had to put her into the carriage; but although our hero was very strong this was a work of no small difficulty. After one or two attempts he lowered down the steps and contrived to bump her on the first, from the first he purchased her on the second, and from the second he at last seated her at the door of the carriage. Jack had no time to be over-polite. He then threw her back into the bottom of the carriage, her heels went up to the top, Jack shoved in her petticoats as fast as he could, for decency, and then shutting the door seized the reins, and jumped upon the box. "I don't know the way," thought Jack, "but we must needs go when the devil drives;" so sticking his trident into the horses they set off at a rattling pace, passing over the bodies of the two robbers who had held the reins, and who both lay before him in a swoon. As soon as he had brought the horses into a trot he slackened the reins, for, as Jack wisely argued, they will be certain to go home if I let them have their own way. The horses, before they arrived at the town, turned off, and stopped at a large country house. That he might not frighten the people, Jack had put on his cloak, and taken off his mask and head-piece, which he had laid beside him on the box. At the sound of the carriage-wheels the servants came out, when Jack, in few words, told them what had happened. Some of the servants ran in, and a young lady made her appearance, while the others were helping the old lady out of the carriage, who had recovered her senses, but had been so much frightened that she had remained in the posture in which Jack had put her.

As soon as she was out Jack descended from the coach-box and entered the house. He stated to the young lady what had taken place, and how opportunely he had frightened away the robbers, just as they were about to murder her relation; and also suggested the propriety of sending after the servants who had fallen in the attack; which was immediately done by a strong and well-armed party collected for the occasion. Jack, having made his speech, made a very polite bow and took his leave, stating that he was an English officer belonging to a frigate in the harbour. He knew his way back, and in half-an-hour was again at the inn, and found his comrades. Jack thought it advisable to keep his own secret, and therefore merely said, that he had taken a long walk in the country; and soon afterwards went to bed.

The next morning our hero, who was always a man of his word, packed up his portmanteau, and paid his bill. He had just completed this heavy operation when somebody wanted to speak to him, and a sort of half-clerical, half-legal sort of looking gentleman was introduced, who, with a starched face and prim air, said that he came to request in writing the name of the officer who was dressed as a devil, in the masquerade of the night before.

Jack looked at his interrogator, and thought of the priests and the Inquisition. "No, no," thought he, "that won't do; a name I must give, but it shall be one that you dare not meddle with. A midshipman you might get hold of, but it's more than the whole island dare to touch a post-captain of one of his Majesty's frigates." So Jack took the paper and wrote Captain Henry Wilson, of his Majesty's ship *Aurora*.

The prim man made a prim bow, folded up the paper, and left the room.

Jack threw the waiter half a doubloon, lighted his cigar, and went on board.

CHAPTER XXV

In which the old proverb is illustrated, "that you must not count your chickens before they are hatched."

THE first lieutenant of the *Aurora* was a very good officer in many respects, but as a midshipman he had contracted the habit of putting his hands in his pockets, and could never keep them out, even when the ship was in a gale of wind; and hands are of some use in a heavy lurch. He had more than once received serious injury from falling on these occasions, but habit was too powerful, and although he had once broken his leg by falling down the hatchway, and had moreover a large scar on his forehead, received from being thrown to leeward against one of the guns, he still continued the practice; indeed, it was said that once when it was necessary for him to go aloft, he had actually taken the two first rounds of the Jacob's ladder without withdrawing them, until, losing his balance, he discovered that it was not quite so easy to go aloft with his hands in his pockets. In fact, there was no getting up his hands, even

when all hands were turned up. He had another peculiarity, which was, that he had taken a peculiar fancy to a quack medicine, called Enouy's Universal Medicine for all Mankind; and Mr. Pottyfar was convinced in his own mind that the label was no libel, except from the greatness of its truth. In his opinion it cured everything, and he spent one of his quarterly bills every year in bottles of this stuff; which he not only took himself every time he was unwell, but occasionally when quite well, to prevent his falling sick. He recommended it to everybody in the ship, and nothing pleased him so much as to give a dose of it to every one who could be persuaded to take it. The officers laughed at him, but it was generally behind his back, for he became very angry if contradicted upon this one point, upon which he certainly might be considered to be a little cracked. He was indefatigable in making proselytes to his creed, and expatiated upon the virtues of the medicine for an hour running, proving the truth of his assertions by a pamphlet, which, with his hands, he always carried in his trousers pocket.

