

PATRICK  
O'BRIAN

# 21

The Final  
Unfinished Voyage  
of Jack Aubrey

*including a facsimile of the manuscript*

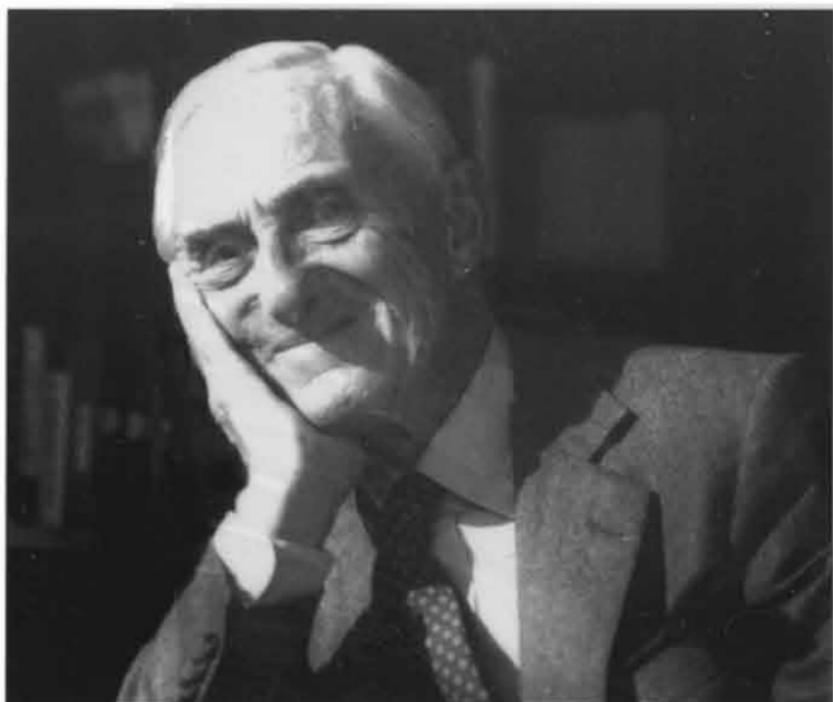
WITH AN AFTERWORD BY RICHARD SNOW

**“21 is a fragment, of course, and one would expect such a document to be little more than a forlorn remnant. . . . But just look at 21! There is no sense of harassment or desolation here, no loss of focus, nor of energy. And if it ends too soon, it is nonetheless a rich distillation—a summary of sorts—of all that has, over thousands of pages and tens of thousands of miles, won O’Brian such passionate admirers.”**

*—from the afterword by Richard Snow*

*Blue at the Mizzen* (Novel #20) ended with Jack Aubrey getting the news, in Chile, of his elevation to flag rank: rear admiral of the Blue Squadron, with orders to sail to the South Africa station. The next novel, unfinished and untitled at the time of the author’s death, would have been the chronicle of that mission, and much else besides. The three chapters left on O’Brian’s desk at the time of his death are presented here in both a printed version—including his corrections to the typescript—and a facsimile of his manuscript, which goes several pages beyond the end of the typescript to include a duel between Stephen Maturin and an impertinent officer who is courting his fiancée.

Of course we would rather have had the whole story; instead we have this proof that O’Brian’s powers of observation, his humor, and his understanding of his characters were undiminished to the end.



**Patrick O'Brian** (b. 1914), whose works won the passionate admiration of millions of readers worldwide, died in January 2000. In addition to twenty volumes in the Aubrey/Maturin series, O'Brian's many novels include *Testimonies* and *The Golden Ocean*. O'Brian has also written acclaimed biographies of Pablo Picasso and Sir Joseph Banks and has translated many works from the French, among them the novels and memoirs of Simone de Beauvoir, the bestseller *Papillon*, and Jean Lacouture's biography of Charles de Gaulle.

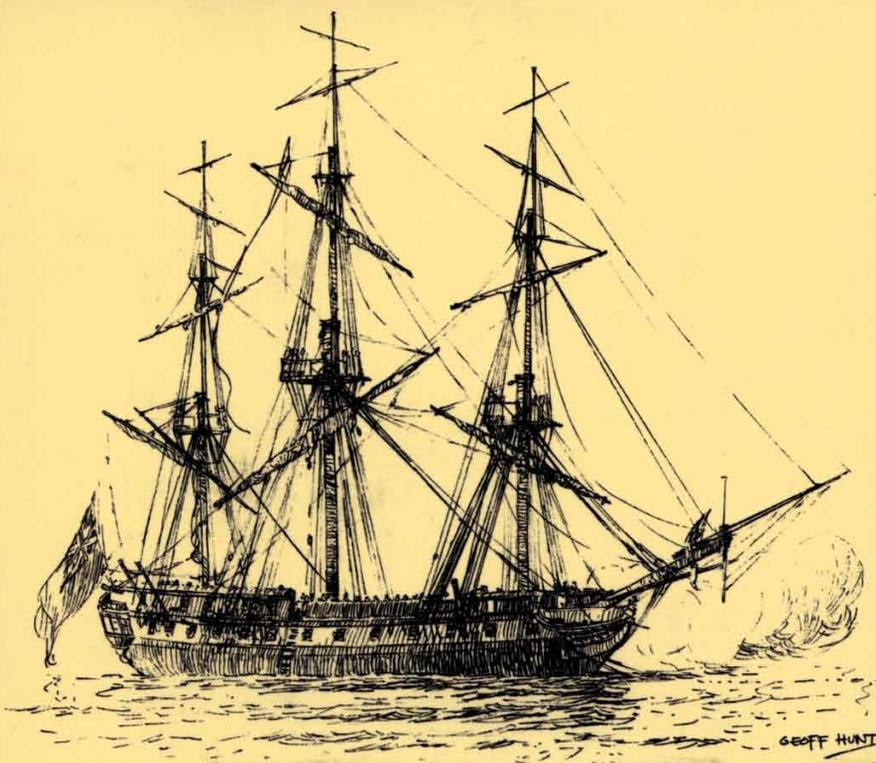
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"H.M.S. SURPRISE IN MOURNING"

