

CHAPTER IV.

A rude and boisterous captain of the sea.

DOUGLAS.

Under his eye-brows looking still askance,

— — — — —
 He lower'd with dangerous eye-glance ;
 His rolling eyes did never rest in place,
 But walk'd each way for fear of hid mischance,
 Holding a lattice still before his eyes,
 Through which he still did peep.

SPENCER.

THE Bailie had been wisped down with straw, washed with soap and water, and dried with a towel by the hostess and Peggy Galravage,—the boards had been replaced as a table, and the ranks of the company restored after their late discomfiture,—and the stoups had begun to circulate with renewed energy, when the door opened, and their attention was attracted by the entrance of a new personage.

This was a tall, swaggering, sea-faring man, dressed in a tawdry anomalous sort of sea uniform, of blue, faced with orange, ornamented with large brass buttons, and broad gold lace. On his head he wore an enormous cocked hat, a huge cutlass was suspended at his side by a broad buff belt, whilst the butt ends of two brace of brass-mounted pistols were seen appearing from his girdle. His black curly hair, and his large whiskers and eyebrows, gave uncommon fierceness to features, naturally handsome, had they not been disfigured by an expression of libertinism, mingled with certain touches of depravity, appearing to argue a ready inclination to crime, and a fitness for executing it, but partially disguised by that look of careless freedom characterizing the hearty sailor on shore.

“ Ah ! Captain Brandywyn,” exclaimed several voices at once. “ What ? are you come at last ? how goes it with you ? and what has become of you ? ”

“ Ha, ha ! my boys, all assembled I see ! ” cried he, as he leered around him. “ What cheer, my hearty fellows ? So I see you have broke bulk already—is’t not prime Bourdeaux, eh ?—

I have thirty casks on board as good—never shipped better since I have been in the trade. I sent that sample ashore, when I was off the head at hap-hazard, just to let you know that I was on the coast, to give you a notion what sort of tippie I carried, and to wet your whistles a-bit. I would ha' been here at the broaching of the barrel too, an I had not been afeard of the hawks to the eastward. But, sink them, they were on the look-out, and I was forced to push away and keep a decent offing; so, taking advantage of the wind, I ran over for the north coast, did a little business there in the meanwhile, and then came walloping back with the breeze that sprung up at sun-set. But just as I was about to take up my anchorage, I saw a suspicious-looking little vessel lying in my very birth, so I hauled my wind and stood off a bit, and though I did see your blaze, I thought it as well to come ashore in my boat, to know how the land might lay before I ——”

Here he suddenly paused, for having by this time thrown his eyes all round the company, they rested upon Cleaver, when, starting invo-

luntarily, and earnestly gazing at him, he exclaimed, "What! Clea——"

His presence of mind seemed to return to him in time to prevent his finishing the word, and correcting himself with uncommon readiness, he added,

"What! Cleghorn among you? no, no, no—I see, I am mistaken;—this damned hovel is so smoky, that I swear I took that good humour-ed-looking gentleman for the Custom-house Captain himself, and so thought I had thrown myself into the very jaws of the lion."

"How could you suppose, Captain," said Macgillivray, "that we could have such a guest to welcome you? These are two English gentlemen on a pleasure trip in that same little vessel which so alarmed you. Pray let me make you acquainted with one another," continued he, as he led the seemingly unwilling Captain up to the strangers. "Mr Oakenwold, this is our worthy friend, Captain Brandywyn, formerly of the navy, and now commanding a merchantman. He is a rough diamond, Sir, but not the less valuable on that account. And this, Captain Brandywyn, is Captain Cleaver, to whom you

will the rather more naturally draw, as being sons of the same element ; for sailors, you know, stick together like pitch.”

But never was proposition less borne out by appearances, for Brandywyn seemed to be repelled rather than attracted by the sight of his brother tar, and Cleaver had been too busily employed with some deviled herring roes, done by Peggy Galravage according to his own directions, to notice the entrance of any one. He was nevertheless too polite not to rise when Macgillivray introduced Brandywyn to him. He got up, his fork in his hand, with a large piece of the rich food impaled on it, made his bow, his eye being all the time directed downwards on the morsel about to relish his mouth, and was in the act of saying something civil, without thinking much to whom it was addressed, when Brandywyn drew hastily back, and muttered, in a sulky tone,

“ Pshaw ! Macgillivray—curse your Italian politeness ! you are enough to sicken a dog with your palaver.”

