

## MR. MIDSHIPMAN EASY

"Very true," said the first lieutenant, "people require air and exercise. I've no opinion of the doctor's remedies; the only thing that is worth a farthing is the universal medicine."

"I should so long to try it, sir," replied Jack; "I read the book one day, and it said that if you took it daily for a fortnight or three weeks, and with plenty of air and exercise, it would do wonders."

"And it's very true," replied Mr. Pottyfar; "and if you'd like to try it you shall—I have plenty—shall I give you a dose now?"

"If you please, sir," replied Jack; "and tell me how often I am to take it, for my head aches all day."

Mr. Pottyfar took Jack down, and putting into his hand three or four bottles of the preparation, told him that he was to take thirty drops at night when he went to bed, not to drink more than two glasses of wine, and to avoid the heat of the sun.

"But, sir," replied Jack, who had put the bottles in his pocket, "I am afraid that I cannot take it long; for as the ship is ready for fitting, I shall be exposed to the sun all day."

"Yes, if you were wanted, Mr. Easy; but we have plenty here without you; and when you are unwell you cannot be expected to work. Take care of your health; and I trust, indeed I am sure, that you will find this medicine wonderfully efficacious."

"I will begin to-night, sir, if you please," replied Jack, "and I am very much obliged to you. I sleep at the governor's—shall I come on board to-morrow morning?"

"No, no; take care of yourself, and get well; I shall be glad to hear that you get better. Send me word how it acts."

"I will, sir, send you word by the boat every day," replied Jack, delighted; "I am very much obliged to you, sir. Gascoigne and I were thinking of asking you, but did not like to do so; he, poor fellow, suffers from headaches almost as bad as I do, and the doctor's pills are of no use to him."

"He shall have some too, Mr. Easy; I thought he looked pale. I'll see to it this afternoon. Recollect, moderate exercise, Mr. Easy, and avoid the sun at mid-day."

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"Yes, sir," replied Jack, "I'll not forget;" and off went Jack, delighted. He ordered Mesty to put up his whole portmanteau instead of the small bundle he put into the boat, and telling Gascoigne what a spoke he had put into his wheel, was soon in the boat with the captain, and went on shore, where he was cordially greeted by the governor.

## CHAPTER XXVII

*In which Captain Wilson is repaid with interest for Jack's borrowing his name; proving that a good name is as good as a legacy.*

WELL, Jack, my boy, have you any long story ready for me?" inquired the governor.

"Yes, sir," replied Jack, "I have one or two very good ones."

"Very well, we'll hear them after dinner," replied old Tom. "In the meantime, find out your room and take possession."

"That must not be for very long, governor," observed Captain Wilson. "Mr. Easy must learn his duty, and there is a good opportunity now."

"If you please, sir," replied Jack, "I'm on the sick list."

"Sick list," said Captain Wilson; "you were not in the report that Mr. Wilson gave me this morning."

"No, I'm on Mr. Pottyfar's list, and I'm going through a course of the universal medicine."

"What's all this, Jack, what's all this? There's some story here. Don't be afraid of the captain—you've me to back you," said the governor.

Jack was not at all afraid of the captain, so he told him how the first lieutenant had refused him leave the evening before, and how he had now given him permission to remain, and try the universal medicine, at which the governor laughed heartily, nor could Captain Wilson refrain from joining.

"But, Mr. Easy," replied the captain, after a pause, "if Mr. Pottyfar will allow you to stay on shore, I cannot—you have your duty to learn. You must be aware that now is your time,



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and you must not lose opportunities that do not occur every day. You must acknowledge the truth of what I say."

"Yes, sir," replied Jack, "I admit it all, provided I do intend to follow the profession;" and so saying our hero bowed and left the verandah, where they had been talking.

This hint of Jack's, thrown out by him more with the intention of preventing his being sent on board than with any definite idea, was not lost upon either the captain or the governor.

"Does he jib, then?" observed the governor.

"On the contrary, I never knew him more attentive, and so entirely getting rid of his former notions. He has behaved most nobly in the gale, and there has not been one complaint against him—I never was more astonished—he must have meant something."

"I'll tell you what he means, Wilson—that he does not like to be sent on board, nothing more. He's not to be cooped up—you may lead him, but not drive him."

"Yes, but the service will not admit of it. I never could allow it—he must do his duty like the rest, and conform to the rules."