Jack reported himself when he came on board, and Mr. Pottyfar, who was on the quarter-deck at the time, expressed a hope that Mr. Easy would take his share of the duty, now that he had had such a spell on shore; to which Jack very graciously acceded, and then went down below, where he found Gascoigne and his new messmates, with most of whom he was already acquainted.

"Well, Easy," said Gascoigne, "have you had enough of the shore?"

"Quite," replied Jack, recollecting that, after the events of the night before, he was just as well on board; "I don't intend to ask for any more leave."

"Perhaps it's quite as well, for Mr. Pottyfar is not very liberal on that score, I can tell you; there is but one way of getting leave from him."

"Indeed!" replied Jack; "and what is that?"

"You must pretend that you are not well, take some of his quack medicine, and then he will allow you a run on shore to work it off."

"Oh! that's it, is it? well then, as soon as we anchor in Valette, I'll go through a regular course, but not till then."

"It ought to suit you, Jack; it's an equality medicine, cures one disorder just as well as the other."

"Or kills—which levels all the patients. You're right, Gascoigne, I must patronise that stuff—for more reasons than one. Who was that person on deck in mufti?"

"The mufti, Jack; in other words, the chaplain of the ship; but he's a prime sailor, nevertheless."

"How's that?"

"Why, he was brought up on the quarter-deck, served his time, was acting-lieutenant for two years, and then, somehow or another, he bore up for the Church."

"Indeed—what were his reasons?"

"No one knows—but they say he has been unhappy ever since."

"Why so?"

"Because he did a very foolish thing, which cannot now be remedied. He supposed at the time that he would make a good parson, and now that he has long got over his fit, he finds himself wholly unfit for it; he is still the officer in heart, and is always struggling with his natural bent, which is very contrary to what a parson should feel."

"Why don't they allow parsons to be broke by a court-martial, and turned out of the service, or to resign their commissions, like other people?"

"It won't do, Jack—they serve Heaven—there's a difference between that and serving his Majesty."

"Well, I don't understand these things. When do we sail?"

"The day after to-morrow."

"To join the fleet off Toulon?"

"Yes; but I suppose we shall be driven on the Spanish coast going there. I never knew a man-of-war that was not."

"No; wind always blows from the south, going up the Mediterranean."

"Perhaps you'll take another prize, Jack—mind you don't go away without the articles of war."

"I won't go away without Mesty, if I can help it. O dear, how abominable a midshipman's berth is after a long run on shore; I positively must go on deck and look at the shore, if I can do nothing else."

"Why, ten minutes ago you had had enough of it!"

"Yes, but ten minutes here has made me feel quite sick. I shall go to the first lieutenant for a dose."

"I say, Easy, we must both be physicked on the same day."

"To be sure; but stop till we get to Malta."

Jack went on deck, made acquaintance with the chaplain and some of the officers whom he had not known, then climbed up into the maintop, where he took a seat on the armolest, and, as he looked at the shore, thought over the events that had passed, until Agnes came to his memory, and he thought only of her. When a mid is in love, he always goes aloft to think of the object of his affection; why, I don't know, except that his reverie is not so likely to be disturbed by an order from a superior officer.

The *Aurora* sailed on the second day, and with a fine breeze stood across, making as much northing as easting; the consequence was, that one fine morning they saw the Spanish coast before they saw the Toulon fleet. Mr. Pottyfar took his hands out of his pockets, because he could not examine the coast through a telescope without so doing; but this, it is said, was the first time that he had done so on the quarter-deck from the day that the ship had sailed from Port Mahon. Captain Wilson was also occupied with his telescope, so were many of the officers and midshipmen, and the men at the mast-heads used their eyes, but there was nothing but a few small fishing-boats to be seen. So they all went down to breakfast, as the ship was hove-to close in with the land.

"What will Easy bet," said one of the midshipmen, "that we don't see a prize to-day?"

"I will not bet that we do not see a vessel—but I'll bet you what you please, that we do not take one before twelve o'clock at night."

"No, no, that won't do—just let the tea-pot travel over this way, for it's my forenoon watch."

