THE MUTABLE MANY

BY

ROBERT BARR.

Copyright, 1896, by Robert Barr.

CHAPTER XIX.—CONTINUED.

"You see, you are in Bohemia," cried Barney beaming joyously on his many guests, "and the delight of Bohemia is unconventionality. I danced after the theatre till daylight this morning, and I am as ready as ever to begin again. Shall we not lunch because we have breakfasted, and because we dine at 7? Not so. I am ready for a dance any time of the night or day. Now, Mr. Musician, strike up. 'On with the dance, let joy be unconfined,' as the poet says."

Langly could not have played out of time or tune if he tried. The piano, as Barney had truly said, was a splendid instrument, and when the gay waltz music filled the large room each couple began to float lightly over the polished floor. The musician played on and on, mechanically yet brilliantly, and in the pauses between the dances more than one of the guests spoke to their host of the music's excellence.

"Oh, yes," said Barney, with a jaunty wave of the hand, "he's one of my finds. The man's a genius, don't you know, and is in music what I am myself in painting."

"Barney, you always lay it on too thick," said one of the young men. "You'll turn the pianist's head with flattery if he knows you consider him as clever as yourself."

"Perhaps you imagine I'm too dense to see through that remark," said Barney, with the condescension of true genius. "I know your sneering ways, but let me tell you what I meant was that both the musician and myself are unrecognized by the mob of commonplace people of whom you are so distinguished a representative." ("I flatter myself I had him there," whispered Barney aside to the lady on his right.) "Yes, my boy, the day will come when you will be proud to say you were invited to these receptions, which I intend to make one of the artistic features of London society."

"Why, Barney," protested the young man, "I'm proud of it now. I make myself objectionable in all my clubs by continually bragging that you smile upon me. I claim that you are in art what the Universal Provider is in commerce."

"Do get him to play something while we are resting," murmured the lady, thus pouring oil on the troubled waters.

Langly sat at the piano, a disconsolate figure, paying no attention to the hum of conversation around him. His thoughts were far away, in the squalid room where the dead girl lay. Barney bustled up to him, and the musician came to himself with a start on being spoken to.

"Here are several Hungarian mazurkas—weird things—you'll like 'em. Just polish off a few for us while we have some tea, will you? They are all complimenting your playing—they're people to know a good thing when they hear it. Won't you have some refreshment yourself before you begin?"

Langly shook his head and began playing the Hungarian music. Barney sat down again beside the lady, smiling with satisfaction at being able to pose as the patron of so accomplished a musician. The lady leaned her chin on her hand and listened intently.

"How marvellously he does those mazurkas," she whispered softly. "He brings out that diabolical touch which seems to be in much of the Polish and Hungarian music."

"Yes," assented Barney cordially, "he does play like the devil, yet he is an organist in a church. Ah, well, I suppose Beelzebub looks after our music as he does our morals."

"Has he composed anything?"

"Who? Satan?"

"No, no. You know very well I'm speaking of the organist."

"Composed. Well, rather. He's an unrecognized genius, but I'm going to look after his recognition. I'm going to bring out some of his works, if he'll let me. He's a very modest man, and——"

"Another likeness to yourself."

"Exactly, exactly. I'm always pushing other people forward and neglecting my own interests; still, I'll arrive some of these days and astonish you all, don't you know. You see, our set doesn't produce men of genius like that organist. The 'upper ten' never produced a Shakespeare."

"I thought it did. Didn't Bacon write Shakespeare?"

"No, he didn't. I've looked up that question, but there's nothing in it, don't you know. No, the really great men come from the common people. The world doesn't know where to look for them, but I do, and I find 'em just as I found this man. I go for my society to the aristocracy, but for my geniuses to the democracy."

"But if society does not produce great men, how do you hope to become the greatest of painters?"

"Ah, painting's a different thing, don't you know. It has always been the gentleman's art. Leonardo and all of those chaps were great swells. Rubens—or was it Titian?—one of them, anyhow, went as Ambassador to the court of Spain in great pomp. Painters have always been the companions of kings. But I say, let us have another dance."

Once more the dreamy waltz music mingled with the swish-swish of silken skirts, sibilant on the polished floor. Langly nearly always lost himself in whatever music he played, but now it merely dulled his sorrow, and an undertone of deep grief lay beneath the frivolous harmony that rippled so smoothly and sweetly from the piano—an undertone heard by none save himself. Merry laughter, and now and then a whispered phrase as the dancers swung close to where he sat, fell on his unheeding ear, and he wished his task were done, so that he might face again the long walk lying before him. He chided himself as being ungrateful, when it seemed hard that at this time he should be called upon to minister to the amusement of a pleasure-loving party; for he remembered that the Hebrew had toiled seven years uncomplainingly for the woman he loved; so why should he grudge an afternoon, when the object was practically the same, although hope cheered the longer task, and despair clouded the shorter. Each in his way labored for his love, living and dead.

The heavy hand of Barney came down boisterously on the thinly clad shoulder of the player, and partially aroused him from his bitter reverie.

"First rate, my boy, first rate! You've done nobly, and every one is delighted—charmed!—they are indeed, I assure you. Now they're saying good-by, so give us a rousing march for the farewell—anything you like—something of your own would be just the thing; you know what I mean—a march with a suggestion of regret in it—sorry they're going, don't you know."

Barney hurried back to his guests, shaking hands, asking them to come again, and receiving gushing thanks for a most agreeable afternoon. Suddenly there knelled forth on the murmur of farewell the solemn notes of the "Funeral March," like the measured toll of a passing bell. The metallic clangor of the instrument gave a vibrant thrill to the sombre music, which was lacking in the smooth, round tones of the organ. Langly played like a man entranced, his head thrown back, his pale face turned upward, looking as if life had left it. An instantaneous chilling hush fell on the assemblage, as if an icy wind had swept through the room, freezing into silence the animated stream of conversation. Some shivered where they stood, and one girl, clasping her cloak at her throat, paused and said, half hysterically:

"If this is a joke, Mr. Hope, I must say I don't like it."

"Cursed bad taste, if you ask me," muttered one man, hurrying away.

"Oh, I say," cried Barney, as much shocked as any one at the inopportune incident, and striding toward the performer, as soon as his wits came to him, "we didn't want a dirge, don't you know."

The lady who had spoken in praise of Langly's music laid a hand on Barney's arm.

"Hush," she said gently, the glimmer of tears in her eyes, "don't stop him. Listen. That man is inspired. I never heard Chopin played like that before."

"Oh, it's Chopin, is it?" murmured Barney, apologetically, as if, had he known it, he would not have interfered.

The throng dissolved rapidly with the unwelcome chords ringing in their ears, leaving Barney and his guest standing there alone. Langly, on finishing the march, sat where he was, his long arms drooping by his side.

"Wouldn't you like to speak to him?" asked Barney.

"No, not now."

The lady stole softly out, Barney following her to the landing at the head of the stairs.

"Please don't lose sight of him," she said, giving Barney her hand. "I want you to ask him here again and let me invite the guests."

"I'll do it," said Barney enthusiastically. "That will be awfully jolly."