"Exactly, so he must; but look ye, Wilson, you must not lose him. It's all easily settled—appoint him your orderly midshipman to and from the ship; that will be employment, and he can always remain here at night. I will tell him that I have asked, as a favour, what I now do, and leave me to find out what he is thinking about."

"It may be done that way, certainly," replied Captain Wilson, musing; "and you are more likely to get his intentions from him than I am. I am afraid he has too great a command of money ever to be fond of the ship; it is the ruin of a junior officer to be so lavishly supplied."

"He's a long way from ruin yet, Wilson—he's a very fine fellow, even by your own acknowledgment. You humoured him out of gratitude to his father, when he first came into the service; humour him a little now to keep him in it. Besides, if your first lieutenant is such a fool with his universal medicine, can you wonder at a midshipman taking advantage of it?"

"No, but I ought not to allow him to do so with my eyes open."

"He has made it known to you upon honour, and you ought not to take advantage of his confidence; but still what I pro-

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posed would, I think, be the best, for then he will be at his duty in a way that will suit all parties. You, because you employ him on service—the first lieutenant, because Jack can take his medicine—and Jack, because he can dine with me every day."

"Well, I suppose it must be so," replied Captain Wilson, laughing; "but still, I trust you will discover what is working in his mind to induce him to give me that answer, governor."

"Never fear, Jack shall confess, and lay his soul as bare as that of a Catholic bigot before his padre."

The party sat down to dinner, and what with the governor's aide-de-camp and those invited it was pretty numerous. After the cloth had been removed the governor called upon Jack for his stories, whereupon, much to the surprise of Captain Wilson, who had never heard one word of it, for the admiral had not mentioned anything about it to him during the short time the *Aurora* was with the Toulon fleet, our hero gave the governor and the company the narrative of all that happened in the *Mary Ann* transport; the loves of Captain Hogg and Miss Hicks; the adventures of Gascoigne; and his plan, by which he baulked them all. The governor was delighted, and Captain Wilson not a little astonished.

"You prevented a very foolish thing, Mr. Easy, and behaved very well," observed the captain, laughing again at the idea; "but you never told me of all this."

"No, sir," replied Jack, "I have always reserved my stories for the governor's table, where I am sure to meet you, and then telling once does for all."

Jack received his appointment as orderly midshipman, and everything went on well; for of his own accord he stayed on board the major part of the day to learn his duty, which very much pleased the captain and Mr. Pottyfar. In this Jack showed a great deal of good sense, and Captain Wilson did not repent of the indulgence he had shown him. Jack's health improved daily, much to Mr. Pottyfar's satisfaction, who imagined that he took the universal medicine night and morning. Gascoigne also was a patient under the first lieutenant's hands, and often on shore with our hero, who thought no more of quitting the service.

For seven weeks they had now remained in harbour, for even the masts had to be made, when one day Captain Wilson



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opened a letter he received at breakfast-time, and having read it, laid it down with the greatest surprise depicted in his countenance. "Good heavens! what can this mean?" said he.

"What's the matter, Wilson?" said the governor.

"Just hear its contents, Sir Thomas."

Captain Wilson then read in Spanish as follows:—

"HONOURABLE SIR,—It is my duty to advise you that the Honourable Lady Signora Alforgas de Guzman, now deceased, has, in her testament, bequeathed to you the sum of one thousand doubloons in gold as a testimony of your kind services on the night of the 12th of August. If you will authorise any merchant here to receive the money, it shall be paid forthwith, or remitted in any way you please to appoint. May you live a thousand years!—Your most obedient servant,  
ALFONZO XEREZ."

Jack heard the letter read, rose quietly, whistled low, as if not attending to it, and then slipped out of the room, unperceived by the governor or Captain Wilson.

The fact was, that although Jack had longed to tell the governor about his adventures after the masquerade, he did not like yet awhile, until he was sure that there were no consequences—because he had given the captain's name instead of his own. As soon as he heard the letter read, he at once perceived that it had been the old lady, and not the priests, who had made the inquiry, and that by giving Captain Wilson's name he had obtained for him this fine legacy. Jack was delighted, but still puzzled, so he walked out of the room to reflect a little.

"What can it mean?" said Captain Wilson. "I never rendered any services to any one on the 12th of August or after it. It is some mistake—12th of August—that was the day of the grand masquerade."

"A lucky one for you, at all events—for you know, mistake or not, no one else can touch the legacy. It can only be paid to you."

