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they were non-combatants. Jack explained all this to Mesty and the men, and then finished his sausage. The men, who were a little elevated with the wine which they had been drinking, proposed that they should take the ladies a cruise, and Jack at first did not dislike the idea, but he said nothing. Mesty, however, opposed this, saying that ladies only made a row in a ship, and the coxswain sided with him, saying, that they should all be at daggers drawn. Whereupon Jack pulled out the "articles of war," and informed the men that there was no provision in them for women, and therefore the thing was impossible.

The next question was, as to the propriety of allowing them to take their effects; and it was agreed, at last, that they might take them. Jack desired the steward to feed his master the captain, and then told the Spanish Don the result of the consultation, further informing him, that as soon as it was dark, he intended to put them all on board the small vessel, when they could cast loose the men and do as they pleased. The Don and the ladies returned thanks, and went down to pack up their baggage; Mesty ordering two men to help them, but with a caution, that they were not to encumber themselves with any of the money, if there should happen to be any on board.

The crew were busy during the day making preparations for sailing. The coxswain had examined the provender in the ship, and found that there was enough for at least three months, of water, wine, and provisions, independent of luxuries for the cabin. All thoughts of taking any more of the vessels were abandoned, for their crew was but weak to manage the one which they had possession of. A fine breeze sprang up, and they dropped their fore-topsails, just as a boat was shoving off from the shore; but seeing the fore-topsails loosed, it put back again. This was fortunate, or all would have been discovered. The other vessels also loosed their sails, and the crews were heard weighing the anchors.

But the *Nostra Senora del Carmen*, which was Jack's prize, did not move. At last the sun went down, the baggage was placed in the cutter, the ladies and passengers went into the boat, thanking Jack for his kindness, who put his hand to his heart, and bowed to the deck; and the captain was lowered down after them. Four men well armed pulled them alongside of the xebecque, put them and their trunks on deck, and

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returned to the ship. The cutter was then hoisted up, and as the anchor was too heavy to weigh, they cut the cable, and made sail. The other vessels followed their example. Mesty and the seamen cast longing eyes upon them, but it was of no use; so they sailed in company for about an hour, and then Jack hauled his wind for a cruise.

CHAPTER XIV

In which our hero finds that disagreeable occurrences will take place on a cruise.

AS soon as the ship had been hauled to the wind, Jack's ship's company seemed to think that there was nothing to do except to make merry; so they brought up some earthen jars full of wine, and emptied them so fast that they were soon fast asleep on the deck, with the exception of the man at the helm, who, instead of thirty-two, could clearly make out sixty-four points in the compass, and of course was able to steer to a much greater nicety. Fortunately, the weather was fine, for when the man at the helm had steered till he could see no more, and requested to be released, he found that his shipmates were so overpowered with fatigue, that it was impossible to wake them. He kicked them one by one most unmercifully in the ribs, but it was of no use. Under these circumstances, he did as they did, that is, lay down with them, and in ten minutes it would have taken as much kicking to awake him as he gave his shipmates.

In the meantime the ship had it all her own way, and not knowing where she was to go, she went round and round the compass during the best part of the night. Mesty had arranged the watches, Jack had made a speech, and the men had promised everything, but the wine had got into their heads, and memory had taken that opportunity to take a stroll. Mesty had been down with Jack, examining the cabin, and in the captain's state-room they had found fourteen thousand dollars in bags. Of this they determined not to tell the men, but locked up the money and everything else of value, and took out the key. They then sat down at the cabin table, and

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after some conversation, it was no matter of surprise, after having been up all the night before, that Jack laid his head on the table and fell fast asleep. Mesty kept his eyes open for some time, but at last his head sank down upon his chest, and he also slumbered. Thus, about one o'clock in the morning, there was not a very good watch kept on board of the *Nostra Senora del Carmen*.

About four o'clock in the morning, Mesty tumbled forward, and he hit his head against the table, which roused him up.

"By de mass, I tink I almost fall asleep," cried he, and he went to the cabin window, which had been left open, and found that there was a strong breeze blowing in. "By de Lord, de wind ab come more aft," said Mesty, "why they not tell me?" So saying, he went on deck, where he found no one at the helm; every one drunk, and the ship with her yards braced up running before the wind, just by way of a change. Mesty growled, but there was no time to lose; the topsails only were set,—these he lowered down, and then put the helm a-lee, and lashed it, while he went down to call our hero to his assistance. Jack roused up, and went on deck.

"This nebber do, Massa Easy; we all go to devil together—together—dam drunken dogs—I freshen um up anyhow." So Mesty drew some buckets of water, with which he soused the ship's company, who then appeared to be recovering their senses.

"By heavens!" says Jack, "but this is contrary to the articles of war; I shall read them to them to-morrow morning."

"I tell what better ting, Massa Easy: we go lock up all de wine, and sarve out so much, and no more. I go do it at once, 'fore they wake up."