"No, it won't be jolly, Mr. Hope, but we'll hear some enchanting music. Good-by."

Barney re-entered the room, and found Langly standing beside the piano like a man awakened from a dream, apparently not quite knowing where he was.

"You must have something to drink," cried Barney, cordially. "You look fagged out, and no wonder. I never heard Chopin so well rendered before. I tell you, my boy, you get all out of a piano that's in it, don't you know. Now, will you have whiskey or brandy?"

Langly thanked him, but refused either beverage. He had a long walk before him and was anxious to get away, he said.

"Walk!" cried Barney. "Nonsense. Why should you walk and thus insult every self-respecting cabby you meet? I'll see about the walking; I hope I know my duty toward the hansom industry."

Barney touched an electric bell, and when his man appeared said to him:

"Just send Buttons to the King's Road for a hansom. When it comes give the cabby ten shillings and tell him he belongs to his fare for four hours. Ask him to wait at the door till his his fare comes, and meanwhile, bring in some whiskey and soda. Now, Mr. Organist—I always forget names—ah, Langly, here it is on the card, of course. Have you ever composed any music yourself? I thought so. Ever published any? I thought not. Well, my boy, we must remedy all that. You're too modest; I can see that. Now, modesty doesn't pay in London, I know, because I suffer from it myself. Heavens! If I only had the cheek of some men, I would be the most famous painter in Europe. If you bring a few of your compositions to me, I'll get a publisher for you. Will you promise? Nonsense. Not worthy? Bosh! Compared with the great composers? My dear fellow, the great composers were all very well in their way, I've no doubt, but they were once poor devils like you. Because Raphael painted, is that any reason why I should not improve on him? Not a bit of it. You and I will be old masters in painting and music some few centuries hence—you just wait and see. The great point is to realize that you're an old master while you're young and can do something. If you don't recognize the fact yourself, you may be jolly well sure no one else will—at least, not in time to do you any good here below. Do have some whiskey; it's cheering and comforting,' as the advertisements say. Well, here's to you."

"I came to see you, Mr. Hope," stammered Langly, "because Marsten—one of your father's employees—told me he thought you might—that you were good enough to—help once——"

"Oh, yes, I remember Marsten. He was here about some fellow knocking down a few policemen. Well—has he knocked down some more?"

"No, but he is in great trouble, Mr. Hope."

"Such a man is sure to be. How much is the fine?"

"His only daughter died yesterday."

"Oh, I'm very sorry to hear it—very indeed."

"He has no money, and none of the men have any. Braunt would ask no one for help, but I know that he fears there will have to be a——. He doesn't want her to be buried as a pauper—and I thought——"

"Of course, of course. I see it all. I never could understand the feeling of the poor on that subject. They seem to like a fine funeral, as if that mattered. I confess that if you give me good company while I'm alive, you may do what you please with me when I'm dead. I would just as soon lie beside a pauper as a prince, but I prefer the prince when I'm above ground. Now, how much will be needed? Of course, you don't know; no more do I. Let us say £15; if more is wanted, just telegraph me and I'll send it by messenger at once, don't you know. No, you mustn't think of sending any of it back. Use the surplus, if there is a surplus, for some charity or another. But you must come back yourself, and we'll have a talk on music. Drop in any time—there's no ceremony here. And just write your address on this card, so that I may communicate with you. I promised a lady to have you here some day to play for a few friends. You won't disappoint me, will you? Thanks, I'm ever so much obliged."

"The hansom is here, sir," said the man, entering.

"All right. I'll just see you into your cab, Mr.—er—Langly. No trouble at all; don't mention it. You can make this fellow drive you around for four hours, if you want to. He'd take you to Brighton in that time, so I suppose he'll land you anywhere in London in short order. Well, good-by, my dear fellow, and I thank you ever so much for your exquisite music."

CHAPTER XX.

After the burial of his daughter Braunt sat in his lonely room and pondered bitterly upon the failure his life had been ever since he could remember. Hard and incessant toil he did not complain of; that was his lot, and it had been the lot of his fathers. He was able to work and willing; the work was there waiting to be done; yet, through the action of men over whom he had not the slightest control, he was doomed to idleness and starvation until the capricious minds of others changed, and the signal was given to pick up the tools that had been dropped.

"Ah'll not stand it!" he cried aloud, bringing his fist down on the empty table.

But after these momentary flashes of determination the depression habitual to him settled down with increased density upon his mind, and, realizing how helpless he was, he buried his face in his hands and groaned in hopeless despair. It is difficult for a starving man to be brave for long. What could he do? Absolutely nothing. He might drop dead from exhaustion before he got a chance to earn a meal, though he tramped the huge city searching for work. The trade he knew was already overcrowded with thousands of men eager for the place he had been compelled to abandon. Even the street crossings were owned by impoverished wretches who earned what living they got by sweeping them. If he were presented with a crossing he had not the money to buy a broom. Gibbons, fool though he might be, spoke the truth when he said a workingman was but a cog in a large wheel; the wheel might get a new cog, or a new set of cogs, but the cog separated from the wheel was as useless as old iron.

Langly stole softly in upon his stricken friend, closing the door stealthily after him, with the bearing of a man about to commit a crime and certain of being caught. Braunt gave him no greeting, but glowered upon him from under his frowning, shaggy eyebrows.

"There is some money here that you are to take," said the organist timidly, placing a heap of coins on the table.

Braunt, with an angry gesture, swept away the pile, and the silver jingled on the floor.

"Ah'll have none o' thy money, as Ah've told 'ee before!" he roared. "Ah can earn ma money, if Ah boot get th' chance."

Langly, with no word of remonstrance, patiently collected every scattered piece.

"It is not my money," he said, on rising. "It was sent to you, and is for you and for no one else. It belongs to you; I have no right to it, and this very money you yourself have earned. I don't know who has a better claim to it."

Again placing the silver and gold on the table Langly tiptoed out of the room in some haste before Braunt could collect his wits and make reply.

The Yorkshireman, with curious inconsistency, had accepted without question the money which had saved his child from a pauper funeral, although he must have known, had he reflected, that the expenses were paid by some one; yet charity which did not come direct awakened no resentment in his turbulent nature, while the bald offer of money or food sent him instantly into a tempest of anger.

