir."

"Nonsense! I distinctly saw you do so through my glasses. You ought to be ashamed of yourself."

"He attacked me, sir. He tried to take my life."

"Pooh! I tried to make you drink a little sea water, and I succeeded, too," laughed Tom. "Rob has won the race, sir."

"It is a disgraceful affair."

"I did not cheat, sir. I was trying to win."

"Yes, Barn! I am confident of that," said Dr. Inglesby.

"They planned it between them, sir," declared Snags.

"I wonder you have the effrontery to make such an assertion," retorted the doctor. "Barn was ahead of you when you deliberately held him back. He would have gained the first prize, and you would have won the second. You have acted dishonorably."

"I could have beaten him easily."

"Very well! I shall award the first prize to Robert Saunders," said the doctor. "You two will swim over the course again for the second prize."

"I don't care to compete, sir," said Snags.

"That may be, but I order it. Row back to the starting boat," said the doctor.

"He tried to drown me," snarled Snags.

"Nonsense! He tried to duck you, and serve you right. It is a shame that you should behave like that to a small boy. Had he beaten you it would have been no disgrace. Now, you are disgraced. I insist on your competing for the second prize."

Tom was on his little nose. The doctor followed closely in his boat; he sincerely hoped the plucky lad would win, though he feared that his strength would fail after his previous exertions. But this was not the case. Tom swam splendidly. Snags did not once get ahead of him, and Tom finished up winner by several yards, to the frantic delight of the Lower House.