Mesty went down, leaving Jack on deck to his meditations.

"I am not sure," thought Jack, "that I have done a very wise thing. Here I am with a parcel of fellows who have no respect for the articles of war, and who get as drunk as David's sow. I have a large ship, but I have very few hands; and if it comes on bad weather, what shall I do?—for I know very little—hardly how to take in a sail. Then—as for where to steer, or how to steer, I know not—nor do any of my men; but, however, as it was very narrow when we came into the Mediterranean through the straits, it is hardly possible to get out of them without perceiving it; besides, I

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should know the rock of Gibraltar again if I saw it. I must talk to Mesty."

Mesty soon returned with the keys of the provision-room tied to his bandana.

"Now," says he, "they not get drunk again in a hurry."

A few more buckets of water soon brought the men to their senses: they again stood on their legs, and gradually recovered themselves. Daylight broke, and they found that the vessel had made an attempt for the Spanish coast, being within a mile of the beach, and facing a large battery *à fleur d'eau*; fortunately they had time to square the yards, and steer the ship along shore under the topsails, before they were perceived. Had they been seen at daylight in the position that they were in during the night, the suspicions of the Spaniards would have been awakened; and had a boat been sent off, while they were all drunk, they must have been recaptured.

The men, who perceived what danger they had been in, listened very penitently to Jack's remonstrances; and our hero, to impress them more strongly on their minds, took out the articles of war, read that on drunkenness from beginning to end; but the men had heard it read so often at the gangway, that it did not make a due impression. As Mesty said, his plan was better, and so it proved; for as soon as Jack had done, the men went down to get another jug of wine, and found, to their disappointment, that it was all under lock and key.

In the meantime, Jack called Mesty aft, and asked him if he knew the way to Toulon. Mesty declared that he knew nothing about it.

"Then, Mesty, it appears to me that we have a better chance of finding our way back to Gibraltar; for you know the land was on our left side all the way coming up the Mediterranean; and if we keep it, as it is now, on our right, we shall get back again along the coast."

Mesty agreed with Jack that this was the *ne plus ultra* of navigation; and that old Smallsole could not do better with his "pig-yoke" and compasses. So they shook a reef out of the topsails, set top-gallant-sails, and ran directly down the coast from point to point, keeping about five miles distant. The men prepared a good dinner; Mesty gave them their allowance of wine, which was just double what they had on

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board the *Harpy*—so they soon appeared to be content. One man, indeed, talked very big and very mutinously, swearing that if the others would join him they would soon have liquor enough; but Mesty gave him his look, opened his knife, and swore that he would settle him, and Jack knocked him down with a handspike; so that, what with the punishment received, and that which was promised, the fellow thought he might as well say no more about it. The fact is, that had it not been for fear of Mesty, the whole of the men would, in all probability, have behaved equally as bad; nevertheless, they were a little staggered, it must be owned, at seeing Jack play so good a stick with the handspike.

After this night Jack and Mesty kept watch and watch, and everything went on very well until they were nearly abreast of Carthage, when a gale came on from the northward, and drove them out of sight of land. Sail after sail was reduced with difficulty from their having so few hands, and the gale blew for three days with great fury. The men were tired out and discontented. It was Jack's misfortune that he had but one good man with him: even the coxswain of the boat, although a fine-looking man, was worth nothing. Mesty was Jack's sheet-anchor. The fourth day the gale moderated, but they had no idea where they were: they knew that they had been blown off, but how far they could not tell, and Jack now began to discover that a cruise at sea without knowledge of navigation was a more nervous thing than he had contemplated. However, there was no help for it. At night they wore the ship and stood on the other tack, and at daylight they perceived that they were close to some small islands, and much closer to some large rocks, against which the sea beat high, although the wind had subsided. Again was the helm put up, and they narrowly escaped. As soon as the sails were trimmed the men came aft and proposed that if they could find anchorage they should run into it, for they were quite tired out. This was true, and Jack consulted with Mesty, who thought it advisable to agree to the proposal. That the islands were not inhabited was very evident. The only point to ascertain was, if there were good anchorage. The coxswain offered to go in the boat and examine; and, with four men, he set off, and in about an hour returned, stating that there was plenty of water, and that it was as smooth as a mill-pond, being land-locked on every side.

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As they could not weigh the bower-anchor they bent the kedge, and running in without accident, came to in a small bay, between the islands, in seven fathoms water. The sails were furled, and everything put in order by the seamen, who then took the boat and pulled on shore. They might as well have asked leave, thought Jack. In an hour they returned, and, after a short discussion, came aft to our hero in a body.