He thought over the organist's words. How could the money be his? How had he earned the coins? His slow brain gradually solved the problem. The money evidently had come from Hope or Monkton, or perhaps from Sartwell. He cursed the three of them, together and separate, and in his rage once more scattered the heap to the floor. The coins whirled hither and thither, at last spinning to rest on the bare boards. Braunt watched them as they lay there glittering in the dim light, his mind ceasing to cogitate on the respective culpability of employers or employed for the state of things under which he suffered. He had formerly thought of Monkton and Hope as purseproud, haughty capitalists until he saw their cringing, frightened demeanor when escorted out of the works by the policemen, and since that time he had been endeavoring to reconstruct his ideas concerning them. So, after all, why should he refuse to take money from them if one or the other had sent it? He gazed at the coins on the floor, white splotches and yellow points of light, hitching round his chair the better to see them. He had heard that a man might be hypnotized by gazing steadily on a silver piece held in the palm. As Braunt watched the coins intently he passed his hand swiftly across his brow, concentrating his gaze by half closing his eyes. He leaned forward and downward. Surely they were moving, edging closer to each other, the larger heaps attracting the various atoms of metal, as he remembered, with bewildered brain, was the case with money all the world over, which gave a plausible cause, such as one has in dreams, for the coins creeping together, although what was left of his reason told him that it was all an illusion. The sane and insane sections of his mind struggled for mastery, while Braunt leaned closer and closer over the money, sitting forward now on the very edge of his chair, breathing hard, almost wholly absorbed in the strange movement on the floor, and gradually losing interest in the mental conflict regarding the reality of what his strained, unwinking eyes told him was going on at his feet. At last he noticed that the heap was slowly but imperceptibly sliding away from him. All doubts about the genuineness of what he saw vanished. The money was trying to escape. He sprang to his feet and jumped to the door, placing his back against it.

"Oh, no," he shouted, "you're mine, mine."

Crouching down, never taking his eyes from the coins, he got upon his hands and knees, crawling toward them craftily; then pounced suddenly on the main heap, while the isolated pieces scuttled back to their former positions, pretending they had never shifted their places. He laughed sneeringly at their futile attempts to deceive him, poured the heap into his pocket, and captured each separate coin that remained by springing upon it. He searched the whole room like some animal, nosing into the corners, crouching lower and proceeding more cautiously when he spied a silver or gold piece that had rolled far, chuckling when he seized it and placed it with the others. At last he rose to his feet, slapping his pocket joyously, and making the money jingle. Once erect, the blood rushed to his head, making him dizzy. He staggered and leaned against the wall, all his hilarity leaving him. The room seemed to swim around him, and he covered his eyes with his hands.

"Ah'm goin' mad," he whispered. "Ah moost ha' summat ta eat—or drink."

Braunt staggered through the doorway to the passage and down the stair, out into the open air, which revived him and made him feel the nip of hunger again. Once on Light street he turned into the "Rose and Crown" and asked for a mug of beer. The barman hesitated. The credit of the strikers had long since gone.

"I'd like to see the color of your money," he said gruffly.

"Ah've no money. Ah'll pay thee next week; ah'm goin' to stop the strike to-day."

He brought down his open palm against his trousers pocket to emphasize his poverty, and was startled by the clink of coins. He thrust his hand down into his pocket, and pulled out some silver, gazing at it stupidly.

"Ma word," he gasped at last. "Ah thought Ah dreamt it!"

The barman laughed, and reached for an empty mug, grasping the beer pump handle.

"That dream's good enough for the 'Crown,'" he said. "Better have some bread and cheese with it."

"Yes. Be quick, man."

Standing, Braunt ate and drank ravenously.

"I can get you a plate of cold meat," said the barman, seeing how hungry the man was. The other nodded, and the plate, with knife and fork, was placed before him.

"So the strike's off, is it?" said the man, leaning his arms on the bar.

"It'll be off when Ah get there."

"Well, it's not a minute too soon. Our trade's suffered."

"More than your trade has suffered, worse luck. Dom little you'll do for a man, unless the money's in ta pouch."

"Oh, if it comes to that, neither will other people. We're not giving outdoor relief, any more than our neighbors."

Braunt ate his food and drank his beer, but made no reply. The barman's attitude was commercially correct; no one could justly find fault with it. Money was the master-key of the universe; it unlocked all doors. The barman did not care how Braunt came by it, so long as he paid for what was ordered, and the workman now found that courage was taking the place of despair, merely because he had money in his pocket. He felt that now he had energy enough to cope with the strikers, simply because he had fed while they were hungry. He would wait for no meeting, but would harangue the men on the street, those of them that were assembled in futile numbers around the closed gates, and most of them were sure to be there. If Gibbons opposed, he would settle the question by promptly and conclusively knocking him down—an argument easily comprehended by all onlookers.

Braunt drew the back of his hand across his lips when he had finished his meal, and departed for the works. He found, as he had expected, the despondent men standing there, with hands hopelessly thrust deep in their empty pockets. Their pipes were as smokeless as the tall chimneys of the factory, and that of itself showed that their condition was at its lowest ebb. They were listening with listless indifference to a heated altercation going on between Gibbons and Marsten, as if the subject discussed did not concern them.

"You might have played that card last week," Marsten cried, "but it is too late now. You can have no conference with the owners, I tell you they have left the country, and won't return for a fortnight, and by that time the works will be filled with new men. The new men are coming in on Monday. I demand that the committee call a meeting now, and that a vote be taken."

"Don't mind him, men!" cried Gibbons. "He's in Sartwell's pay."

The men didn't mind him, and paid no attention to Gibbons either. What they wanted was something to eat and drink, with tobacco to smoke afterward. If Marsten was in Sartwell's pay, they would gladly have changed places with him. Braunt made his way roughly through the crowd, elbowing the men rudely aside. None resented this; all the fight had gone out of them. Marsten seemed on the point of attacking Gibbons for the slanderous remark made, when he felt Braunt's heavy hand on his shoulder.

"The time is past for meetings, lad," said the big man, "and for talk, too. The meeting's here, and Ah'll deal with it. Stop bothering with that fool, and stand among the crowd, ready to back me up if need be."

Marsten at once did as requested, while Braunt strode across the open space, in spite of the warning of a policeman to stand back.

Few of the force were on the ground; the authorities saw there was little to fear from cowed and beaten men.

"You'll have to stand back," said the officer, "or I'll take you in charge."

"Will you so?" cried Braunt truculently, rolling up his sleeves as he turned upon his opponent. "Then I warn you, send for help. You haven't men enough here to take me in charge. Ah've had a meal to-day."

After glaring for a moment Braunt turned and strode unmolested to the closed gate.

The officer paid heed to the advice given him and sent for more men. He saw there was to be trouble of some sort.

Braunt smote his huge fist against the panels and roared at the top of his voice:

"Open the gates!"

A slight flutter of listless interest seemed to pass over the crowd. The men elbowed closer together, shuffling their feet and craning their necks forward. Those to the rear pressed toward the front, wondering what was about to happen. The few policemen looked on without interfering, waiting for reinforcements. Braunt beat with his fist against the sounding timbers, the rhythmic thuds being the only break in the stillness except when he repeated his stentorian cry, "Open the gates."

The porter at the small wicket, fearing an attack, ran for Sartwell, and met the manager coming down the stairs.

"I'm afraid there's going to be another riot, sir," said the porter breathlessly.

Sartwell did not answer, but walked to the small gate, unbolted it, and stepped out.

"What do you want?" he said.

"We want our work!" cried Braunt. "Open the gates."

Sartwell's glance swept swiftly over the men, who stood with jaws dropped, their gaunt faces and wolfish eyes turned toward the closed barriers. The manager quickly comprehended that it was no time for discussion or arranging of terms. What was needed was action, sharp and prompt. He turned toward the trembling porter and said peremptorily:

"Throw down the bar."