"I never heard of anything taking place at the masquerade—I was there, but I left early, for I was not very well. Mr. Easy," said Captain Wilson, turning round; but Jack was gone.

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"Was he at the masquerade?" asked the governor.

"Yes, I know he was, for the first lieutenant told me that he requested not to come on board till the next day."

"Depend upon it," replied the governor, striking his fist upon the table, "that Jack's at the bottom of it."

"I should not be surprised at his being at the bottom of anything," replied Captain Wilson, laughing.

"Leave it to me, Wilson; I'll find it out."

After a little more conversation Captain Wilson went on board, leaving Jack on purpose that the governor might pump him. But this Sir Thomas had no occasion to do, for Jack had made up his mind to make the governor his confidant, and he immediately told him the whole story. The governor held his sides at our hero's description, especially at his ruse of giving the captain's name instead of his own.

"You'll kill me, Jack, before you've done with me," said old Tom at last; "but now, what is to be done?"

Our hero now became grave; he pointed out to the governor that he himself had plenty of money, and would come into a large fortune, and that Captain Wilson was poor, with a large family. All Jack wished the governor to manage was, that Captain Wilson might consent to accept the legacy.

"Right, boy, right! you're my own boy," replied the governor; "but we must think of this, for Wilson is the very soul of honour, and there may be some difficulty about it. You have told nobody?"

"Not a soul but you, Sir Thomas."

"It will never do to tell him all this, Jack, for he would insist that the legacy belonged to you."

"I have it, sir," replied Jack. "When I was going into the masquerade I offered to hand this very old lady, who was covered with diamonds, out of her carriage, and she was so frightened at my dress of a devil, that she would have fallen down had it not been for Captain Wilson, who supported her, and she was very thankful to him."

"You are right, Jack," replied the governor, after a short pause; "that will, I think, do. I must tell him the story of the friars, because I swore you had something to do with it—but I'll tell him no more; leave it all to me."

Captain Wilson returned in the afternoon, and found the governor in the verandah.



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"I have had some talk with young Easy," said the governor, "and he has told me a strange story about that night, which he was afraid to tell to everybody."

The governor then narrated the history of the friars and the will.

"Well, but," observed Captain Wilson, "the history of that will afford no clue to the legacy."

"No, it does not; but still, as I said, Jack had a hand in this. He frightened the old lady as a devil, and you caught her in your arms and saved her from falling, so he had a hand in it, you see."

"I do now remember that I did save a very dowager-like old personage from falling at the sight of a devil, who, of course, must have been our friend Easy."

"Well, and that accounts for the whole of it."

"A thousand doubloons for picking up an old lady!"

"Yes, why not?—have you not heard of a man having a fortune left him for merely opening the pew door of a church to an old gentleman?"

"Yes, but it appears so strange."

"There's nothing strange in this world, Wilson, nothing at all—we may slave for years and get no reward, and do a trifle out of politeness and become independent. In my opinion, this mystery is unravelled. The old lady, for I knew the family, must have died immensely rich; she knew you in your full uniform, and she asked your name; a heavy fall would have been to one so fat a most serious affair; you saved her, and she has rewarded you handsomely."

"Well," replied Captain Wilson, "as I can give no other explanation, I suppose yours is the correct one; but it's hardly fair to take a thousand doubloons from her relations merely for an act of civility."

"You really are quite ridiculous; the old lady owned half Murcia, to my knowledge. It is no more to them than any one leaving you a suit of mourning in an English legacy. I wish you joy; it will help you with a large family, and in justice to them you are bound to take it. Everybody does as he pleases with his own money—depend upon it, you saved her from breaking her leg short off at the hip joint."

"Upon that supposition I presume I must accept of the legacy," replied Captain Wilson, laughing.

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"Of course; send for it at once. The rate of exchange is now high. I will give you government bills, which will make it nearly four thousand pounds."

"Four thousand pounds for preventing an old woman from falling," replied Captain Wilson.

"Devilish well paid, Wilson, and I congratulate you."

"For how much am I indebted to the father of young Easy!" observed Captain Wilson, after a silence of some minutes; "if he had not assisted me when I was appointed to a ship I should not have gained my promotion—nor three thousand pounds I have made in prize-money—the command of a fine frigate—and now four thousand pounds in a windfall."

The governor thought that he was more indebted to Jack than to his father for some of these advantages, but he was careful not to point them out.

