

## CHAPTER LVI.

### A SHORE EMPEROR ON BOARD A MAN-OF-WAR.

While we lay in Rio, we sometimes had company from shore; but an unforeseen honour awaited us. One day, the young Emperor, Don Pedro II., and suite--making a circuit of the harbour, and visiting all the men-of-war in rotation--at last condescendingly visited the Neversink.

He came in a splendid barge, rowed by thirty African slaves, who, after the Brazilian manner, in concert rose upright to their oars at every stroke; then sank backward again to their seats with a simultaneous groan.

He reclined under a canopy of yellow silk, looped with tassels of green, the national colours. At the stern waved the Brazilian flag, bearing a large diamond figure in the centre, emblematical, perhaps, of the mines of precious stones in the interior; or, it may be, a magnified portrait of the famous "Portuguese diamond" itself, which was found in Brazil, in the district of Tejuco, on the banks of the Rio Belmonte.

We gave them a grand salute, which almost made the ship's live-oak knees knock together with the tremendous concussions. We manned the yards, and went through a long ceremonial of paying the Emperor homage.

Republicans are often more courteous to royalty than royalists themselves. But doubtless this springs from a noble magnanimity.

At the gangway, the Emperor was received by our Commodore in person, arrayed in his most resplendent coat and finest French epaulets. His servant had devoted himself to polishing every button that morning with rotten-stone and rags--your sea air is a sworn foe to metallic glosses; whence it comes that the swords of sea-officers have, of late, so rusted in their scabbards that they are with difficulty drawn.

It was a fine sight to see this Emperor and Commodore complimenting each other. Both were chapeaux-de-bras, and both continually waved them. By instinct, the Emperor knew that the venerable personage before him was as much a monarch afloat as he himself was ashore. Did not our Commodore carry the sword of state by his side? For though not borne before him, it must have been a sword of state, since it looked far too lustrous to have been his fighting sword. That was naught but a limber steel blade, with a plain, serviceable handle, like the handle of a slaughter-house knife.

Who ever saw a star when the noon sun was in sight? But you seldom see a king without satellites. In the suite of the youthful Emperor came a princely train; so brilliant with gems, that they seemed just emerged from the mines of the Rio Belmonte.

You have seen cones of crystallised salt? Just so flashed these

Portuguese Barons, Marquises, Viscounts, and Counts. Were it not for their titles, and being seen in the train of their lord, you would have sworn they were eldest sons of jewelers all, who had run away with their fathers' cases on their backs.

Contrasted with these lamp-lustres of Barons of Brazil, how waned the gold lace of our barons of the frigate, the officers of the gun-room! and compared with the long, jewel-hilted rapiers of the Marquises, the little dirks of our cadets of noble houses--the middies--looked like gilded tenpenny nails in their girdles.

But there they stood! Commodore and Emperor, Lieutenants and Marquises, middies and pages! The brazen band on the poop struck up; the marine guard presented arms; and high aloft, looking down on this scene, all the people vigorously hurraed. A top-man next me on the main-royal-yard removed his hat, and diligently manipulated his head in honour of the event; but he was so far out of sight in the clouds, that this ceremony went for nothing.

A great pity it was, that in addition to all these honours, that admirer of Portuguese literature, Viscount Strangford, of Great Britain--who, I believe, once went out Ambassador Extraordinary to the Brazils--it was a pity that he was not present on this occasion, to yield his tribute of "A Stanza to Braganza!" For our royal visitor was an undoubted Braganza, allied to nearly all the great families of Europe. His grandfather, John VI., had been King of Portugal; his own

sister, Maria, was now its queen. He was, indeed, a distinguished young gentleman, entitled to high consideration, and that consideration was most cheerfully accorded him.

He wore a green dress-coat, with one regal morning-star at the breast, and white pantaloons. In his chapeau was a single, bright, golden-hued feather of the Imperial Toucan fowl, a magnificent, omnivorous, broad-billed bandit bird of prey, a native of Brazil. Its perch is on the loftiest trees, whence it looks down upon all humbler fowls, and, hawk-like, flies at their throats. The Toucan once formed part of the savage regalia of the Indian caciques of the country, and upon the establishment of the empire, was symbolically retained by the Portuguese sovereigns.

His Imperial Majesty was yet in his youth; rather corpulent, if anything, with a care-free, pleasant face, and a polite, indifferent, and easy address. His manners, indeed, were entirely unexceptionable.