Whatever doubts the man may have had about the wisdom of such an order in the face of the hostile mob, he preferred to brave probable danger from the crowd rather than the certain wrath of the manager, and obeyed the command with haste. The heavy gates were slowly pushed open.

"Now, men, in with you," cried Braunt, with a scythe-like swing of his long arm. "The man that holds back now—ah, God—Ah'll break his back."

Some one stumbled forward, as if pushed from behind; then it was as if an invisible rope, holding the crowd back, had suddenly broken. The men poured through the open gateway in a steady stream. Gibbons, waving his hands like a maniac, cried:

"Stop. Stop. Listen to me for a moment."

But no one stopped, and no one listened. Braunt, his face white with anger, struggled against the incoming tide, shouting:

"Let me get at him. Ah'll strangle the whelp."

"Braunt," said Sartwell sharply, his voice cutting through the din of shuffling boots. "Leave him alone and get inside yourself. Gather the men together in the yard. I want a word with them."

Braunt's truculence at once disappeared. He turned with the men and came to where Sartwell stood looking grimly at the moving throng. No one glanced toward his master, but each went doggedly forward, with head down, as though doing something he was ashamed of. Braunt stopped at Sartwell's side and whispered:

"For God's sake, manager, set them at work, and don't talk to them. They're beaten, and there's no more to be said. Be easy with them; there's been talk enough."

"I quite agree with you," said Sartwell, in kindly manner. "Don't be afraid, but gather them together. You have the voice for it. I heard your first shout at the gates in my office."

As the last man passed through, Sartwell heard Braunt calling them to halt. A few still remained outside—Scimmins and his fellow members of the strike committee—listening gloomily to Gibbons's frantic denunciation of the wholesale defection. The manager stepped inside, and ordered the wondering porter to close the gates.

As Sartwell walked briskly toward the works he saw the men huddled together like sheep, very crestfallen, and evidently ready to endure any censure the manager saw fit to launch at their defenceless heads. Braunt, towering over them, looked anxiously about him, with the air of a huge dog not quite certain how his flock would behave.

Sartwell mounted the steps leading to the door of the former office, and spoke.

"I take it, men," he said, "that this strike is off. I want to begin fair and square; so, if there is any among you unwilling to go back to work on my terms, let him stand out now and say so."

There was a short pause, during which the silence was unbroken. No one stepped out.

"Very well," continued the manager. "That's settled and done with. Now each man knows his place in these buildings; let him get there, and remain for further instructions. No work will be done to-day, as some preparation is required before we begin. You will come to-morrow at the usual hour, and, after arrangements for work have been made, you may each draw half a week's wages in advance from the cashier; I shall give orders to that effect. A number of telegrams were to have been sent out on Saturday which it is now unnecessary to send; I will spend the money thus saved in tobacco, of which each man shall get a share as he passes out through the small gate. The large gates will not be opened until to-morrow morning."

There was a faint wavering cheer as Sartwell stopped speaking and stepped down. The men then slowly filtered into the works.

(To be continued.)

A TALE OF TWO TUNNELS.

A Romance of the Western Waters.

BY CLARK RUSSELL.

CHAPTER VI.

BUGSBY'S HOLE.

The brig Gypsy lay in the Thames off Gravesend. She had been fast at her mooring buoy for some days. She was now fully equipped for the sea, and a very handsome boat, pierced for three guns of a side, with place for a pivoted one pounder forward or aft.

In those days the peaceful trader often sailed from the Thames with guns run out. Especially did she need to give this hint did her course for traffic carry her into the ways where the galley pirate still lingered, where the slave ship troubled the waters with her hellish keel, where in short there were numerous vessels afloat of very doubtful respectability.

Here, then, lay the brig Gypsy, Capt. Jackman's heirloom, and much good had his worthy father hoped it would do him. Men in craft pushing slowly by in bows as round as a potato gazed at the brig with admiration. They would like to have such a little vessel to command. She was going to make a pleasant voyage, bet your heart. She certainly looked more like a pleasure craft rigged as a sham trader than a vessel of commerce, and many would have expected to see the dresses of ladies fluttering on board her, and a number of gentlemen, well dressed, ready for the start and for enjoyment.

It was the fifth day of the Gypsy's detention. The river was running rapidly and bearing all sorts of vessels seaward, while those forging inward had to strike with a forefoot of claws to catch the way the breeze was giving them. It was a dull afternoon. The shipping showed shabbily. The water flowed in lead, and the sky was a rainy brown, sickly with the slow motion of unwholesome yellow cloud. A large man, with a huge face, made up as it might appear of pieces of putty, the seams showing so as to render his mask of face extraordinary, overhung the bulwark rail, with his foot on a carronade, and his gaze bent on a boat that was approaching the brig almost athwart stream from the Gravesend pier. The wrinkles grew deep in his brow as the boat neared the vessel until, giving a wild laugh, he cried to himself: "Blowed if it ain't Commander Conway."

The men got their boat alongside and the Commander handed himself up the three or four steps which lay over the gangway. The huge, putty-faced man saluted him.

"I thought you'd know me, Hoey. Are they aboard?"

"You mean the master and wife, sir?"

"No one else," said the Commander.

"They are not, then, and we've been here fooling around this buoy five days."

"You're mate of this ship, aren't you?" said the Commander.

"Yes, sir," answered the man, with something of a lumpish grin.

"How many mates have you?"

"Myself and another."

"I mean to remain on board until the arrival of my daughter, and then," said the Commander firmly, almost to grimness, "shall ask you, Bill Hoey, to set me and her ashore at our home, which is a good way down Channel, as of course you know."

"I've signed articles under Capt. Jackman. I can take no liberties. I am afraid."

"We shall see. I will bring you and the others to a right state of mind before I've done with you," said the Commander, shooting sharp glances in the direction of a number of seamen who were lounging on the forecastle and smoking, and looking at the land, and apparently filling their end of the little ship with their numbers.

"Can you give us any idea when the Captain's coming off, sir?" said Hoey.

"He may be here to-day or to-morrow or next day. He'll not long tarry. I have hunted the docks for good purpose, and have gathered information which I shall communicate to the crew in proper time. Where are you bound to, do you think?"

The huge Bill Hoey made no answer and looked sheepish.

"You are cleared for the port of Oporto," continued the Commander.

"For the land of romance, more likely," answered Bill Hoey, who laughed respectfully, saluted, and crossed the deck, his dutifulness—which is one of the glories of the English seaman—being alarmed by the Commander's questions and his unrevealed knowledge.

The Commander went to the side, paid the boatmen, received his valise, dismissed the boat, and, seeing a man approaching the little companion, he gave him the valise and told him to take it below.

"Into the living room, sir?" said the man.

"Death and fire, has it come to a sailor not knowing what below means!"

"But what's your cabin," said the fellow, sulkily; "that's what I meant. There are but three, two's occupied and one's pantry."

"Take that thing below!" repeated the Commander, gesticulating with a shovel-shaped hand, and speaking in that tone of voice to which the bluejacket is used when the naval officer's digestion is a little out of repair. The Commander then made the rounds of the brig. He gazed first with astonishment and attention at the three guns, the tompions of which were in. He studied the little brig aloft and secretly admired her.