IN MEMORIAM ♦ PATRICK O'BRIAN ♦ d. JANUARY 2000

"May I contribute to the general mourning this little drawing of the 'dear *Surprise*.' Captain Aubrey, sailing his ship somewhere in the Elysian Seas, has anchored awhile to salute his creator. In the prescribed navy manner, the yards are hoisted cockbilled, the flags and pennants droop at half-mast; cannon boom out the salute, while on board, perhaps, the hands are mustered, black is the colour of the day, swords are reversed, and maybe the Dead March is played. It will not last long. There will be another tide to catch, another wind to profit by; she will not lose a minute. The man may be gone, but *Surprise* and her well-known crew will sail on forever in our hearts." —Geoff Hunt, January 2000

FICTION

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# The Works of Patrick O'Brian

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*Picasso*

*Joseph Banks*

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*Master and Commander*

*Post Captain*

*H.M.S. Surprise*

*The Mauritius Command*

*Desolation Island*

*The Fortune of War*

*The Surgeon's Mate*

*The Ionian Mission*

*Treason's Harbour*

*The Far Side of the World*

*The Reverse of the Medal*

*The Letter of Marque*

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PATRICK O'BRIAN

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21



The Final  
Unfinished Voyage  
of Jack Aubrey

*Including facsimile of  
the manuscript*

W. W. Norton & Company  
New York London

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

When Patrick O'Brian died in early January 2000, he left 65 handwritten pages of the untitled twenty-first novel in the Aubrey/Maturin series. He had also begun typing the same material and had made revisions to the typescript.

The printed version of *21* presented here follows the author's revised typescript, with the correction of a few obvious omissions and errors of spelling. But it is not to be supposed that these pages are exactly as O'Brian would have wanted them to be in a final draft, or had he seen proofs of his book. There are occasional word repetitions and rhyming echoes—how he abhorred these!—that he would surely have caught on subsequent readings. The typescript ends in mid-sentence (page 114), and chapter 3 continues—without conclusion—in O'Brian's own hand. The facsimile pages include such wonderful curiosities as O'Brian's sketch of the seating arrangements for a dinner party, and the reader is granted a last, intimate glimpse of this extraordinary writer practicing his craft.

—Starling Lawrence

# CHAPTER ONE

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STEPHEN MATURIN squared up to his writing-desk once more: he had been called away to attend to one of the ship's boys who in the lightness of his heart had contrived to stun himself in the foretop by taking the maul from its place, tossing it to a considerable height and so misjudging the revolutions as it fell that the massive head struck him down, speechless and unnaturally pale. Stephen dressed the wound, such as it was (more bruise than blood and no bone broken) and said to his loblolly-boy, 'Tell Dr Jacob, when he comes back, that this boy is to have no grog for the next three days, and tomorrow he may keep his hammock.' Dr Jacob, the surgeon's mate, was away visiting friends aboard the frigate's tender, the rapid and windwardly Chesapeake schooner *Ringle*, and Stephen glanced in her direction, fine on the starboard bow, before going down from the brilliance of noon to the comparatively sombre cabin that he shared with Captain Aubrey.

He had already written *My dear Christine* before he was called away, and he had dated the letter *Surprise, at sea, in Magellan's Strait*. At his first sitting down he had meant to tell her, with what skill he could command, of the extraordinary beauty of the weather and of the Strait, generally so forbidding: he should certainly have spoken of the favourable wind that had allowed them to keep topgallantsails abroad ever since the morning watch; but above all he should have dwelt upon the happiness that filled the ship, homeward bound after a very long, arduous and most uncommonly dangerous voyage, a well-found ship commanded by a right seaman, a well-liked, deeply-respected fighting captain who, moreover, was soon to hoist his flag. There was no secret about this: Jack Aubrey's first unrestrained cries of delight on receipt of the blessed order had not escaped his steward nor anyone else within a range of twenty yards: nor had the unwonted floods of rum, the feasts in cabin, gunroom and midshipmen's

## Chapter I

Stephen Malin scurried up to his writing desk once again: he had been called away to attend to one of the ship's boys who had contrived to skin himself in the foretop by taking the mast from its place, forcing it to a considerable height and so misjudging the revolutions as it fell: that the massive head struck him down, speechless and unskinned pole. Stephen dressed the wound, such as it was (more trauma than blood and no bone broken) and said to his loblolly boy, 'Poll, tell Dr Jacob, when he comes back, that this boy is to have no grog for the next three days, and tomorrow he may keep his humour.' Dr Jacob, the surgeon mate, was away visiting friends aboard the frigate's tender, that rapid and windward Chesapeake schooner Ruyle, and Stephen glanced in her direction from the starboard bow, before going down from the brilliancy of noon to the comparatively somber cabin which he shared with Jack Aubrey.