"It's a fine morning," observed one of the mates, of the name of Martin; "but I've a notion it won't be a fine evening."

"Why not?" inquired another.

"I've now been eight years in the Mediterranean, and know something about the weather. There's a watery sky, and the wind is very steady. If we are not under double-reefed topsails to-night, say I'm no conjurer."

"That you will be, all the same, if we are under bare poles," said another.

"You're devilish free with your tongue, my youngster. Easy, pull his ears for me."

"Pull them easy, Jack, then," said the boy, laughing.

"All hands make sail!" now resounded at the hatchways.

"There they are, depend upon it," cried Gascoigne, catching up his hat and bolting out of the berth, followed by all the others except Martin, who had just been relieved, and thought that his presence in the waist might be dispensed with for the short time, at least, which it took him to swallow a cup of tea.

It was very true; a galliot and four latteen vessels had just made their appearance round the easternmost point, and as soon as they observed the frigate, had hauled their wind. In a minute the *Aurora* was under a press of canvas, and the telescopes were all directed to the vessels.

"All deeply laden, sir," observed Mr. Hawkins, the chaplain; "how the topsail of the galliot is scored!"

"They have a fresh breeze just now," observed Captain Wilson to the first lieutenant.

"Yes, sir, and it's coming down fast."

"Hands by the royal halyards, there."

The *Aurora* careened with the canvas to the rapidly-increasing breeze.

"Top-gallant sheet and halyards."

"Luff you may, quarter-master; luff, I tell you. A small pull of that weather maintop-gallant brace—that will do," said the master.

"Top-men aloft there;—stand by to clew up the royals—and, Captain Wilson, shall we take them in?—I'm afraid of that pole—it bends now like a coach-whip," said Mr. Pottyfar, looking up aloft, with his hands in both pockets.

"In royals—lower away."

"They are going about, sir," said the second lieutenant, Mr. Haswell.

"Look out," observed the chaplain, "it's coming."

Again the breeze increases, and the frigate was borne down.

"Hands reef topsails in stays, Mr. Pottyfar."

"Ay, ay, sir—'bout ship."

The helm was put down and the topsails lowered and reefed in stays.

"Very well, my lads, very well indeed," said Captain Wilson.

Again the topsails were hoisted and top-gallant sheets home. It was a strong breeze, although the water was smooth, and the *Aurora* dashed through at the rate of eight miles an hour, with her weather leeches lifting.

"Didn't I tell you so?" said Martin to his messmates on the gangway; "but there's more yet, my boys."

"We must take the top-gallant sails off her," said Captain Wilson, looking aloft—for the frigate now careened to her bearings, and the wind was increasing and squally. "Try them a little longer;" but another squall came suddenly—the halyards were lowered, and the sails clewed up and furled.

In the meantime the frigate had rapidly gained upon the vessels, which still carried on every stitch of canvas, making short tacks in-shore. The *Aurora* was again put about with her head towards them, and they were not two points on her weather-bow. The sky, which had been clear in the morning, was now overcast, the sun was obscured with opaque white clouds, and the sea was rising fast. Another ten minutes, and then they were under double-reefed topsails and the squalls were accompanied with heavy rain. The frigate now dashed through the waves, foaming in her course, and straining under the press of sail. The horizon was so thick that the vessels ahead were no longer to be seen.

"We shall have it, I expect," said Captain Wilson.

"Didn't I say so?" observed Martin to Gascoigne. "We take no prizes this day, depend upon it."

"We must have another hand to the wheel, sir, if you please," said the quarter-master, who was assisting the helmsman.

Mr. Pottyfar, with his hands concealed us usual, stood by the capstern. "I fear, sir, we cannot carry the mainsail much longer."

"No," observed the chaplain, "I was thinking so."

"Captain Wilson, if you please, we are very close in," said the master; "don't you think we had better go about?"

"Yes, Mr. Jones.—Hands about ship—and—yes, by heavens we must!—up mainsail."

The mainsail was taken off, and the frigate appeared to be immediately relieved. She no longer jerked and plunged as before.

"We're very near the land, Captain Wilson; thick as it is,

I think I can make out the loom of it—shall we wear round, sir?" continued the master.

"Yes,—hands wear ship—put the helm up."