"What a villain," he said to himself, "to marry my daughter, and then put his ship to this use!"

"I beg your pardon, sir," said Hoey, the mate coming over to him, "but is your Honor sailing with us?"

"I am just doing what I blessed well please," cried the Commander, blood-red with rage at being questioned by a man filling Hoey's post. "You will do me the favor to leave me alone, merely sending the steward to me, as I am going below."

The habit of command was to be seen in the Commander. Hoey read the taut discipline of the quarterdeck in old Conway from his white hair to his buckled shoes. He touched his cap as though the Commander had been the skipper himself. Conway went below, and in a few minutes a young seaman dressed in a camlet jacket made his appearance. Conway had been looking around the cabin. It was a comfortable little berth. A little table equal to dining two persons at a time was fixed amidships, and there were three sleeping berths, one of which was the pantry.

"I shall want to sleep here," said the Commander. "That's my valise. Where can I rest my head o' night down channel?"

The young steward, recognizing something superior to the average officer he was used to, in this square, slow man of fighting aspect, said:

"The Cap'n sleeps there, and his lady there, sir. And this 'ere's been made a pantry of," and he opened the little door.

There was an unnecessary variety of crockery, all of a much too expensive sort for a common little trading brig. The Commander stood wrapped in contemplation. He then looked at a locker which ran along the ship's side parallel with the table and formed a bench.

"That'll make me all the bed I want," said he. "Which is my daughter's berth?"

"The starboard one, sir."

The Commander walked into it, followed like a sentry by the steward, who could not understand this severe, square gentleman's procedure on board a ship that did not belong to him.

Conway saw a little trunk belonging to his daughter. A handbag was hanging under a looking glass. Under the glass was a small, oil painting of Capt. Walter Jackman, stiff in high coat collars, his gift to his love. The rest consisted of the ordinary fittings of a bunk to sleep in, of a washstand, and so forth.

The Commander, taking no notice of the steward, walked on deck. He was warmly clad in thick pilot. He made for the weather quarterdeck at once, and Mr. Hoey, seeing him coming, edged forward, and trudged in the waist with askant looks aft. It was something after two. The stream of tide was slacking. The houses of Gravesend were faintly discernible through a delicate drizzle of squall that was just then blowing over them. The cold and melancholy waste, where now stand the civilizing signs of great docks and tall masts, made the scene that way soul depressing. Hard by the fort lay a little cutter of sixty or seventy tons. The pennant of the State flickered at her masthead, and Commander Conway frequently directed his attention at the little craft as he stumped his few feet of deck.

Nobody seemed to notice that Conway usurped the quarterdeck. In fact, it had breezed abroad that he was the father-in-law of the master of the brig, and Jack was therefore satisfied. For an hour or so things remained as they were. Gravesend hung in squall; Tilbury, running off its banks in bleams of mud; the little cutter, with her gaff mainsail hoisted, straining at her tackle; and all between were great ships and little ships coming and going. Those who came were bound to London town, and those who went were being steered down the noble stream to every port in the world.

An hour after Commander Conway had arrived on board the Gypsy, a wherry might have been seen putting off with feathering blade and smart whip of oar in the direction of the brig.

"Here they come," said the Commander, and he knocked the ashes of his pipe out over the rail.

The boat rapidly glanced athwart the tide; the Commander continued to strut to and fro. Hoey stood at the gangway ready to receive the party. The boat hooked on and swarmed through the rush of the waters abreast to alongside. Captain and Mrs. Jackman went on board. The boat put off, and Hoey, turning to the Commander, shouted:

"Are you going ashore, sir?"

"Yes, and with my daughter," said the Commander, advancing toward Ada, who slightly shrank.

"Pray, sir, what business have you in this vessel?" demanded Capt. Jackman, with a very dark face.

"My business is that lady whom you have feloniously removed from my roof, and now intend to carry her into some sort of calling—smuggling, they call it—which may wholly ruin her."

"Nonsense!" exclaimed the young lady. "What I did was done entirely of my own free will, and I would do it again. He is my husband. You cannot separate us; you cannot take me ashore because you wish to see us sundered."

She stood all her inches as she said these words, and spoke with her full strength of voice and the sailors listened eagerly. Reckoned on the whole, she was the finest girl out of the port of London.

"Weigh anchor!" shouted Capt. Jackman to Hoey, whose voice instantly went forward in the proper cow-like roar.

It was an old-fashioned capstan, and it was worked with a song, and there were thirty throats. By degrees those looking over the rail saw the shore slipping by and inward-bound vessels coming along fast. Sail floated to the masthead and blew balloon-like at the topgallant mast. Capt. Jackman, after speaking a word with his wife, crossed the deck, where Conway stepped, the picture of violated law, indignant parentage, and horror of the whole proceeding.

"Is it your intention, sir, to make this cruise with us? If so, you are very welcome; another nautical Sabreur will please me vastly."

"You are carrying me away at your own risk. You have stolen my daughter. I mean that you shall set me ashore, and I intend that my daughter shall accompany me home."

"To what home?" cried Jackman.

"To the home you stole her from!" shouted Conway.

"She has a home of her own!" exclaimed Capt. Jackman, drawing himself up with the gravity and dignity of an earl who talks of a belt and acres. "As you are accompanying us you shall visit us in that home and judge if your daughter is not perfectly comfortable."

With that he turned on his heel and crossed the deck to speak to Mrs. Jackman.

Meanwhile those who noticed anything had observed that the cutter lying in shore had loosed her mainsail and was getting her anchor. The evening gathered. The cutter was manifestly giving chase. The brig floated in lofty and silent contempt through the wide reaches. At 7 o'clock the Captain, followed by Ada, came out of the cabin and found the Commander pacing the deck, smoking a pipe. Capt. Jackman, slightly raising his hat, went up to him and said:

"Since, sir, you are deliberately a guest of the brig's, you will allow me to force her hospitality upon you."

"Oh, presently! A biscuit, that will do, thank you," answered the Commander in his gruffest notes. "I am an old sailor."

The Captain, making no answer, crossed into the gloom, where, he perceived, stood the burly shape of Bill Hoey.

"Summon all hands aft; I have something to say to them," said he, and then rejoined his wife, who had remained silently watching her father pacing the deck, and trying in vain to imagine what he intended to do.

There came aft, on the quarter deck, a large number of men for so small a craft, despite the fact that vessels went very liberally handled in those days. They filled the waist and all about the mainmast, and the Commander, poising his pipe at his mouth, stood watching them in something of a posture of astonishment. The dusk rendered faces and figures imperfect. It might be seen, however, that, in addition to her batteries of guns and stern and bow chasers, she carried a crew as powerful almost as a man-of-war of small rating would have entered.