He had already written My dear Christian before he was called away, and he had added the little Suapru, at sea, in Magellan's Strait. At his first sitting down he had meant to tell her, with what skill he could command, of the extraordinary beauty of the weather, and of the strait, ordinarily so forbidding: he should certainly have spoken of the favourable wind that had allowed them to keep topgallant sails abroad ever since the morning watch; but above all he should have dwelt upon the happiness that filled the ship, homeward bound after a long, arduous and most uncommonly dangerous voyage, a well-found ship commanded by a right seaman, a well-liked, deeply respected fighting captain who, moreover, was soon to hoist his flag. There was no secret about this: Captain Aubrey's first unstrained cry of delight had not escaped his steward or anyone else within a range of twenty yards; nor had the unworried floods of rum, the feasts in Cabin, gunroom and midshipmen's

berth; and the sacred blue flag itself, the mark of a rear-admiral, lay openly on the fo'c'sle, shaded from too fierce a sun, from untimely drops of spray, by an awning, the sailmaker and his mates, the ship's tailor and his, titivating it with minute stitches, while every hand aboard added half an inch of seam around its ample verge. It was considered the handsomest ensign in the service.

But for the moment the flag was absent from Stephen's mind: indeed the mind itself was in a singular state of absence, hesitation, even stupidity. Before being called to the wretched boy, he had known at least the general trend of the passages that were to follow the words that lay there before him; but now he was filled with doubt, and to give his wits time to settle and clarify he mended his pen, clipping its tip with a minute pair of metal jaws made for the purpose and trimming the sides with a lancet capable of splitting hairs.

Yet the right free, easy, candid expressions would not come, though the Christine in question was very dear to him: Stephen had long practised medicine, a calling in which discretion is often of great importance; but for an even longer time, if time is to be measured by stress, he had been an intelligence-agent, and here discretion was of the very essence, since an unguarded word or step might lead to the agent's death and to the death, the often hideous death, of his friends and the destruction of their cause.

He sat down, his expression still tolerably blank: he was a lean, middle-sized man, unremarkable, of mixed Catalan and Irish origin; but it was the tropical sun and the sea-air that accounted for his dark complexion, not any mixture of Moorish blood, for although his birth was illegitimate (which weighed upon him) his ancestors had been Christians time out of mind. A man of something less than forty, though he looked older as his mind wrestled with the difficulties of giving the intelligent woman he longed to marry a coherent, plausible account of the *Surprise's* activities and of her present return, mission accomplished: for as soon as Captain Aubrey joined the South African squadron in the River Plate, going aboard HMS *Suffolk*, taking command of her and hoisting or causing to be hoisted the flag, blue at the mizzen, her act would turn him into that glorious creature a rear-admiral,

①

berth; and the saved blue flag itself lay openly on the fore-castle, shaded from the fierce sun, from underneath <sup>drops</sup> of spray, by an awning. The sailmaker and his mate, the ship's doctor and his, tending it with minute stitches, while every hand aboard added half an inch of the ~~found~~ seam around its ample verge. It was considered the handsomest ensign in the service.

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the likelihood, the virtual certainty, was that *Surprise* should return to England, carrying Jack Aubrey's official dispatch, two young men who were to pass for lieutenant and a great number of papers and certificates from the bosun, carpenter, gunner and purser justifying the expenditure or replacement of almost every item in the ship's unbelievably complex gear, furnishings and supplies, from pistol-flints to great round-shot and innumerable blocks. There was also a flat, factual, unadorned account of the *Surprise's* meetings with the Chilean authorities and of her proceedings, together with volume after volume of her activity in charting and surveying the South American islands and coasts.

She was one of the smaller frigates, carrying no more than 28 great guns, and although in the right hands she was an outstanding sailer she had been sold out of the service when heavier craft were built and Stephen had bought her: so there she was, eminently seaworthy and available for hire to the Hydrographical Service of the Admiralty once Napoleon had been dealt with and the western world was at something like peace.

Her ostensible function was to survey and chart the little-known coasts and innumerable islands of the recently independent republic of Chile and to help form its navy, training the young officers. All this was perfectly allowable and even praiseworthy, but the voyage had other aspects that were never distinctly laid down in written orders but that were implied and understood on either side: and here total candour was wholly out of the question, so that Stephen's letter home could obviously not be all he wished.

In the first place, through Stephen's innumerable connexions, Jack had been appointed commander-in-chief of the Chilean navy as well as Admiralty hydrographer; but the frigate's voyage had been slow (very foul weather south of the Horn) and when she reached Chile she found that the situation had changed remarkably. Apart from anything else she was met with a bewildering number of juntas, of more or less independent governing bodies belonging to widely differing political parties, one of which had appointed its own commander-in-chief though all were

(1)

the likelihood, the virtual certainty, was that the Surprise should go home, carrying Jack Aubrey's official dispatch, letters home from those who could write, two young men who were to pass for lieutenants, and a <sup>small</sup> great number of papers that justified the expenditure or replacement of the ship's unbelievably complex ~~expensive~~ <sup>every</sup> gear: furnishings and supplies from pistol flints to great roundshot, a considerable stock. There was also a full, factual, account day-by-day account of the Surprise's meetings with the Chilean authorities and of her proceedings.

where unadorned

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harmed, surprised, displeased

obsessed by the fear of a Peruvian invasion by land or sea or both: Peru was still ruled by the Spanish king's viceroy in Lima, and it still possessed a powerful, well-trained navy.