Now here, thought I, is a very fine lad, with very fine prospects before him. He is supreme Emperor of all these Brazils; he has no stormy night-watches to stand; he can lay abed of mornings just as long as he pleases. Any gentleman in Rio would be proud of his personal acquaintance, and the prettiest girl in all South America would deem herself honoured with the least glance from the acutest angle of his eye.

Yes: this young Emperor will have a fine time of this life, even so long as he condescends to exist. Every one jumps to obey him; and see, as I live, there is an old nobleman in his suit--the Marquis d'Acarty they call him, old enough to be his grandfather--who, in the hot sun, is standing bareheaded before him, while the Emperor carries his hat on his head.

"I suppose that old gentleman, now," said a young New England tar beside me, "would consider it a great honour to put on his Royal Majesty's boots; and yet, White-Jacket, if yonder Emperor and I were to strip and jump overboard for a bath, it would be hard telling which was of the blood royal when we should once be in the water. Look you, Don Pedro II.," he added, "how do you come to be Emperor? Tell me that. You cannot pull as many pounds as I on the main-topsail-halyards; you are not as tall as I: your nose is a pug, and mine is a cut-water; and how do you come to be a 'brigand,' with that thin pair of spars? A brigand, indeed!"

"Braganza, you mean," said I, willing to correct the rhetoric of so fierce a republican, and, by so doing, chastise his censoriousness.

"Braganza! bragger it is," he replied; "and a bragger, indeed. See that feather in his cap! See how he struts in that coat! He may well wear a green one, top-mates--he's a green-looking swab at the best."

"Hush, Jonathan," said I; "there's the First Duff looking up. Be

still! the Emperor will hear you;" and I put my hand on his mouth.

"Take your hand away, White-Jacket," he cried; "there's no law up aloft here. I say, you Emperor--you greenhorn in the green coat, there--look you, you can't raise a pair of whiskers yet; and see what a pair of homeward-bounders I have on my jowls! Don Pedro, eh? What's that, after all, but plain Peter--reckoned a shabby name in my country. Damn me, White-Jacket, I wouldn't call my dog Peter!"

"Clap a stopper on your jaw-tackle, will you?" cried Ringbolt, the sailor on the other side of him. "You'll be getting us all into darbies for this."

"I won't trice up my red rag for nobody," retorted Jonathan. "So you had better take a round turn with yours, Ringbolt, and let me alone, or I'll fetch you such a swat over your figure-head, you'll think a Long Wharf truck-horse kicked you with all four shoes on one hoof! You Emperor--you counter-jumping son of a gun--cock your weather eye up aloft here, and see your betters! I say, top-mates, he ain't any Emperor at all--I'm the rightful Emperor. Yes, by the Commodore's boots! they stole me out of my cradle here in the palace of Rio, and put that green-horn in my place. Ay, you timber-head, you, I'm Don Pedro II., and by good rights you ought to be a main-top-man here, with your fist in a tar-bucket! Look you, I say, that crown of yours ought to be on my head; or, if you don't believe that, just heave it into the ring once, and see who's the best man."

"What's this hurra's nest here aloft?" cried Jack Chase, coming up the t'-gallant rigging from the top-sail yard. "Can't you behave yourself, royal-yard-men, when an Emperor's on board?"

"It's this here Jonathan," answered Ringbolt; "he's been blackguarding the young nob in the green coat, there. He says Don Pedro stole his hat."

"How?"

"Crown, he means, noble Jack," said a top-man.

"Jonathan don't call himself an Emperor, does he?" asked Jack.

"Yes," cried Jonathan; "that greenhorn, standing there by the Commodore, is sailing under false colours; he's an impostor, I say; he wears my crown."

"Ha! ha!" laughed Jack, now seeing into the joke, and willing to humour it; "though I'm born a Briton, boys, yet, by the mast! these Don Pedros are all Perkin Warbecks. But I say, Jonathan, my lad, don't pipe your eye now about the loss of your crown; for, look you, we all wear crowns, from our cradles to our graves, and though in double-darbies in the brig, the Commodore himself can't unking us."

"A riddle, noble Jack."

"Not a bit; every man who has a sole to his foot has a crown to his head. Here's mine;" and so saying, Jack, removing his tarpaulin, exhibited a bald spot, just about the bigness of a crown-piece, on the summit of his curly and classical head.