It was but just in time, for as the frigate flew round, describing a circle, as she payed off before the wind, they could perceive the breakers lashing the precipitous coast, not two cables' length from them.

"I had no idea we were so near," observed the captain, compressing his lips; "can they see anything of those vessels?"

"I have not seen them this quarter of an hour, sir," replied the signalman, protecting his glass from the rain under his jacket.

"How's her head now, quarter-master?"

"South south-east, sir."

The sky now assumed a different appearance—the white clouds had been exchanged for others dark and murky, the wind roared at intervals, and the rain came down in torrents. Captain Wilson went down into the cabin to examine the barometer.

"The barometer has risen," said he, on his return on deck. "Is the wind steady?"

"No, sir, she's up and off three points."

"This will end in a south-wester."

The wet and heavy sails now flapped from the shifting of the wind.

"Up with the helm, quarter-master."

"Up it is—she's off to south-by-west."

The wind lulled, the rain came down in a deluge—for a minute it was quite calm, and the frigate was on an even keel.

"Man the braces. We shall be taken aback directly, depend upon it."

The braces were hardly stretched along before this was the case. The wind flew round to the south-west with a loud roar, and it was fortunate that they were prepared—the yards were braced round, and the master asked the captain what course they were to steer.

"We must give it up," observed Captain Wilson, holding on by the belaying pin. "Shape our course for Cape Sicie, Mr. Jones."

And the *Aurora* flew before the gale, under her foresail and topsails close reefed. The weather was now so thick that

nothing could be observed twenty yards from the vessel; the thunder pealed, and the lightning darted in every direction over the dark expanse. The watch was called as soon as the sails were trimmed, and all who could went below, wet, uncomfortable, and disappointed.

"What an old Jonah you are, Martin," said Gascoigne.

"Yes, I am," replied he; "but we have the worst to come yet, in my opinion. I recollect, not two hundred miles from where we are now, we had just such a gale in the *Favourite*, and we as nearly went down, when——"

At this moment a tremendous noise was heard above, a shock was felt throughout the whole ship, which trembled fore and aft as if it was about to fall into pieces; loud shrieks were followed by plaintive cries, the lower deck was filled with smoke, and the frigate was down on her beam ends. Without exchanging a word, the whole of the occupants of the berth flew out, and were up the hatchway, not knowing what to think, but convinced that some dreadful accident had taken place.

On their gaining the deck it was at once explained; the foremast of the frigate had been struck by lightning, had been riven into several pieces, and had fallen over the larboard bow, carrying with it the main topmast and jib-boom. The jagged stump of the foremast was in flames, and burnt brightly, notwithstanding the rain fell in torrents. The ship, as soon as the foremast and main topmast had gone overboard, broached-to furiously, throwing the men over the wheel and dashing them senseless against the carronades; the forecastle, the forepart of the main deck, and even the lower deck, were spread with men, either killed or seriously wounded, or insensible from the electric shock. The frigate was on her beam ends, and the sea broke furiously over her; all was dark as pitch, except the light from the blazing stump of the foremast, appearing like a torch held up by the wild demons of the storm, or when occasionally the gleaming lightning cast a momentary glare, threatening every moment to repeat its attack upon the vessel, while the deafening thunder burst almost on their devoted heads. All was dismay and confusion for a minute or two; at last Captain Wilson, who had himself lost his sight for a short time, called for the carpenter and axes. They climbed up, that is, two or three of them, and he

pointed to the mizenmast; the master was also there, and he cut loose the axes for the seamen to use; in a few minutes the mizenmast fell over the quarter, and the helm being put hard up, the frigate payed off and slowly righted. But the horror of the scene was not yet over. The boatswain, who had been on the forecastle, had been led below, for his vision was gone for ever. The men who lay scattered about had been examined, and they were assisting them down to the care of the surgeon, when the cry of "Fire!" issued from the lower deck. The ship had taken fire at the coal-hole and carpenter's store-room, and the smoke that now ascended was intense.

"Call the drummer," said Captain Wilson, "and let him beat to quarters—all hands to their stations—let the pumps be rigged and the buckets passed along. Mr. Martin, see that the wounded men are taken down below. Where's Mr. Haswell? Mr. Pottyfar, station the men to pass the water on by hand on the lower deck. I will go there myself. Mr. Jones, take charge of the ship."