"It's very true," observed the governor, "that Mr. Easy was of service to you when you were appointed; but allow me to observe, that for your ship, your prize-money, and for your windfall, you have been wholly indebted to your own gallantry, in both senses of the word; still Mr. Easy is a fine generous fellow, and so is his son, I can tell you. By-the-bye, I had a long conversation with him the other day."

"About himself?"

"Yes, all about himself. He appears to me to have come into the service without any particular motive, and will be just as likely to leave it in the same way. He appears to be very much in love with that Sicilian nobleman's daughter. I find that he has written to her, and to her brother, since he has been here."

"That he came into the service in search of what he never will find in this world, I know very well; and I presume that he has found that out—and that he will follow up the service is also very doubtful; but I do not wish that he should leave it yet, it is doing him great good," replied Captain Wilson.

"I agree with you there—I have great influence with him, and he shall stay yet awhile. He is heir to a very large fortune, is he not?"

"A clear eight thousand pounds a year, if not more."

"If his father dies he must, of course, leave; a midship-



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man with eight thousand pounds a year would indeed be an anomaly."

"That the service could not permit. It would be as injurious to himself as it would to others about him. At present, he has almost, indeed I may say quite, an unlimited command of money."

"That's bad, very bad. I wonder he behaves so well as he does."

"And so do I; but he really is a very superior lad, with all his peculiarities, and a general favourite with those whose opinions and friendship are worth having."

"Well, don't curb him too tight—for really he does not require it. He goes very well in a snaffle."

## CHAPTER XXVIII

*"Philosophy made Easy" upon agrarian principles, the subject of some uneasiness to our hero—The first appearance, but not the last, of an important personage.*

THE conversation was here interrupted by a mail from England which they had been expecting. Captain Wilson retired with his letters; the governor remained equally occupied; and our hero received the first letter ever written to him by his father. It ran as follows:—

"MY DEAR SON,—I have many times taken up my pen with the intention of letting you know how things went on in this country. But as I can perceive around but one dark horizon of evil, I have as often laid it down again without venturing to make you unhappy with such bad intelligence.

"The account of your death, and also of your unexpectedly being yet spared to us, were duly received, and I trust I mourned and rejoiced on each occasion with all the moderation characteristic of a philosopher. In the first instance I consoled myself with the reflection that the world you had left was in a state of slavery, and pressed down by the iron arm of despotism, and that to die was gain, not only in all the parson tells us, but also in our liberty; and at the second

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intelligence I moderated my joy, for nearly about the same reasons, resolving, notwithstanding what Dr. Middleton may say, to die as I have lived, a true philosopher.

"The more I reflect the more am I convinced that there is nothing required to make this world happy but equality, and the rights of man being duly observed—in short, that everything and everybody should be reduced to one level. Do we not observe that it is the law of nature—do not brooks run into rivers—rivers into seas—mountains crumble down upon the plains?—are not the seasons contented to equalise the parts of the earth? Why does the sun run round the ecliptic instead of the equator, but to give an equal share of his heat to both sides of the world? Are we not all equally born in misery? does not death level us all *æquo pede*, as the poet hath? are we not all equally hungry, thirsty, and sleepy, and thus levelled by our natural wants? And such being the case, ought we not to have our equal share of good things in this world, to which we have undoubted equal right? Can any argument be more solid or more level than this, whatever nonsense Dr. Middleton may talk?

"Yes, my son, if it were not that I still hope to see the sun of Justice arise, and disperse the manifold dark clouds which obscure the land—if I did not still hope, in my time, to see an equal distribution of property—an agrarian law passed by the House of Commons, in which all should benefit alike—I would not care how soon I left this vale of tears, created by tyranny and injustice. At present the same system is carried on; the nation is taxed for the benefit of the few, and it groans under oppression and despotism; but I still do think that there is, if I may fortunately express myself, a bright star in the west, and signs of the times which comfort me. Already we have had a good deal of incendiarism about the country, and some of the highest aristocracy have pledged themselves to raise the people above themselves, and have advised sedition and conspiracy; have shown to the debased and unenlightened multitude that their force is physically irresistible, and recommended them to make use of it, promising that if they hold in power, they will only use that power to the abolition of our farce of a constitution, of a church, and of a king; and that if the nation is to be governed at all, it shall only be governed by the many. This is cheering. Hail, patriot lords! all hail! I am in hopes that