And so saying, he hastened to seat himself beyond Partenclaw, half way down the table

where, in defiance of the numerous questions and remarks addressed to him from all quarters, he seemed to fall into a reverie, during which he stole frequent and long looks at Cleaver, when he thought himself unobserved, as if he wished to scrutinize every feature of his countenance.

Cleaver, whose politeness amounted to no more than what a sailor commonly serves out to every one he meets on shore, as matter of course, pretty much in the same way as he does his guineas, eagerly returned to his deviled roes, without perceiving the strangely mysterious conduct of Brandywyn. But it did not escape Amherst, whose eyes had been rivetted upon the ruffian-looking seaman from the first moment of his entrance.

“ Captain Cleaver,” said Sir Alisander, “ you and Captain Brandywyn may have met before. Sailors are often jostled together by the jumble of accidents. It is not unlikely you may have seen one another on the shores of Italy for instance, or may be——”

No sooner had Brandywyn heard the name of Italy, than he started, and hastily interrupting the Baronet, stammered out, in a flurried,

but very earnest manner, "Italy! I never was in Italy in my life—at least I mean—that is—I should have said—I never was at Naples."

"Why," replied the Baronet, with his usual good-natured laugh, "nobody talked of Naples; yet, if I mistake not, since you have named it, I think I have heard you talk of the place."

"In troth, and so have I," said Deacon M'Candy, hiccupping as he spoke, for he was now beginning to get very drunk. "I swear—that is to say, in my faith, I'm sure, I've often heard ye crack o' that city, and mair by token, I've heard ye brag o' the braw macaroni and the sugar confecks they manufactur' there; and I canna be mista'en, seeing these are articles mair especially in my line, ye ken, Captain, so that I canna but mind it."

"Aye, indeed," said Macflae, "and I remember hearing you tell of the eruption and eructations of that famous hill called Mount Vesuvius—and moreover, of that popish miracle of the liquifaction, or deliquation of the blood of their patron saint, whose name is like unto that of one of our months, but whether it be January or February, I cannot just remember at the pre-

sent period or epocha. But surely, and of a truth, much more do I recollect to have heard you narrate of the curiosities and extraord'nars of that famous town, city, or metropolis."

Brandywyn seemed to fret inwardly at these remarks, vague and unmeaning as they were. But, like some wolf attacked by ignorant rustics and vulgar yelping sheep dogs, he roused himself; and with a loud, but apparently forced laugh, which increased the savage expression of the passion he could but ill conceal, he exclaimed,

" Belay ! belay !—what ! will ye not allow a sailor to use the privilege of a traveller, and to cram a little ? I tell ye, I may have been off the mouth of the bay of Naples, or perhaps in its mouth ; but if ever I was ashore in the city, blast me, I say !—so let's have no more on't."

And so lifting a large stoup of claret to his head, he quaffed it off at one draught, and then muffling himself up in a cloak, the Neapolitan fashion of which particularly struck Amherst, and saying—" Well, I must go and see what the Charming Sally is about ; I shall have her in before many hours are over, so those who may want

to be customers will keep a look-out at the old place,"—he precipitately left the house.

Cleaver, who had at first paid little or no regard to Brandywyn, had his attention somewhat excited by the earnest and suspicious manner in which he denied having been at Naples. He had looked at him, and his face instantly struck him as not entirely strange to him, though he could not immediately remember where he had met with it. But he had now little time allowed him for cogitation; for the empty stoups began to rattle more frequently against the sides of the already half-hollow cask, and the discharge from the spigot-hole nearly amounted to a constant stream. The tongues of the revellers, too, began to ring such an incessant larum of nonsense, that nothing was to be distinguished in the general Babel of voices, except an occasional howl from some Bacchanal, raising a note louder than the rest, or the screeching verse of some ribald song, to which nobody listened, because every one wished to be the person listened to.

Sir Alisander himself, being naturally of a less buoyant and more even temperament than the rest, maintained a state of tolerable sobriety, but

could no longer preserve even the semblance of control over his troops, although he frequently thundered on the crazy boards with the end of his gold-headed cane.

“ I wish to Heaven we could slip away from this boisterous scene,” said he to Amherst ; “ but I dare not desert my post without giving dire offence—I shall have a headache for a month after all this noise.”