After a very great number of vicissitudes, changes of ministry and so on it appeared to Jack that since his main duty, often expressed in London but never committed to writing, was to preserve the independent Chilean republic, the best way of doing so and at the same time of protecting his beloved infant Chilean navy was to attack the Peruvians in their port of Callao and if possible to cut out their powerful frigate *Esmeralda*, the heaviest, best-armed man-of-war on the Pacific coast of America. This he did with extraordinary success, at the risk of his life; and he brought the *Esmeralda* back to Valparaiso. He was much flattered and caressed, but later he was treated very shabbily indeed: his men were not paid, they were denied their prize-money from various sources, and upon some pretext his ship was threatened with impoundment. Yet though Jack sometimes behaved like a simpleton by land, and though he was often swindled ashore, he was sea-wise, and having provisioned and stored his ship with the basic supplies needed to carry her at least to some port in the Argentine, he handed the Chileans an ultimatum: either his men must have their due by a given date or he should sail away. They were not paid, and he did sail away. Yet although the *Surprise's* voyage had something of the appearance of a failure, in fact the Spanish hold on South America was broken: and although this had not been the Admiralty's direct order, the result gave immense satisfaction in the proper

[N.B.: *The facsimile page opposite and the following one mostly overlap.  
See O'Brian's note in the margin.*]

would then return home

HORAD

that Surprise, a former Royal Naval frigate, sold out of the service, bought by Matern himself, and for this occasion sailing as a <sup>hipped</sup> surveying hydrographical vessel with the <sup>intention</sup> purpose of laying down the ill-charted coasts and islands of the recently independent republic of Chile and of helping to form a new Chilean navy. Among the young officers of the Surprise <sup>she had</sup> was one with a boundless number of more or less governing bodies of widely differing political parties, and with the ever present threat of Peruvian invasion by land or sea or both - Peru at that time still being ruled from Lima by the Spanish king's ~~own~~ viceroy, and still possessed a powerful fully trained navy.

After a very great number of vicissitudes, changes of government and so on it appeared to Jack Aubrey that - who had had many a man's hand but precious little in the way of formal, exact written instructions, - that the best way of preserving the Chilean Republic and above all of protecting his beloved infant Chilean navy was to attack the Peruvians in their port of Callao and if possible to cut out their big frigates, the heaviest, best armed man-of-war on the Pacific coast of America. - This he did with extraordinary success, though at the price of his life, bringing the big Fernando down to Valparaiso. But although he was very much flattered and esteemed, he was treated very shabbily: his men were not paid; they were denied their prize money from various sources; and upon some pretext ~~that~~ his ship was threatened with impoundment. But though Jack ~~was not always~~ <sup>was</sup> sometimes behind <sup>like</sup> a sailmaker by land, and though he was often surrounded ashore, he was sea-war, and having provisions and stored his ship with <sup>strength</sup> enough to carry her home, he issued an ultimatum to the Chileans: either his men must have their due by a given date or he should sail away. They were not paid, and he did sail away. Yet although the Surprise's voyage <sup>something of</sup> had the appearance of a failure, in fact the Spanish hold in South America was broken; and although there had not been the Admiralty's direct order, the result gave great pleasure, in the right

I think that in trying I consumed nearly two pages. For the women I shall leave them. Some I want to clear it reads - every day after what is there

////

quarters.

Furthermore Jack had on board a singularly amiable and gifted young man, the unacknowledged but much beloved illegitimate son of Prince William, Admiral the Duke of Clarence, a zealous sailor and almost certain to be king after his brother's death. Clarence had a great respect for Captain Aubrey (some of Jack's actions were indeed

obsessed by the fear of a Peruvian invasion by land or sea or both: Peru was still ruled by the Spanish King's viceroy in Lima, and it still possessed a powerful, well-trained navy.

where

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part in the war or Brown he could take

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1000

extraordinarily brilliant), and through Dr Maturin, who had treated His Highness for a variety of disease, mostly discreditable, had begged Jack to take the youth on this voyage: and young Hanson had distinguished himself as much as any loving naval father could have wished, cutting the *Esmeralda's* cable and carrying her out under fire. Yet even this was not all: on the Pacific coast Jack and Stephen had met with a small stout vessel filled with fellow members of the Royal Society, two of whom, ornithologists, were determined to cross the narrow isthmus of Panama and return to London by the Atlantic. And these excellent creatures agreed to take Jack's dispatches – the news of his famous victory and the preservation of Chile – back to the Admiralty, then in the process of forming a South African squadron. Maturin and his chief, the head of Naval Intelligence, had long since established a system of rapid communication across the Andes, and it was thanks to this arrangement that Jack received the Admiralty's beautiful reply, a signal requiring him 'to proceed to the River Plate, there to go aboard HMS *Suffolk* taking command of her and hoisting his flag, blue at the mizzen,' that had spread such happiness throughout the ship.

Yet although the ephemeral Chilean ministry had fallen, to be replaced by one of its many rivals, the satisfaction that might have been supposed to accompany an assured independence was by no means general: there were many Chileans who regretted their old friends and their declared policies. Furthermore the feeling was not confined to Chile: there were many Chilean refugees and many of their Argentinian friends who had resented the Englishmen's presence and who now even more bitterly resented their absence – to say nothing of those many, many Argentinians who so clearly remembered the British capture of Buenos Aires and the even greater number of those who looked upon them as heretics, given to cursing the Holy Father almost every day.