Capt. Jackman, leaving his wife's side, stepped in front of the men, and said, in a high note of exultation:

"Men, I have called you aft, not to make you a speech, but to give you two or three facts, all of which I know will warm you to the very roots of your souls. I told you, for purposes of signing, that I had pretended we were bound to the Portugal coast, but that, in reality we were bound away in search of a treasure, the particulars of which I gave you. That was a lie. We are no treasure seekers, unless it lie in the hold of others. Men," he cried, now beginning to gesticulate and to warm up with his fancies, "this beautiful little brig has been fitted up as a pirate"—the Commander's pipe dropped from his hand—"and a smuggler," continued Jackman. "I have a date for a ship sailing from Lisbon. She will make your fortune, and I swear you will go in no risk. That is what I have to say to you, men. Turn it over, and consider how magnificently it must work, seeing that in the south of Cornwall I already possess a splendid estate of smuggling steps and caves, and a little house in which my wife will live till we have completed our business, in which time Commander Conway may be glad to prove one of the party. He will be welcome."

A curious murmur rose from among the crew. No man could clearly catch the exact word or groan. The cutter astern was leaning over to the damp evening blast, which was now beginning to breeze up, and her wake went astern of her as though it was the shimmer of her canvas.

"Bear a hand in making sail, Mr. Hoey," shouted Jackman, and the great fellow answered with a roar and the sailors sprang about.

Swift as was the brig, however, the cutter proved a swifter keel, and by half-past 10 o'clock that night she had ranged within easy hail of the Gypsy.

"Brig ahoy!" came a loud voice through the moist dissembling gloom. "What ship are you and where are you bound to?"

"We are the brig Gypsy, of and from London, and bound to the coast of Portugal," answered Capt. Jackman, who had sprung on the rail when the other had hailed him.

The Commander rushed to the ship's side. "Nothing of the sort, sir. He's no honest ship; he's going for a pirate and a smuggler. I am Commander——"

He had shouted this in a voice like a speaking trumpet, when Capt. Jackman rounded upon him, fiercely levelling a pistol at his head as he did so.

"Down, you old dog!" he cried, stepping close to Conway. "Speak another word, and even your daughter's presence shan't save your life! Go below, sir, so as to be out of danger! below, sir!—below, sir, I say!" This he said, pushing him toward the companionway.

"I'll square the yards yet with you, young man!" exclaimed the Commander, and with a lingering look at the cutter, that was whitening the gloom with foam and canvas to windward, he went below.

Shortly after the Commander had descended into the cabin his daughter arrived. A bright lamp was swinging, the remains of the supper were upon the table. The girl looked fiercely under her black crooked brows at her father, and said, in a voice of hot contempt:

"What right have you on board this ship?"

"The right of a father," shouted the Commander, "to fetch his daughter away from a pirate and a smuggler."

"You cannot separate us," she cried.

"You shall go ashore with me, or I shall stick to this ship," he answered.

She arched her mouth into a sneer and said: "I would advise you to leave us to our fate. You are never likely to hear of us; and your reputation, of which you think highly, will be safe. If you interfere——. But as it is you have already given the news to the revenue cutter on our quarter, even while our own sailors may be considering whether they shall sail in the ship or not."

As she spoke these words there was a sharp hail abeam, quite audible in the cabin. It was not answered from the brig, which was now sheeting through the sea under a tall, leaning mainroyal, beating the water into sifted snow with a drive of her round bows. The hail was repeated. A minute later the Gypsy was fired at; the glare of the gun illuminated the little cabin porthole. The shot made the old hull thrill, and she broke off somewhat wildly to a sudden frightened whirl of smoke. The Commander, fully expecting that Capt. Jackman would heave to, rushed on deck just in time to behold some men abaft the wheel of the Gypsy bringing a nine-pounder to bear upon the little foaming hull. As he rushed to the side the gun was fired. A sharp sound of cracking followed, and, more to the consternation than the gratification, perhaps, of the brig's company, they beheld the fabric of mainmast cut sheer in halves by the shot, and the whole litter and smother of gear and canvas incumbering the deck. She came to a stand. The Gypsy sped on.

"Do you know what you have done, sir?" cried the Commander.

"I have served him as I intend to serve others," was the answer. "You stand in my way. I am an honest man; this is a clean ship. What law can justify that scoundrel's act in firing at me?"

"Your refusal to answer the hail of a King's ship. What are you bringing yourself into?" And with something frantic in his manner the old fellow went in long strides to the stern.

He stood watching the cutter sending up signals. They might have been colors of danger, hurried flashes of distress. No notice was taken on board the brig; in fact, the crew seemed all too much afraid of what had happened to be willing to stop the Gypsy, even had the order to back her topsail been given. A King's cutter hulled, dismasted, placed hors de combat by an English brig, which had impudently refused to heave to to legitimate demands. Who was this Capt. Jackman, anyhow? It had got mysteriously whispered about, through God knows what source, that he was a little mad. It may have come from his last ship. It may have been detected in the docks and coolly noted and made nothing of by the reckless seamen who had agreed to sail with him for fine pay and a good share of the treasure.

The wide stretch of river looked melancholy with the black of the night and the dimness of the stars and the dull gleam of the heads of the running sea. The Commander, with folded arms, stood looking in the direction where the cutter was sunk in the gloom. His mind was distracted. He had counted upon the civility and respect of Capt. Jackman; on the contrary, his life had been threatened, and he was now being carried away to sea in spite of his protests. He could endure his reverie no longer, and after looking about him in search of Capt. Jackman, and beholding no one aft but the huge figure of Bill Hoey keeping the watch, he went into the cabin.

There he found the Captain and Ada, late as it was, in earnest conversation. They broke off when he entered, and the Captain stood up, but the girl stared at her father with angry looks of impatience.

"We are pleased that you have come below, sir," said the Captain respectfully, indicating a chair and brandy, and other materials, in as many flourishes of his hand. "We should like a good understanding between us."

"I am very wishful that that should be," said the Commander, who understood that this lover of good understandings carried loaded pistols in his pockets, and that he had one in his breast then.

"You are on board my brig," said Capt. Jackman, "without invitation. Do not you think you are guilty of great rudeness?"

The Commander pointed, mute with passion, to his daughter.

"You cannot divorce us by being here," continued Capt. Jackman, with a slow white smile and a sarcastic face, and eyes full of dangerous light. "She is my wife, sir, above and beyond your control absolutely."

"You will set me ashore with her, nevertheless," exclaimed Commander Conway.

"Yes, you shall be set ashore certainly, and my wife and I will accompany you. Does that satisfy you, sir?"

"Where is the place?" said the Commander, with an angry shuffle of suspicion.

"In Cornwall."

"It is your home, perhaps."

"You shall see it," exclaimed Ada. "And when you have enjoyed its beauties you will return to the little square house."

The Commander looked from one to the other. He was very much of an old fool, but not so foolish as to miss this, that this couple were not to be dealt with by him, that he had started on a fool's chase, in which, if he was not very careful with the fellow opposite, he might lose his life. He looked up at the hour that ticked in a clock under the little hatch. It was twelve. He said:

"I will take my rest here, on this locker."

The Captain bowed to him. "You have had no refreshment. May I," said he, "offer you something to eat?"