And truly it was indeed overpowering enough ; every one striving to bring his own individual supposed talent into notice, and no one being disposed to yield the arena to his neighbour. Some half dozen to be sure there were, who, wiser than the rest, or perhaps more deeply overloaded with drink, lay snoring in different attitudes, with their arms and heads resting on the table. Now it was that Partenclaw, being very desirous to get up a glee, had ranged himself with Blutterbog and Windlestraw, like choristers upon a form, where they began to strain their throats in ineffectual endeavours to tune their voices, producing a jarring discord, very much improved by the drunken attempts of Deacon M‘Candy, who was trying to roar out,

“ Hey, Johnny Cope, are ye waukin yet,
Or are ye sleeping, I would wit? ”—

Now it was that Bailie Sparrowpipe insisted upon exhibiting to the company the very minuet he had danced with Miss Sally Hopkins, at a grand farewell ball given by him at the Hog and Pitcher in Wapping, on the occasion of his leaving London.—Now it was that Julius Cæsar Macflae was in vain attempting to procure listeners to a speech he had composed, and spoken with great applause, in the Rum Club of Kingston, on some subject then under discussion in the House of Assembly ; but Demosthenes himself, when rehearsing to the raging elements, spoke not more unprofitably. He jumped upon a stool, slapped his breast, shut his eyes, forced down his eye-brows, clenched his fist, and hammered the air ; but all to no purpose. At last the barrel at the upper end of the room catching his eye, a faint hope seized him that he might have some chance of making a stronger impression from so elevated a rostrum. The idea no sooner struck him, than staggering towards it, he mounted with considerable difficulty, and poising

himself erect, he began to spout forth his oration in interrupted jets and spurts, something resembling those issuing from the spiggot of the barrel itself when it lacked air. He screamed,—he vociferated,—but attracted no attention, save from the Deacon, whose animal spirits, generally sluggish when in their wonted state of quiescence, but now spurred into furious gallop by the liberal potations he had imbibed, knew no bounds.

No sooner did he perceive Macflae perched on the hogshead, than, rushing towards it, he ascended it with an activity no one could have expected from his round bulky figure, and short thick legs, and getting astride on it, like a Bacchus, he began roaring out his favourite song of “Johnny Cope” with the lungs of a Stentor.

Cæsar might have fancied that he was partially heard before, but now his speech was annihilated. If he had possessed the eloquence of Marc Antony himself, it would have availed him nothing, when opposed to a voice that resembled the noise of a blast-furnace in an iron-foundery. The irritated Julius turned round upon him with bitter rage, and with a heat which nothing but Cayenne pepper and a West Indian sun could

have generated, he grappled the Deacon by the throat, whilst M'Candy in his turn seized the orator by the legs, so that Macflae would have been certainly thrown down by the suddenness and violence of his gripe, had he not supported himself by twisting the assailant's neckcloth with both hands, until the purple face of poor M'Candy actually became as black as one of his own plums.

The struggle now grew desperate. It was too much for the rotten gantrees,—it cracked and gave way, and down came the hogshead with a noise like thunder. All was hushed in an instant, and on rolled the barrel down the inclined plane of the uneven floor, like the stone of Sisyphus, leaving Cæsar and M'Candy struggling in a sea of claret that poured from the bung-hole opened by the shock. The Baronet and Amherst had hardly time to get out of its way, when bang it went against the end of the crazy form on which the three choristers were standing in all the ecstasy and self-imagined harmony of their first stave, and the legs giving way before it, the whole orchestra was precipitated on the table, which failing in its turn, was involved in a second

ruin, and the chorus of snorers having their support thus suddenly removed, were thrown head foremost into the centre, where nothing was to be seen among the broken lumber but a moving heap of arms, heads, and legs, kicking and sprawling in so confused a manner, as to make it utterly impossible to say to whom the various members belonged. Those who had been so suddenly and rudely awakened, finding themselves, they knew not how, on the floor in the midst of such a *melée*, and supposing they had had foul play, and that some vile trick had been played them, began to fight, every man against him who was nearest to him, until in a very few minutes, nothing was to be seen but bloody faces, broken noses, and bunged up eyes, whilst the glee of the musical *Partenclaw* and his harmonious associates was changed into a medley of groans, screams, and execrations. Sir Alisander, Cleaver, Amherst, Macgillivray, and one or two of the soberest, who had escaped from the general overthrow, endeavoured for some time to separate the combatants; but this they found not only impossible to execute, but dangerous to attempt; for so numerous were the arms and legs that were

striking and kicking in all directions, that one might as well have expected to come in contact with the complicated machinery of a hackling-mill without risk, as within reach of these animated flails.

Sir Alisander seeing, to his great satisfaction, that the claret had all run out, and that his official duties were consequently terminated, thought it the part of a prudent general to sound a retreat whilst he could draw off his forces without observation, and communicating his intentions to Amherst and his friend, they grasped their arms and cloaks, and called O'Gollochar. The Baronet, in his hurry to escape, forgot to send for his old coach, and notwithstanding night air, and rheumatism, he sallied forth with them, leaving Macgillivray and the two females, whose shrill voices were now pitched like trumpets far above the deep roar of the battle, to restore peace and order as they best might.

