

LXI. REDBURN AND HABBY, ARM IN ARM, IN HARBOR

There we sat in that tarry old den, the only inhabitants of the deserted old ship, but the mate and the rats.

At last, Harry went to his chest, and drawing out a few shillings, proposed that we should go ashore, and return with a supper, to eat in the forecastle. Little else that was eatable being for sale in the paltry shops along the wharves, we bought several pies, some doughnuts, and a bottle of ginger-pop, and thus supplied we made merry. For to us, whose very mouths were become pickled and puckered, with the continual flavor of briny beef, those pies and doughnuts were most delicious. And as for the ginger-pop, why, that ginger-pop was divine! I have revered ginger-pop ever since.

We kept late hours that night; for, delightful certainty! placed beyond all doubt--like royal landsmen, we were masters of the watches of the night, and no starb-o-leens ahoy! would annoy us again.

"All night in! think of that, Harry, my friend!"

"Ay, Wellingborough, it's enough to keep me awake forever, to think I may now sleep as long as I please."

We turned out bright and early, and then prepared for the shore, first stripping to the waist, for a toilet.

"I shall never get these confounded tar-stains out of my fingers," cried Harry, rubbing them hard with a bit of oakum, steeped in strong suds. "No! they will not come out, and I'm ruined for life. Look at my hand once, Wellingborough!"

It was indeed a sad sight. Every finger nail, like mine, was dyed of a rich, russet hue; looking something like bits of fine tortoise shell.

"Never mind, Harry," said I--"You know the ladies of the east steep the tips of their fingers in some golden dye."

"And by Plutus," cried Harry--"I'd steep mine up to the armpits in gold; since you talk about that. But never mind, I'll swear I'm just from Persia, my boy."

We now arrayed ourselves in our best, and sallied ashore; and, at once, I piloted Harry to the sign of a Turkey Cock in Fulton-street, kept by one Sweeny, a place famous for cheap Souchong, and capital buckwheat cakes.

"Well, gentlemen, what will you have?"--said a waiter, as we seated ourselves at a table.

"Gentlemen!" whispered Harry to me--"gentlemen!--hear him!--I say now, Redburn, they didn't talk to us that way on board the old Highlander. By heaven, I begin to feel my straps again:--Coffee and hot rolls," he added aloud, crossing his legs like a lord, "and fellow--come back--bring us a venison-steak."

"Haven't got it, gentlemen."

"Ham and eggs," suggested I, whose mouth was watering at the recollection of that particular dish, which I had tasted at the sign of the Turkey Cock before. So ham and eggs it was; and royal coffee, and imperial toast.

But the butter!

"Harry, did you ever taste such butter as this before?"

"Don't say a word,"--said Harry, spreading his tenth slice of toast "I'm going to turn dairyman, and keep within the blessed savor of butter, so long as I live."

We made a breakfast, never to be forgotten; paid our bill with a flourish, and sallied into the street, like two goodly galleons of gold, bound from Acapulco to Old Spain.

"Now," said Harry, "lead on; and let's see something of these United

States of yours. I'm ready to pace from Maine to Florida; ford the Great Lakes; and jump the River Ohio, if it comes in the way. Here, take my arm;--lead on."

Such was the miraculous change, that had now come over him. It reminded me of his manner, when we had started for London, from the sign of the Golden Anchor, in Liverpool.

He was, indeed, in most wonderful spirits; at which I could not help marveling; considering the cavity in his pockets; and that he was a stranger in the land.

By noon he had selected his boarding-house, a private establishment, where they did not charge much for their board, and where the landlady's butcher's bill was not very large.

Here, at last, I left him to get his chest from the ship; while I turned up town to see my old friend Mr. Jones, and learn what had happened during my absence.

With one hand, Mr. Jones shook mine most cordially; and with the other, gave me some letters, which I eagerly devoured. Their purport compelled my departure homeward; and I at once sought out Harry to inform him.

Strange, but even the few hours' absence which had intervened; during which, Harry had been left to himself, to stare at strange streets, and

strange faces, had wrought a marked change in his countenance. He was a creature of the suddenest impulses. Left to himself, the strange streets seemed now to have reminded him of his friendless condition; and I found him with a very sad eye; and his right hand groping in his pocket.

"Where am I going to dine, this day week?"--he slowly said. "What's to be done, Wellingborough?"

And when I told him that the next afternoon I must leave him; he looked downhearted enough. But I cheered him as well as I could; though needing a little cheering myself; even though I had got home again. But no more about that.

Now, there was a young man of my acquaintance in the city, much my senior, by the name of Goodwell; and a good natured fellow he was; who had of late been engaged as a clerk in a large forwarding house in South-street; and it occurred to me, that he was just the man to befriend Harry, and procure him a place. So I mentioned the thing to my comrade; and we called upon Goodwell.

I saw that he was impressed by the handsome exterior of my friend; and in private, making known the case, he faithfully promised to do his best for him; though the times, he said, were quite dull.

That evening, Goodwell, Harry, and I, perambulated the streets, three abreast:--Goodwell spending his money freely at the oyster-saloons; Harry

full of allusions to the London Clubhouses: and myself contributing a small quota to the general entertainment.