Pottyfar, who actually had taken his hands out of his pockets, hastened down to comply with the captain's orders on the main deck, as Captain Wilson descended to the deck below.

"I say, Jack, this is very different from this morning," observed Gascoigne.

"Yes," replied Jack, "so it is; but I say, Gascoigne, what's the best thing to do?—when the chimney's on fire on shore, they put a wet blanket over it."

"Yes," replied Gascoigne; "but when the coal-hole's on fire on board, they will not find that sufficient."

"At all events, wet blankets must be a good thing, Ned, so let us pull out the hammocks; cut the lanyards and get some out—we can but offer them, you know, and if they do no good, at least it will show our zeal."

"Yes, Jack, and I think when they turn in again, those whose blankets you take will agree with you, that zeal makes the service very uncomfortable. However, I think you are right."

The two midshipmen collected three or four hands, and in a very short time they had more blankets than they could carry—there was no trouble in wetting them, for the main deck was afloat—and followed by the men they had collected,

Easy and Gascoigne went down with large bundles in their arms to where Captain Wilson was giving directions to the men.

"Excellent, Mr. Easy, excellent, Mr. Gascoigne!" said Captain Wilson. "Come, my lads, throw them over now, and stamp upon them well;" the men's jackets and the captain's coat had already been sacrificed to the same object.

Easy called the other midshipmen, and they went up for a further supply; but there was no occasion, the fire had been smothered; still the danger had been so great that the fore magazine had been floated. During all this, which lasted perhaps a quarter of an hour, the frigate had rolled gunwale under, and many were the accidents which occurred. At last all danger from fire had ceased, and the men were ordered to return to their quarters, when three officers and forty-seven men were found absent — seven of them were dead, most of them were already under the care of the surgeon, but some were still lying in the scuppers.

No one had been more active or more brave during this time of danger, than Mr. Hawkins, the chaplain. He was everywhere, and when Captain Wilson went down to put out the fire he was there, encouraging the men and exerting himself most gallantly. He and Mesty came aft when all was over, one just as black as the other. The chaplain sat down and wrung his hands—"God forgive me!" said he, "God forgive me!"

"Why so, sir?" said Easy, who stood near. "I am sure you need not be ashamed of what you have done."

"No, no, not ashamed of what I've done; but, Mr. Easy, I have sworn so, sworn such oaths at the men in haste—I, the chaplain! God forgive me!—I meant nothing." It was very true that Mr. Hawkins had sworn a great deal during his exertions, but he was at that time the quarter-deck officer and not the chaplain; the example to the men and his gallantry had been most serviceable.

"Indeed, sir," said Easy, who saw the chaplain was in great tribulation, and hoped to pacify him, "I was certainly not there all the time, but I only heard you say, 'God bless you, my men! be smart,' and so on; surely that is not swearing."

"Was it that I said, Mr. Easy—are you sure? I really had an idea that I had d—d them all in heaps, as some of

them deserved—no, no, not deserved. Did I really bless them—nothing but bless them?"

"Yes, sir," said Mesty, who perceived what Jack wanted; "it was nothing, I assure you, but 'God bless you, Captain Wilson!—Bless your heart, my good men!—Bless the king!' and so on. You do nothing but shower down blessing and wet blanket."

"I told you so," said Jack.

"Well, Mr. Easy, you've made me very happy," replied the chaplain; "I was afraid it was otherwise."

So indeed it was, for the chaplain had sworn like a boatswain; but as Jack and Mesty had turned all his curses into blessings, the poor man gave himself absolution, and shaking hands with Jack, hoped he would come down into the gun-room and take a glass of grog—nor did he forget Mesty, who received a good allowance at the gun-room door—to which Jack gladly consented, as the rum in the middies' berth had all been exhausted after the rainy morning; but Jack was interrupted in his third glass, by somebody telling him the captain wanted to speak with Mr. Hawkins and with him.

Jack went up, and found the captain on the quarter-deck with the officers.

"Mr. Easy," said Captain Wilson, "I have sent for you, Mr. Hawkins, and Mr. Gascoigne, to thank you on the quarter-deck, for your exertions and presence of mind on this trying occasion." Mr. Hawkins made a bow. Gascoigne said nothing, but he thought of having extra leave when they arrived at Malta. Jack felt inclined to make a speech, and began something about when there was danger that it levelled every one to an equality even on board of a man-of-war.