Both Maturin and Jacob had caught wind of this feeling both in Chile and during their very beautiful passage of the Strait; and in the afternoon

①

extraordinarily brilliant), and through Dr. Maturin, who had treated the Highness for a variety of diseases, mostly disordered faith, had begged Jack to take the boy on this voyage: and young Blanes had distinguished himself as well as any loving naval father could have wished, ~~etc~~ cutting the Esmeralda's cable and carrying her out under fire.

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Maturin and his chief, the head of Naval Intelligence, had long since established a system of rapid communication across the Andes. And it was thanks to this arrangement that Jack had received the <sup>beautiful</sup> signal requiring him to proceed to the River Plate, there to go aboard HMS Suffolk, taking command of her and hoisting his flag, blue at the mizzen that had spread such happiness throughout the Strait of Chiloe.

is reply.

Yet though the episcopal incursion had failed, to be replaced by some one of their many rivals, the satisfaction had by no means general: there were many who regretted their old friends and their declared enemies. Furthermore the feeling was not confined to Chile: there were many Chilean refugees and many of their Argentinian friends who had resented the Englishman's presence and who now even more bitterly resented their absence - Argentinians to say nothing of those many many Argentinians who so clearly remembered the British capture of Buenos Aires and the even greater number of those who looked upon them as vile heretics, given to cursing if the Holy Father almost every day.

Both Maturin and Jacob had caught wind of this feeling <sup>in Chile</sup> during their very beautiful passage of the Strait, and the evening afternoon

before they were to put in to San Pedro, a small sealing and fishing port at the bottom of an inlet on the northern shore with some sheltered arable land behind it famous for potatoes and cabbages on the one hand and prodigious mussels and crayfish on the other, Stephen said, 'My dear Jack, in the backwoods of America they say that an evil reputation is like an inextinguishable debt; and we have been so maligned on the Pacific coast that it might be prudent to arm the boats, or even to hale the ship so close to the strand that your great guns command the whole settlement.'

In the event the few inhabitants of San Pedro did not offer to challenge a reasonably powerful man-of-war moored broadside-on before their settlement, nor the powerful, cutlass-bearing seamen who walked along the quay. Yet although most of the citizens were at least partly Tierra del Fuegians and although none of them could have had any first-hand knowledge of recent events they were sullen and unfriendly, yielding only a few indifferent potatoes and wilted cabbages at an exorbitant price. However, the ship did top up her water from a clear free-running stream, no great distance from its parent glacier; and still with this blessed westerly breeze she pursued her long twisting course through the strait, Jack, Hanson and Daniel perpetually taking bearings, soundings, views of the shore (icy to the southwards, often raining to the north) and establishing a truly remarkable chart.

Stephen, who had no abilities whatsoever in this direction, confined himself to his medical duties of course (slight though they were, with a healthy crew and such an able assistant as Jacob), to watching and sometimes dissecting the birds, mammals and marine plants and creatures of the strait, and much of this he added to his letter to Christine, she being the only woman of his acquaintance who knew the difference between a jackass penguin and a macaroni and who delighted in the knowledge. She would also delight in the knowledge, reflected her lover, that these most inhospitable shores, often snowy on the south of the strait, always icy on the northern height, nevertheless sheltered at least one parrot or parakeet, a green bird with a fine red tail that flew in noisy groups in the beech-woods, and a minute humming-bird that could be seen sipping nectar from the fuchsias in Tierra del Fuego when the ship was on that side of the channel.

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before they were to put in to San Pedro, a small sealy and fishing port ~~at the bottom~~ at the bottom of an inlet on the northern shore with some sheltered arable land behind it famous for potatoes and cabbages on the one hand and prodigious mussels and crayfish on the other. Stephen said 'My dear Jack, in the backwoods of America they say that an evil reputation is like an extinguishable light; and we have been so maligned on the Pacific coast that you might think it prudent to arm the boats, or even to hale the ship so close to the strand that your great gun command the <sup>whole</sup> entire settlement.'

In the event the few inhabitants of San Pedro did not choose to take challenge a powerful man-of-war, moored broadside on before their settlement, nor the ~~cattle-bear~~ powerful, cattle-bearing seamen who walked about along the quay. But although most of them were at least partially Terra del Fuigo and although none of them could have had any first-hand knowledge of recent events they were sullen and unfriendly, yielding only a few indifferent potatoes and wattle cabbages at an over exorbitant price. However the ship did top up her water from a clear, free-running stream, and still with this blessed westerly breeze she pursued her long, tortuous course through the strait. Jack, Hanson and Daniel perpetually taking bearings, soundings, views of the shore (icy to the southwards, often raining to the north) and establishing a truly remarkable chart.

Stephen, who had no abilities whatsoever in this direction, confined himself to his medical duties of course (slight they were, with a healthy crew and such an able assistant as Jacob), to watching and sometimes dissecting the birds, mammals, and marine plants and creatures - a ~~shorter~~ of the strait, and much of this he added to his letter to Christian, she being the only woman of his acquaintance who knew the difference between a Jackass penguin and a macaroni and who thoroughly delighted in the knowledge.

How I must have a reasonably comprehensive account of the State named history, is he gathered from ~~John's~~ book, Darwin, & the Brit  
 The parrot can appear in numbers (+ other exotics? humming birds) in a sketch and from a NW (or whatever) it could extend to 200 words ? also

He was reasonably well engaged with this letter one afternoon after dinner when Jack, abandoning his fiddle, returned to his surveying, and Stephen, clogging his passage on Port Egmont hens (often to be seen), lifted his head to Hanson's reiterated 'Sir, if you please.'