Next morning, we proceeded to business.

Now, I did not expect to draw much of a salary from the ship; so as to retire for life on the profits of my first voyage; but nevertheless, I thought that a dollar or two might be coming. For dollars are valuable things; and should not be overlooked, when they are owing. Therefore, as the second morning after our arrival, had been set apart for paying off the crew, Harry and I made our appearance on ship-board, with the rest. We were told to enter the cabin; and once again I found myself, after an interval of four months, and more, surrounded by its mahogany and maple.

Seated in a sumptuous arm-chair, behind a lustrous, inlaid desk, sat Captain Riga, arrayed in his City Hotel suit, looking magisterial as the Lord High Admiral of England. Hat in hand, the sailors stood deferentially in a semicircle before him, while the captain held the ship-papers in his hand, and one by one called their names; and in mellow bank notes--beautiful sight!--paid them their wages.

Most of them had less than ten, a few twenty, and two, thirty dollars coming to them; while the old cook, whose piety proved profitable in restraining him from the expensive excesses of most seafaring men, and who had taken no pay in advance, had the goodly round sum of seventy dollars as his due.

Seven ten dollar bills! each of which, as I calculated at the time, was worth precisely one hundred dimes, which were equal to one thousand cents, which were again subdivisible into fractions. So that he now stepped into a fortune of seventy thousand American "mitts." Only seventy dollars, after all; but then, it has always seemed to me, that stating amounts in sounding fractional sums, conveys a much fuller notion of their magnitude, than by disguising their immensity in such aggregations of value, as doubloons, sovereigns, and dollars. Who would not rather be worth 125,000 francs in Paris, than only £5000 in London, though the intrinsic value of the two sums, in round numbers, is pretty much the same.

With a scrape of the foot, and such a bow as only a negro can make, the old cook marched off with his fortune; and I have no doubt at once invested it in a grand, underground oyster-cellar.

The other sailors, after counting their cash very carefully, and seeing all was right, and not a bank-note was dog-eared, in which case they would have demanded another: for they are not to be taken in and cheated, your sailors, and they know their rights, too; at least, when they are at liberty, after the voyage is concluded:--the sailors also salaamed, and withdrew, leaving Harry and me face to face with the Paymaster-general of the Forces.

We stood awhile, looking as polite as possible, and expecting every

moment to hear our names called, but not a word did we hear; while the captain, throwing aside his accounts, lighted a very fragrant cigar, took up the morning paper--I think it was the Herald--threw his leg over one arm of the chair, and plunged into the latest intelligence from all parts of the world.

I looked at Harry, and he looked at me; and then we both looked at this incomprehensible captain.

At last Harry hemmed, and I scraped my foot to increase the disturbance.

The Paymaster-general looked up.

"Well, where do you come from? Who are you, pray? and what do you want? Steward, show these young gentlemen out."

"I want my money," said Harry.

"My wages are due," said I.

The captain laughed. Oh! he was exceedingly merry; and taking a long inspiration of smoke, removed his cigar, and sat sideways looking at us, letting the vapor slowly wriggle and spiralize out of his mouth.

"Upon my soul, young gentlemen, you astonish me. Are your names down in the City Directory? have you any letters of introduction, young

gentlemen?"

"Captain Riga!" cried Harry, enraged at his impudence--"I tell you what it is, Captain Riga; this won't do--where's the rhino?"

"Captain Riga," added I, "do you not remember, that about four months ago, my friend Mr. Jones and myself had an interview with you in this very cabin; when it was agreed that I was to go out in your ship, and receive three dollars per month for my services? Well, Captain Riga, I have gone out with you, and returned; and now, sir, I'll thank you for my pay."

"Ah, yes, I remember," said the captain. "Mr. Jones! Ha! ha! I remember Mr. Jones: a very gentlemanly gentleman; and stop--you, too, are the son of a wealthy French importer; and--let me think--was not your great-uncle a barber?"

"No!" thundered I.

"Well, well, young gentleman, really I beg your pardon. Steward, chairs for the young gentlemen--be seated, young gentlemen. And now, let me see," turning over his accounts--"Hum, hum!--yes, here it is:

Wellingborough Redburn, at three dollars a month. Say four months, that's twelve dollars; less three dollars advanced in Liverpool--that makes it nine dollars; less three hammers and two scrapers lost overboard--that brings it to four dollars and a quarter. I owe you four

dollars and a quarter, I believe, young gentleman?"

"So it seems, sir," said I, with staring eyes.

"And now let me see what you owe me, and then well be able to square the yards, Monsieur Redburn."

Owe him! thought I--what do I owe him but a grudge, but I concealed my resentment; and presently he said, "By running away from the ship in Liverpool, you forfeited your wages, which amount to twelve dollars; and as there has been advanced to you, in money, hammers, and scrapers, seven dollars and seventy-five cents, you are therefore indebted to me in precisely that sum. Now, young gentleman, I'll thank you for the money;" and he extended his open palm across the desk.

"Shall I pitch into him?" whispered Harry.