"I will thank you for a biscuit and a drop of that brandy." He spoke with reluctance, the ill breeding of which caused his daughter to fix one of her handsomest though gloomiest stares upon him.

When the sun rose the brig was standing down Channel. Sail was heaped on her. She often foamed to her catheads. She was making a triumphant course swift and fine. The sea about her lay in frosted silver, and the ships around her leaned in shafts of light. The Commander early made his appearance. Observing his daughter Ada to be standing alone at the taffrail, he accosted her.

"Do you not think yourself a very unnatural child?"

"I am free. Leave me, father, or forbear at all events from criticising my behavior," answered the girl, flashing her hottest looks upon him.

"You know that Capt. Jackman deliberately stole £1,500 of the moneys of his owners for the purpose of fitting out his brig for a piratical enterprise?"

"You must prove all that," she cried.

"He has fired upon a revenue cutter, and stands to be transported for life."

"And what then?" she cried, with a bold laugh of contempt. "Wherever he goes he'll find me near."

"But you seem to forget that Capt. Jackman, by confessing that he is going as a pirate, stands to be hanged, and you may see his corpse on the black mud of the Thames revolving at the finger of a gibbet in irons, a brutally degraded wretch. My God! what have you done?" A great sob rent the old man's breast.

"Father," answered the girl, "I am sorry to have caused you grief, but my die is cast, and I beg of you to say no more against my action or against my husband."

She left him and went to the rail, and watched, with a hot, angry face, the white foam sheaming by. She was absolutely reckless and defiant. She had got her man and meant to stick to him at all hazards. The Commander walked over to her suddenly, and putting his arm on her shoulder, exclaimed:

"Do you know Capt. Jackman is insane?"

"You will have to prove all your statements," she cried, without turning her head.

"He is a madman," cried old Conway. "I saw it in him when we met. His owner told me that he was a madman. Certain statements had been made about him by the crew of his last ship, and in any case he would not have sailed under their flag again."

"Mad or not mad, I love him," said the girl, again crossing the deck to avoid her father.

Meanwhile the crew remained quiet and obedient. They could not possibly mistake the ship's errand and the hazard they ran. Yet they acted as though they had made up their minds to the consequences. Their behavior of obedience greatly puzzled old Conway, who tried to get at one and another of them, but somehow they did not choose to speak. Bill Hoey in particular was peculiarly reticent, considering that he was plied by a man who had been a naval commander, and who carried the authority of the flag. He would tell nothing, he knew nothing, he supposed they were going a-pirating since the Captain said so but who was to tell but that the Captain, whose royal yard did not seem very well trimmed by the lifts, might change his mind, go a-slaving instead, go a-hunting for whales—in short, the gentleman well knew there was a great deal of business to be done on the seas.

As the brig passed down the coast the Commande, would, from time to time, take an eagle view of the starboard horizon, hoping that the cutter had been fallen in with, her case reported, a messenger despatched by land to a port where they had a frigate which would intercept the Gypsy. But nothing in the shape of a man-of-war showed the whole way down. They were favored by fine weather, and in places the sea was white with shafts of canvas. The brig took care to speak nothing. She sailed through the deep without sign, and her secret, whose confession would have brought half the ships she sighted in fiery pursuit of her, remained her own.

How did the Commander fare? His daughter was not a lovable creature, though a very fine woman. She was not one to sit at table while her father walked the deck hungry, nor was the Commander one to walk hungry. He said to Capt. Jackman:

"I had counted upon your putting me ashore with my daughter at my home down the coast, otherwise I should not have intruded upon you, but since I am here I must be fed or die. Therefore I will thank you to allow me to join you at your meals."

"There has been no intrusion, sir," said the Captain, in his elegant style. "We are glad to have you with us. We hope you will think better of your resolution, and remain as one who can command us in an expedition which must result in filling our vaults with wealth without risk." The Commander made an extraordinary face. "At all events I have to go ashore," exclaimed the Captain, "at Bugsby's Hole with my wife, and we will take you with us, and perhaps, sir, a little chat in our quiet home, while this brig comes off shore here in readiness for my return, may result in my scheme gaining your favor."

The subject then ended, and the Commander henceforth fed at the table with his daughter and son-in-law. It was an ignominious position, and the food nearly choked the retired officer. But though he had been a gallant sailor, he had the usual weaknesses of the human animal, and among these were hunger and thirst.

A day and a night of the bitter weather of the Chops drove the brig to the southward under reefed canvas, and some of the sailors wondered if she was going to the Portugal coast, where Jackman had promised them a galleon full of precious commodity. She cleverly regained her place in a couple of days, and on a bright, quiet Sunday morning lay within sight of the part of the Cornwall cliffs which may here be called Bugsby's Hole. The air shone with the white light of winter, the seat of the surf was sullen. This line of coast is low and livid, and its sky line ran sharp, with not a human form to break its dreary continuity. All had been prearranged, and when the brig's maintopsail had been brought to the mast on the ship's arrival at about three-quarters of a mile distant from the land, a large boat was lowered and a quantity of luggage was put into it. Then Ada entered, next followed the Commander, finally the Captain, after an earnest conference with Bill Hoey, his chief mate, the man who was to be left in trust. The boat passed quickly over the long heave of sea which here runs with the weight of the Atlantic, and watching their opportunity the men contrived to handsomely beach her within a short walk of Bugsby's Hole. The seamen carried the baggage into the vault, and were followed by the Captain, his wife, and the Commander. The vault was a fine cutting of a gradual slope, charged on either hand with marvellously contrived hiding places. They gained the entrance by land, and Capt. Jackman was loud in his praise of the beautiful tunnel he had passed through which was his property.

"Carry the luggage to that little house yonder," said Ada. "That is my home, father. We will convert it into a castle."

The house that was to be transferred ultimately into a castle, without regard to the laws of the land and the opinions of respectable seamen sailing the high seas, was an edifice worthy to berth a ploughman and his family and to make them a good home. A middle-aged servant had been living in the house for some days, and all was in preparation. Fires burned in the grates, a leg of mutton smoked in the kitchen, and a canary in the living room, which was immediately entered by the house door, sung a loud song of welcome.

"This, sir, will be our residence," said Capt. Jackman to the Commander, who was staring agape and aghast around him, "until we have stored some of the most secret of the hiding places we have just passed with easily negotiable articles. I have taken you into my confidence, for you will not betray me. I do not fear death." He smiled strangely as he looked at the Commander. "I must be a rich man, and Ada, my wife and my love," he exclaimed, turning a look of touching tenderness upon the girl, "will share in my fortune and possess it when I die. You can, if you choose, go away and start the hounds of your own service after us. You will not do this. You will not, with your own hand, bring your son-in-law to the gallows." The Commander stared at him passionately, but in silence. He had long ago exhausted the language of horror. He had no further protests to offer against his son-in-law's daring scheme.