The approach of dawn was just visible in the eastern horizon, when the party left the public-house. The country, as far as they could see, exhibited a variety of soil and surface, cultivated fields being intermixed with furzy pastures, and

occasionally, though more rarely, with patches of hazle-copse, and other brushwood. They had, as Sir Alisander told them, not much more than a mile to go; Amherst, who was stewed by the heat and closeness of the apartment they had just left, enjoyed the fresh and balmy breath of Heaven. He walked on in conversation with the Baronet, whilst Cleaver followed at some distance, steadying his rather treacherous limbs by leaning on the brawny arm of O'Gollochar.

Sir Alisander's kind, unaffected, and gentlemanlike manner, seasoned as it was by an occasional display of dry, inoffensive humour, had already won the heart of the young Englishman, who begged of him to give him some account of the origin of the singular merry-making he had just witnessed.

“ It must, indeed, have appeared to you a very strange, and, perhaps, even a very barbarous assemblage, Mr Oakenwold; and maybe you think it a little odd that one of my apparent character and situation in life should have presided as chief priest in such a sacrifice to Bacchus, surrounded as I was by so many Satyrs and Sileni. I can assure you I have no particular pleasure in

such scenes; but I am of a facile temper, Sir, and do not like to refuse any thing to these worthy people, who, somehow or other, have a very general regard for me, though, Heaven knows, my frail state of health forbids my seeking popularity, by being actively useful as a country gentleman. The truth is, I should probably lose more than I would gain with them, were I to pretend to be so. But I cannot refuse to join in their revels, without setting up as a censor, an office certain to render me very odious, an alternative I cannot make up my mind to. There is some apology for them in the half-civilized state of this part of the country; the hostile parties into which society has been lately divided by political convulsions, having hardly yet allowed us time to borrow the improvement and polish of our more southern neighbours. It is as unwise as it is hopeless, to attempt to alter the nature of man at once; and it is often the best and speediest way to effect a lasting change, to seem to yield to the current for a time, in order the better afterwards to stem it. Having said thus much, I may now tell you, that the wine you were drinking was smuggled, and that the greater part of

the persons you sat with were assembled there to wait for the arrival of Captain Brandywyn and his vessel, the Charming Sally, in order to purchase the various foreign articles her cargo is composed of. The Captain, like an expert angler, knows how to strew his ground baits. He sends on shore a hogshead of claret to Mrs M'Claver's, and it is her business to distribute immediate information of its arrival. This draws the customers together, and after such a deep carouse as you witnessed, it is not unlikely that his goods will be quickly and well disposed of. All this is very bad; but I cannot think of making myself hated by becoming a custom-house officer, and if I did attempt such a thing, I should only succeed in gathering an ample harvest of odium, without adding one shilling to the King's revenue. Besides, a peaceable life is essential to my existence, so I must e'en continue to ride the ford as I find it, and leave it to more active men to bustle and fight themselves out of the good will of those by whom they are surrounded."

By this time they had arrived at the gate of Sanderson Mains, to which a straight avenue of young trees led up through the centre of the

square grass field it stood in. It was a large, plain, barn-like building of three stories, with a great length of front facing directly south, or to what is called, in the language of the country, the *twall o'clock line*. It exhibited numerous windows of small size, and was flanked by two pigeon-house-looking wings.

Behind it, and at about forty yards distance, was a low stone wall fencing off the field from the church-yard. There a very antique church, having divers uncouth projections, a low Gothic tower, or rather belfry of stone, a grey slate roof tinted with a thousand weather-stained hues, several very curious old monuments rising from amidst those of modern date and more vulgar taste, and two or three weather-beaten ash trees, afforded almost the only features of interest, to a scene otherwise completely agricultural, and devoid of variety.

Behind the church-yard, and at the foot of those elevated downs rising between it and the sea, were the miserable hovels of a straggling hamlet, seated amidst all the rich filth which, at that period, (we do not say now,) distinguished such places in Scotland; and above these the grey

roof of the manse appeared rising in that modest dignity befitting its inhabitant. Such were the objects the morning was beginning partially to illuminate, and its sombre light seemed particularly suited to their simplicity.

On entering the house, the gentlemen were ushered into a low-roofed paved hall, and servants having appeared, bed-rooms were speedily prepared for the strangers, to which they retired, to endeavour to get rid of their fatigue by a few hours repose.