"By no means, Mr. Easy," replied Captain Wilson; "it does the very contrary; for it proves which is the best man, and those who are the best raise themselves at once above the rest."

Jack was very much inclined to argue the point, but he took the compliment and held his tongue, which was the wisest thing he could have done; so he made his bow, and was about to go down into the midshipmen's berth when the frigate was pooped by a tremendous sea, which washed all those who did not hold on down into the waist. Jack was among the number, and naturally catching at the first object which touched him,

he caught hold of the chaplain by the leg, who commenced swearing most terribly; but before he could finish the oath, the water which had burst into the cabin through the windows—for the dead lights, in the confusion, had not yet been shipped—burst out of the cross bulk-heads, sweeping like a torrent the marine, the cabin-door, and everything else in its force, and floating Jack and the chaplain with several others down the main hatchway on to the lower deck. The lower deck being also full of water, men and chests were rolling and tossing about, and Jack was sometimes in company with the chaplain, and at other times separated; at last they both recovered their legs, and gained the midshipmen's berth, which, although afloat, was still a haven of security. Mr. Hawkins spluttered and spit, and so did Jack, until he began to laugh.

"This is very trying, Mr. Easy," said the chaplain; "very trying indeed to the temper. I hope I have not sworn—I hope not."

"Not a word," said Jack—"I was close to you all the time—you only said, 'God preserve us!'"

"Only that? I was afraid that I said 'God d—n it!'"

"Quite a mistake, Mr. Hawkins. Let's go into the gun-room, and try to wash this salt water out of our mouths, and then I will tell you all you said, as far as I could hear it, word for word."

So Jack by this means got another glass of grog, which was very acceptable in his wet condition, and made himself very comfortable, while those on deck were putting on the dead lights, and very busy setting the goose wings of the main-sail, to prevent the frigate from being pooped a second time.

CHAPTER XXVI

In which our hero becomes excessively unwell, and agrees to go through a course of medicine.

THE hammocks were not piped down that night; some were taken indiscriminately for the wounded, but the rest remained in the nettings, for all hands were busy preparing jury masts and jury rigging, and Mr. Pottyfar was so well employed that

for twelve hours his hands were not in his pockets. It was indeed a dreadful night; the waves were mountains high, and chased the frigate in their fury, cresting, breaking, and roaring at her taffrail. But she flew before them with the wings of the wind; four men at the helm, assisted by others at the relieving tackles below. Jack, having been thanked on and washed off the quarter-deck, thought that he had done quite enough; he was as deep as he could swim before he had satisfied all the scruples of the chaplain, and stowing himself away on one of the lockers of the midshipmen's berth, was soon fast asleep, notwithstanding that the frigate rolled gunwale under. Gascoigne had done much better; he had taken down a hammock, as he said, for a poor wounded man, hung it up and turned in himself. The consequence was, that the next morning the surgeon, who saw him lying in the hammock, had put him down in the report, but as Gascoigne had got up as well as ever, he laughed and scratched his name out of the list of wounded.

Before morning the ship had been pumped out dry, and all below made as secure and safe as circumstances would permit; but the gale still continued its violence, and there was anything but comfort on board.

"I say, Martin, you ought to be thrown overboard!" said Gascoigne; "all this comes from your croaking—you're a Mother Carey's chicken."

"I wish I had been any one's chicken," replied Martin; "but the devil a thing to nestle under have I had since I can well remember."

"What a bore to have no galley-fire lighted," said one of the youngsters; "no tea, and not allowed any grog."

"The gale will last three days," replied Martin, "and by that time we shall not be far from the admiral; it won't blow home there."

"Well then, we shall be ordered in directly, and I shall go on shore to-morrow," replied Easy.

"Yes, if you're ill," replied Gascoigne.

"Never fear, I shall be sick enough. We shall be there at least six weeks, and then we'll forget all this."

"Yes," replied Martin, "we may forget it, but will the poor fellows whose limbs are shrivelled forget it? and will poor Miles, the boatswain, who is blind for ever?"

"Very true, Martin; we are thinking about ourselves, not