'Why, Master dear' – for Horatio Hanson was acting-master of the ship – 'I fear you have been waiting. I never heard you.'

'Not at all, sir: it was only that Dr Jacob feared you might have overlooked your appointment.' At this moment a tiny chime could be heard in the bosom of both, for each possessed wonderfully accurate repeating watches, the one a replacement of the minute timepiece that Stephen had given to Christine, the other Prince William's parting gift to his son. 'God love us all, and may I be forgiven,' cried Stephen, leaping up. 'It is half three – I am late.'

'Mind your step, sir,' said Hanson, steadying him. 'It is blowing up uncommon stiff from the west-north-west – has veered three points in half an hour, and *Ringle* is reefing hard.'

They made their way forward to the fairly well-lit and now vacant space in the sick-berth which the surgeons reserved for anatomizing – for the past few days they had been busy on a singular, probably undescribed dolphin; and as they carefully pared away, separated and described the muscular parts so they gave them to the cook's mates, standing there with buckets. The bones they kept for themselves. But today they had been obliged to stop. The frigate's motion was too great, and in spite of their skill and care their cutting was by no means accurate with the deck so very much awash.

'We are making ready to lie to, sir,' said Hanson in his ear. 'And the Captain says he will pass the word when it is fit for you to come on deck. In the mean time he desires you and Dr Jacob will stand by to deal with casualties.'

The first, to his own infinite shame, was Harding, the senior lieutenant – a straight-forward fibula and tibia, which they very soon splinted and

He was reasonably well engaged with this letter one afternoon after dinner with Jack, abandoning his fiddle, returned to his surveying, and Stephen, closing his passage on Fort Egmont here, after her head to Hanson's reiterated

'Sir, if you please.'

'Why, Master dear' - for Horatio Hanson was always master of a ship - 'I fear you have been waiting. I never heard you.'

'Not at all, sir: it was only that Dr Jacob feared you might have overlooked your appointment.' At this moment a tiny chime could be heard in the ears of each, for both possessed of wonderfully accurate hearing watches, the one given to Stephen by his grandfather, the other to Hanson by Prince William. 'God love us all and may I be forgiven,' cried Stephen leaping up. 'It is half three - I am late.'

'Mind you clap, sir,' said Hanson, steadying him. 'It is blowing up uncommonly stiff from the west WNW - has veered like yours in half an hour, and Rung is tearing hard.'

They made their way forward to the fairly well-lit, if and now vacant space in the sunbeams which the surgeons reserved for anatomizing - they were busy on a singular, probably undescribed small dolphin and as they carefully pored away, separated and described the muscular parts so they gave them to the cook's maids, standing knee well buckets. The boxes they kept for themselves. But presently they were obliged to stop. The ship's motion was too great; and in spite of all their skill and care, the work was awash - their cutting by no means accurate.

'We are making ready to lie to, sir,' said Hanson in his ear. 'And the Captain says he will pass the word when it is fit for you to come on deck. In the mean time he desires you walk the deck and Dr Jacob will stand by to deal with casualties.'

The first, to his infinite shame, was Hardy, the first lieutenant - a straightforward ~~Dr~~ Dr Jacob fibula and tibiae, which they very soon splinted and

fibula o

bound up: then came the usual series of bumps and bruises, diminishing as the furious gust blew itself out and ending with the Captain's compliments brought by Awkward Davies, and if now they chose to come on deck they would see 'a sight like a madhouse's washing-day – God love us – what rigging we have is fair stuffed, *stuffed*, with fucking poll-parrots and God knows what. Which I am to bring you up and cop three hundred lashes if you fall.'

Stephen had of course heard of the South American parrots and he had often seen their little troops, but only from a distance, identifiable from their manner of flight and from their brilliant colour, so very unlike the general drabness of the Strait; and so eager was he to reach the first, entangled in the leeward shrouds, that he would certainly have gone over the side but for Davies' powerful restraining hand. And it was not only parakeets, though they of course were the most obvious and the most eagerly coveted by hands, who were perfectly accustomed to the African race: even more spectacular and even more wounding were the many kinds of minute birds, including Stephen's Tierra del Fuegian honey-sucker, that had been dashed against the rigging or the remaining sails with such force that in spite of their lightness they were quite shattered and as the blast died away, deck, lighter rigging and scuppers were jewelled all over with their pitiful but still brilliant fragments. Some of the more solid birds, particularly the parakeets and some red-crested woodpeckers, could be revived and patched to some degree, but upon the whole it was a most dispiriting task, the more so since there was very little hope of identification in most cases. Still Stephen, seconded by his mate, did what they could in the way of retrieval, mostly of skins (exceptionally difficult on that scale) and tiny bones: they took quantities of notes and they did a little something to increase their knowledge of this almost untouched avifauna.

FOR TWO AND EVEN THREE days after that furious blast the waters of the Strait remained strikingly turbulent, particularly in the Narrows, and great beds of kelp, torn loose from their basis, floated on every hand, sometimes endangering the rudder, sometimes checking the ship's way, and always disturbing birds, cetaceans and ordinary level-headed fishes. Nevertheless in spite of kelp, unexpected currents and strange vagaries of tide off a number of headlands, the ship's whole passage of the Strait, before she turned north, well out in the full Atlantic, with the Cape of the Eleven Thousand Virgins broad on larboard bow, lasted only three hours more than nine days.