I was thunderstruck at this most unforeseen announcement of the state of my account with Captain Riga; and I began to understand why it was that he had till now ignored my absence from the ship, when Harry and I were in London. But a single minute's consideration showed that I could not help myself; so, telling him that he was at liberty to begin his suit, for I was a bankrupt, and could not pay him, I turned to go.

Now, here was this man actually turning a poor lad adrift without a copper, after he had been slaving aboard his ship for more than four

mortal months. But Captain Riga was a bachelor of expensive habits, and had run up large wine bills at the City Hotel. He could not afford to be munificent. Peace to his dinners.

"Mr. Bolton, I believe," said the captain, now blandly bowing toward Harry. "Mr. Bolton, you also shipped for three dollars per month: and you had one month's advance in Liverpool; and from dock to dock we have been about a month and a half; so I owe you just one dollar and a half, Mr. Bolton; and here it is;" handing him six two-shilling pieces.

"And this," said Harry, throwing himself into a tragical attitude, "this is the reward of my long and faithful services!"

Then, disdainfully flinging the silver on the desk, he exclaimed, "There, Captain Riga, you may keep your tin! It has been in your purse, and it would give me the itch to retain it. Good morning, sir."

"Good morning, young gentlemen; pray, call again," said the captain, coolly bagging the coins. His politeness, while in port, was invincible.

Quitting the cabin, I remonstrated with Harry upon his recklessness in disdainning his wages, small though they were; I begged to remind him of his situation; and hinted that every penny he could get might prove precious to him. But he only cried Pshaw! and that was the last of it.

Going forward, we found the sailors congregated on the fore-castle-deck,

engaged in some earnest discussion; while several carts on the wharf, loaded with their chests, were just in the act of driving off, destined for the boarding-houses uptown. By the looks of our shipmates, I saw very plainly that they must have some mischief under weigh; and so it turned out.

Now, though Captain Riga had not been guilty of any particular outrage against the sailors; yet, by a thousand small meannesses--such as indirectly causing their allowance of bread and beef to be diminished, without betraying any appearance of having any inclination that way, and without speaking to the sailors on the subject--by this, and kindred actions, I say, he had contracted the cordial dislike of the whole ship's company; and long since they had bestowed upon him a name unmentionably expressive of their contempt.

The voyage was now concluded; and it appeared that the subject being debated by the assembly on the forecastle was, how best they might give a united and valedictory expression of the sentiments they entertained toward their late lord and master. Some emphatic symbol of those sentiments was desired; some unmistakable token, which should forcibly impress Captain Riga with the justest possible notion of their feelings.

It was like a meeting of the members of some mercantile company, upon the eve of a prosperous dissolution of the concern; when the subordinates, actuated by the purest gratitude toward their president, or chief, proceed to vote him a silver pitcher, in token of their

respect. It was something like this, I repeat--but with a material difference, as will be seen.

At last, the precise manner in which the thing should be done being agreed upon, Blunt, the "Irish cockney," was deputed to summon the captain. He knocked at the cabin-door, and politely requested the steward to inform Captain Riga, that some gentlemen were on the pier-head, earnestly seeking him; whereupon he joined his comrades.

In a few moments the captain sallied from the cabin, and found the gentlemen alluded to, strung along the top of the bulwarks, on the side next to the wharf. Upon his appearance, the row suddenly wheeled about, presenting their backs; and making a motion, which was a polite salute to every thing before them, but an abominable insult to all who happened to be in their rear, they gave three cheers, and at one bound, cleared the ship.

True to his imperturbable politeness while in port, Captain Riga only lifted his hat, smiled very blandly, and slowly returned into his cabin.

Wishing to see the last movements of this remarkable crew, who were so clever ashore and so craven afloat, Harry and I followed them along the wharf, till they stopped at a sailor retreat, poetically denominated "The Flashes." And here they all came to anchor before the bar; and the landlord, a lantern-jawed landlord, bestirred himself behind it, among his villainous old bottles and decanters. He well knew, from their

looks, that his customers were "flush," and would spend their money freely, as, indeed, is the case with most seamen, recently paid off.

It was a touching scene.

"Well, maties," said one of them, at last--"I spose we shan't see each other again:--come, let's splice the main-brace all round, and drink to the last voyage!"

Upon this, the landlord danced down his glasses, on the bar, uncorked his decanters, and deferentially pushed them over toward the sailors, as much as to say--"Honorable gentlemen, it is not for me to allowance your liquor;--help yourselves, your honors."

And so they did; each glass a bumper; and standing in a row, tossed them all off; shook hands all round, three times three; and then disappeared in couples, through the several doorways; for "The Flashes" was on a corner.

If to every one, life be made up of farewells and greetings, and a "Good-by, God bless you," is heard for every "How d'ye do, welcome, my boy"--then, of all men, sailors shake the most hands, and wave the most hats. They are here and then they are there; ever shifting themselves, they shift among the shifting: and like rootless sea-weed, are tossed to and fro.

As, after shaking our hands, our shipmates departed, Harry and I stood on the corner awhile, till we saw the last man disappear.

"They are gone," said I.

"Thank heaven!" said Harry.