So nothing more was said in this way, and in the afternoon, at about two o'clock, when the leg of mutton had been eaten, Capt. Jackman took a touching farewell of his wife. Again and again he pressed her to his heart. He gravely saluted the Commander, not seeming then to have words for him. Where was he going? This madman—though to be sure, it was still the age of the pirate, the smuggler, and the slaver—was bound away down the Portugal coast to intercept and plunder a large rich ship which was sailing to the Indies on a date of which he had received private notice. The boat that had brought the party ashore lay in wait. He entered it, and was rowed aboard the ship, which lay at about a mile distant. Ada and the Commander stood watching the vessel. The girl was too proud to weep before her father, and gazed haughtily at the picture on the sea. But what was happening there?

"Have you a glass?" almost shrieked the Commander. "By heaven, Ada, I believe the men have seized the ship."

While he said it the vessel was a scene of commotion and disorder. A boat had been lowered, and five men had pulled hastily under the stern. The topsail had been swung, then hauled afresh and the foretopsail backed, and within two hours of Capt. Jackman having gone on board his ship to seize the Portugal galleon a boat of the brig, with Bill Hoey steering her, was swept to Bugsby's Hole.

Commander Conway and his daughter ran down the tunnel to hear what had happened. The huge form of Hoey stood in the orifice and beyond lay the boat in the clear gleams and lights of the high Atlantic afternoon, with men tending her, and some gathering near to Hoey to hear what was to follow.

"I think you are a retired Commander in the navy," said Hoey, respectfully saluting the Commander.

"That's so. What's wrong with you?" answered the Commander, with great agitation.

"We want you to take charge of the brig to a naval port and tell our story for us," said Hoey. "We was tricked into this job. We never signed for piracy and the likes of that. We was to seek for a treasure that lay hid in an island. We laid hold of him when he came aboard and told him plainly that we had mutinied and meant to carry the ship and himself to where we could report the case to an Admiral. He knew we were no pirates. He turned black with passion. 'Who's going to be answerable,' says I, 'for wrecking that there revenue cutter?' He slapped his hand to his pocket, and I sprang upon him, and some of us ran him below and locked him in his own cabin. It had a big stern window, which we had overlooked, and, being naturally mad, as all hands for some time had been aware, he goes and proves it by dropping overboard and drowning himself, and I came off at once, sir, to give you the news and ask for instructions."

A long, wild, incommunicable shriek rang through the tunnel, but Ada stood upright nevertheless.

"Are you sure he is drowned?" asked the Commander.

"Oh, yes, sir," answered Hoey. "A search was made and nothing of him was seen."

"Oh, Walter," moaned the girl; then screaming at Hoey, "Ruffians! Cowards! Murderers!" she swung on her heels and walked wildly up the tunnel.

"Ada," shouted the Commander after her, "you will come along with us?"

"I will drown myself, too, if you carry me on board!" she howled, just glancing around to say so, and he then went up the tunnel and out of sight of them.

The Commander knew his daughter; he was perfectly well aware that no entreaty was to move her, in such a mood as now possessed her, into compliance with any wish of his. He lingered, considered, thought to himself, "She has her little home; when all this passion and grief has passed I will come down to her and bear her away." He entered the boat, but, in justice it must be said, with the most reluctant heart, and eyes which clung to the land.

And was our friend successful in coaxing his daughter out of the tremendous solitude of Bugsby's Hole? He knew that he stood no chance when the messenger whom he had despatched to inquire after her, not caring himself to be visible, returned with the information that it was believed by the simple adjacent villagers that she had lost her true bearings, and was, in fact, out of her course. This could be asserted, that every night, blow high or blow low the poor, unhappy woman, whom her father never could persuade to abandon her wretched home, placed a lamp in a seaward facing window. She is long since dead, but her story is much as it is here related.

THE END.

ENGLAND AND HUDSON'S BAY.

A New War Route Wanted—Aims of the Coming Exploration.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* The British Government, in its promotion of the imperial defence idea, seems to have got hold of the governing classes of Canada. The cheap system of rewards by titles is an effective one. Britain signs a treaty with the United States for the settling of all disputes by arbitration, and calmly proceeds with the work of fortifying the seacoast cities of Canada and carrying out other schemes intended to be of service in war.

The latest work that Britain has decided to carry out at Canada's expense is the exploration of Hudson's Bay, that immense and almost unknown sea on Canada's northern boundary. There is no doubt that this work is intended primarily to be of benefit to England in her imperial defence schemes, and yet preparations are going on at Ottawa for carrying out the whole undertaking at Canada's expense. The avowed object of the expedition, which will pass next summer in northern waters, is to ascertain the time of the opening and closing of navigation in Hudson's Straits and the extent and value of the fishery resources. An Ottawa despatch naively admits, however, that "incidentally other matters will be inquired into." Incidentally it may be stated that these other matters concern the availability of Hudson's Bay as a route for the conveyance of food supplies in time of war and as a means of landing troops at such an important base as Winnipeg in case of any trouble with the United States. The visionary Hudson Bay railway scheme, which has cost Canada much money and is likely to cost much more, is an integral part of the plan; representatives of the railway will accompany the expedition at the public expense.

At the last session of Parliament the Government placed a sum in the estimates to provide for the exploration of the bay by this expedition, announcing at the same time that it might deem it advisable to continue the work during the following season, should the results achieved justify this course. Negotiations are now in progress for the purchase of a suitable steamer, and it is announced that a sealer owned in Dundee probably will be selected. Commander Wakeman of the Department of Marine and Fisheries will probably be in charge of the expedition. The vessel will sail from Sydney, Cape Breton, in May, and cruise around outside of the straits until the ice disappears, or about June 1. The steamer will pass the summer in the bay, remaining as late in the season as is possible. A party of geologists will accompany the expedition to make surveys and report as to the occurrence of minerals along the coast.

One point of peculiar interest to Americans is that this expedition may lead to the declaration that Hudson's Bay is a closed sea. The Canadians have long been jealous of the fishing rights enjoyed in those waters by American vessels, and it is well known that many American whalers cruise within the waters of the bay every summer. There are very few Canadian boats engaged in the trade, but the Newfoundlanders have turned their attention to it recently, and the American schooners may soon find it such a sea of solitude a few seasons hence. Besides, they may have to dodge around corners or icebergs to avoid Canadian revenue cutters. This may provide the first test of the Salisbury-Olney treaty.

The weakest spot in Great Britain's armor of defence is her dependence on foreign countries for her food supply. Fully two-thirds of the foodstuffs imported come from the United States, and, in case of war with the United States or an entanglement in which America was arrayed against her, her position would be very precarious. At present Canada would be entirely inadequate to the task of feeding her august mother, but with her western country peopled and the prairies producing grain she could do considerable in that direction. The great question is the safety of the line of communication. Grain-laden vessels from Montreal or Halifax would be exposed to attack, and the task of protecting them would be a formidable one. The more northerly route, however, with Newfoundland as an immense bulwark, would present considerably less difficulty. From Davis Straits to the North of Ireland the route lies through unfrequented waters, with no land, let alone a hostile one, on the track. Besides, the route is much shorter than that from Montreal or Halifax. It can be made available for only a short season each year, but then the uninterrupted use of such a route for even three months would be a consideration of the greatest importance in war.

W. D. B.

MONTREAL, Jan. 27.