'We are making pretty good time,' said Jack, 'and I think we may look into Port Desire and Bahia Blanca without keeping the Admiral waiting. He was not to sail till the twelfth.'

'Would you ever tell me, has he a numerous fleet?'

'Pretty considerable: three squadrons, of which ours, the blue, is of course the smallest – but, Stephen, do not think for a moment that I complain. Of course it is the smallest, being blue. But had it been half the size, I should still have given my right hand for it. Good Lord above: a flag at last! It was amazingly kind of them. Do not think for a moment that I complain, dear Stephen.'

'It had not occurred to me at all, at all,' said Stephen. And

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bound up: then came the usual series of bumps and bruises, dimmed by  
 as the furious great blast blew out and ending with the Captain's complaint  
 brought by Alexander Daves, and if now he chose to come on deck he  
 would a sight like a madhouse's washing-day - God love us - what  
 regains we have just eluded, stuffed, with funny parrots and God knows  
 what, in what I am to bring you and cap 300 larder if you fall.

Long, long had Stephen heard of the little parrot of South America  
 forest, ~~but~~<sup>yet</sup> he had never seen one and was he would justly have kept a  
 deck but for Daves' powerful restraining hand

more, perhaps 200 more, when more I know



For two and even three days after that furious blast the waters of  
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 a moment that I complain, dear Stephen.'

'It had not occurred to me at all, at all,' said Stephen. And

he went on, 'Since my ill-bred questioning is so prosperous – and to be sure it is very ill-bred indeed – may I ask why you mean to stop at these South American ports, when I understood you to say we could sail home with what was in the hold?'

'Why, for fresh water and meat, of course, to say nothing of vegetables and fruit. We could probably have got home, of course, but verminous, half-starved and rotten with scurvy: but that would have been a desperate stroke, in a God-damned desperate situation, one that a man could not stand. But now the case is altered. I am to join Lord Leyton in the River Plate, and I make no doubt – for he is a very active officer, as I know full well – that he will take the fleet down and across to the Cape with the utmost dispatch, and I prefer to be ready to weigh at the first hint of a signal, with the last cask of biscuit aboard and a well-fed, active, healthy crew – no shore-leave will be allowed.'

'But, my dear, *Surprise* is to go home, as you very well know, with your dispatches and all our letters home; and once there she reverts to the station of a private ship. Ever since we left Magellan's Strait and steered north the people have become increasingly aware of this, and the joy that filled the *Surprise* has sensibly diminished day by day. You know how unhappy our men from Shelmerston were when they were paid off with the peace and how wonderfully they revived when you took them aboard.'

'Certainly I know it very well, and I am going to use all what influence I may have to ease her back into the service. The squadron is pitifully short of frigates, and since I understand that our duty down there is the protection of the Indian and Chinese trade, nothing could be more useful than a nimble weatherly ship like *Surprise*. And I beg you will do the same. But even if we cannot succeed directly, I am allowed my bargemen and a good many other followers – I have little doubt that I shall house a score or so of the rest among my friends. And for those that are left, if there *are* any left, merchant shipping has revived wonderfully, and a seaman with a good character from the Royal Navy will not wait long for a berth.'

JUST AS IT HAD BEEN Hanson who first sighted Cape Pilar on their eastward leg, at the very opening of the Strait, so it was his particular friend Daniel who, spending his watch below in the foretopgallant crosstrees, caught the leading-mark for Port Desire in his glass, checked it twice, and called,

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He went on. 'Since my ill-bred & rebellious is so prosperous - and to be sure it is very ill-bred indeed - may I ask why you mean to stop at the South America ports? When I understand you to say we could sail home with what was in the hold?'

'Why, for fresh water and fresh meat, of course: in some way of vegetables and fruit. We could ~~just~~ probably have got home, of course, but ~~retrogress~~ half-starved and riven with scurvy: but that was a desperate stroke. ~~It is~~ a God-damned desperate situation, one that a man could not stand. But now the case is altered. I am to join Lord Lyell in the River Plate, and I make no doubt - for he is a very active officer, as I know full well - that he will take us down and across to the Cape with the utmost despatch, and I prefer to be ready to meet at the first hint of a signal, with the best case of biscuit aboard and a well-fed active crew - no shore leave will be allowed.'

'But, my dear Surprise is to go home, as you very well know, with your despatches and all our letters home; and once there she reverts to the station of a private ship. Ever since we left Magellan's Strait the people and cleared wood the people have become increasingly aware of her, and the happiness that filled the frigate has sensibly diminished day by day. You <sup>joy</sup> know how unhappy our men from Shelburnston were when they were paid off with the peace and how wonderfully they revived when you took them aboard.'

'Certainly I know it very well, and I am going to use all what influence I may have to have her back in the service. The squadron is pitifully short of frigates, and even I understand that our duty down there is the protection of the keelson and the chosen vessel, nothing could be more useful than a nimble weathering ship like Surprise. And I beg you will do the same. But even if we cannot succeed directly, I am allowed my foremen and good many others - I have little doubt that I shall have a score or so of the best among us friends. And for those that are left, if any are left, merchant shipping has revived wonderfully, and a seaman with a good character from the Royal Navy will not wait long for a berth.'