The coxswain was spokesman. He said that they had had hard work, and required now to have some rest—that there were provisions on board for three months, so that there could not be any hurry, and that they had found they could pitch a tent very well on shore, and live there for a short time; and that, as there was no harm in getting drunk on shore, they expected that they might be allowed to take provisions and plenty of wine with them, and that the men had desired him to ask leave, because they were determined to go whether or no. Jack was about to answer with the handspike, but perceiving that the men had all put on their cutlasses, and had their pistols at their belts, he thought proper to consult Mesty, who, perceiving that resistance was useless, advised Jack to submit, observing, that the sooner all the wine was gone the better, as there would be nothing done while it lasted. Jack, therefore, very graciously told them that they should have their own way, and he would stay there as long as they pleased. Mesty gave them the keys of the provision-hatch, and told them, with a grin, to help themselves. The men then informed Jack that he and Mesty should stay on board and take care of the ship for them, and that they would take the Spaniard on shore to cook their victuals. But to this Jack observed that if he had not two hands he could not obey their orders, in case they wished him to come on shore for them. The men thought there was good argument in that observation, and therefore allowed Jack to retain the Spaniard, that he might be more prompt to their call from the beach. They then wished him good day, and begged that he would amuse himself with the "articles of war."

As soon as they had thrown a spare sail into the boat, with some spars to make a tent, and some bedding, they went down below, hoisted up two pipes of wine out of the three, a bag or two of biscuit, arms and ammunition, and as much of the salt provisions as they thought they might require. The boat being full, they shoved off with three cheers of derision. Jack

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was sensible to the compliment: he stood at the gangway, took off his hat, and made them a polite bow.

As soon as they were gone, Mesty grinned with his sharp-filed teeth, and looking at our hero, said—

"I tink I make um pay for all dis—stop a little; by de piper as played before Moses, but our turn come by-and-by."

As for Jack, he said nothing, but he thought the more. In about an hour the men returned in the boat: they had forgotten many things they wanted—wood to make a fire, and several utensils; they helped themselves freely, and having now everything that they could think of, they again went on shore.

"How d—n lucky we never tell dem about the dollars," said Mesty, as Jack and he were watching the motions of the men.

"It is indeed," replied Jack; "not that they could spend them here."

"No, Massa Easy, but suppose they find all that money, they take boat and go away with it. Now, I hab them in my clutch—stop a little."

A narrow piece of salt pork had been left at the gangway; Jack, without knowing why, tossed it overboard; being almost all fat, it sank very gradually. Jack watched it as it disappeared, so did Mesty, both full of thought, when they perceived a dark object rising under it; it was a ground shark, who took it into his maw, sank down, and disappeared.

"What was that?" said Jack.

"That ground shark, Massa Easy,—worst shark of all; you neber see him till you feel him;" and Mesty's eyes sparkled with pleasure. "By de powers, they soon stop de mutiny; now I hab em."

Jack shuddered and walked away.

During the day the men on shore were seen to work hard, and make all the preparations before they abandoned themselves to the sensual gratification of intemperance. The tent was pitched, the fire was lighted, and all the articles taken on shore rolled up and stowed away in their places; they were seen to sit down and dine, for they were within hail of the ship, and then one of the casks of wine was spiled. In the meantime the Spaniard, who was a quiet lad, had prepared the dinner for Easy and his now only companion. The evening closed, and all was

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noise and revelry on shore; and as they danced, and sung, and tossed off the cans of wine by the light of the fire, as they hallooed and screamed, and became more and more intoxicated, Mesty turned to Jack with his bitter smile, and only said—

"Stop a little."

At last the noise grew fainter, the fire died away, and gradually all was silent. Jack was still hanging over the gangway when Mesty came up to him. The new moon had just risen, and Jack's eyes were fixed upon it.

"Now, Massa Easy, please you come aft and lower down little boat; take your pistols, and then we go on shore and bring off the cutter; they all asleep now."

"But why should we leave them without a boat, Mesty?" for Jack thought of the sharks, and the probability of the men attempting to swim off.

"I tell you, sar; this night they get drunk, to-morrow they get drunk again, but drunken men never keep quiet,—suppose one man say to others, 'Let's go board and kill officer, and then we do as we please,' they all say yes, and they all come and do it. No, sar—must have boat—if not for your sake, I must hab it, save my own life anyhow, for they hate me and kill me first; by de powers, stop a little."

Jack felt the truth of Mesty's observation; he went aft with him, lowered down the small boat, and they hauled it alongside. Jack went down with Mesty into the cabin and fetched his pistols. "And the Spaniard, Mesty, can we leave him on board alone?"

"Yes, sar, he no got arms, and he see dat we have; but suppose he finds arms he never dare do anything—I know de man."

Our hero and Mesty went into the boat and shoved off, pulling gently on shore; the men were in a state of intoxication, so as not to be able to move, much less hear. They cast off the cutter, towed her on board, and made her fast with the other boat astern.

"Now, sar, we may go to bed; to-morrow morning you will see."

"They have everything they require on shore," replied Easy, "all they could want with the cutter would be to molest us."

"Stop a little," replied Mesty.

Jack and Mesty went to bed, and as a precaution against