Just as it had been Hanson who first sighted Cape Peter on the eastward leg, at the very opening of the strait, so it was his particular friend Daniel who, spreading his watch below in the foretopgallant crossbeams, caught the leading-mast for Port-Jésion in his glass, checked it twice and called

'On deck, there. On deck: St Paul's Rock, twelve to fifteen miles on the larboard bow. Dim. Comes and goes.'

It came and went because of a heavy sea inshore that covered it entirely from time to time, if not with green water then with foam; and although the rollers moderated somewhat inshore, the frigate had an uneasy time, mooring in the sullen turbulences this side of the primitive mole-dirty water from some untimely flash-flood.

'I once saw a rhea here, some way inland,' observed Stephen, as he and Jacob were walking along the mean street (obscurely strewn with drowned dogs) to speak to the port-captain about water and vegetables. 'The South American ostrich, somewhat smaller than the African bird – a most inferior creature.'

'Ah?' said Jacob: and then 'I believe this must be the captain's house.'

The port-captain half rose when they came in, but he was far from cordial and he said that he could not recommend the town water after this diabolic flood and all the nastiness it brought.

Stephen spoke about the country inland, a hacienda he had visited, the kindness of the people. He and the others were of course speaking Spanish and after a while the port-captain said that there happened to be a clean spring at no great distance, but they would have to pay the proprietor a fee. 'It is not for myself, you understand. For my own part I am astonishingly generous, generous to a fault, even lavish . . .' He spoke of his faults at some length and then, having called for coffee, he asked in a confidential, almost affectionate tone, 'Why they, obviously old and rancid Christians, consorted with those vile heretics?' And when Stephen made the usual gesture of extreme poverty, rubbing thumb over knuckle, the captain shook his head, saying 'Ah, when the Devil drives . . . I shall send my boy with your men to Anita's spring, but they must be very respectful to her, and pluck off their hats. Her sister, Helena, the werewolf, will provide cabbages.'

So she did, fine upstanding plants, but without the least appearance of pleasure or (perhaps understandably) of common humanity: and both in these transactions and in a few others along the edge of the market the Surprises noticed a sullenness, a strong inclination to stare, muttering; while after some of their transactions the sellers could be seen to wash the coins or rub them industriously in the grit underfoot.

'On deck there. On deck: St Paul's rock twelve to fifteen miles on the tarboared low.  
Dim. Comes & goes.'

It came and went because of a heavy sea motion that covered in ebbing  
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So she did, fine upstanding plants, but without the best appearance of  
pleasure or (perhaps understandably) of common humanity, and both  
in their transaction and in a few others along the edge of the market  
noticed a sullenness, a stony inclination <sup>to</sup> stare, muttering; while after  
some of their transactions the sellers could be seen to wash the  
corns or rub them indistinctly on the gritty path, just under foot.

Even if the *Surprise*, with her singularly fine lines and her thirty-six-gun frigate's towering mainmast, had not been so recognizable to a sailor's eye, her ensign would have identified her almost anywhere in the world, for on reverting to her function as a surveying-vessel under Admiralty command she had also reverted to the white ensign. At Bahia Blanca, their next port of call, Stephen, who was the natural emissary on such occasions, reported the same sullen apathy, no unmingled with a reluctance to sell, exorbitant prices and injurious expressions.

'Brother, you are playing at least half a tone too high,' said Jack that evening as they sawed away after an early supper.

'Am I?' cried Stephen, looking attentively at his fingers and twanging the string. 'So I am. I do beg your pardon. It is the shrill bitterness of my soul that makes its way out, I fear.'

'I am so sorry to impose these odious duties upon you, Stephen – pray take a sup of port – but you know, of course you know only too well, that when you and all your people have been without long enough you will descend to the basest means to relieve your wants.'

'I am not sure that the response is altogether civil: but be that as it may, I will tell you, Jack, that if they are bad in Port Desire and worse in Bahia, they are likely to be downright outrageous in the River Plate, where we are to meet the South African ships. Yet if I am not mistaken we are likely to be there well before Lord Leyton – well before even your little squadron . . .'

'What the Devil do you mean by *my little squadron*? It is a perfectly normal squadron, rather large than otherwise. Two ships of the line apart from *Suffolk*: a fifty-gun ship, two considerable sloops of war . . .'

'Hush, hush, Jack. Never fly into a passion, soul,' cried Stephen, seeing that his friend was seriously annoyed. 'Sure you must know after all this time that we use *little* as an endearment – a meliorative term, as one says *my little Puss* to a handsome Amazon that weighs fifteen stone in her

Even y the Surprise, with her singularly fine lines and her 36-gun frigate's towering masts had not been so recognizable to a sailor's eye, her success would have identified her almost anywhere in the world, for in her history is her function as a surveying-vessel under Admiralty command she had also proved to be whole success. At Bahia Blanco, their next port of call, Stephen, who was the habitual emissary on such occasions, reported the same sudden outbursts, not unmingled with a reluctance to sell, exorbitant prices, and injurious expressions.

'Brother, you are playing at least a half-crown too high,' said Jack that evening as they sat down after an early supper.

'Am I?' cried Stephen, looking attentively at his fingers a living in stone. 'So I am. I do beg your pardon. It is the slight bitterness of my soul that makes it so <sup>out</sup> true, I fear.'

'I am so sorry to impose these ~~of~~ odious duties upon you, Stephen - pray take a sup of port - but you know, of course you know only too well, that when you and all your people have been without long enough you will descend to the basest means to relieve them.'

'I am not sure that <sup>the</sup> that's altogether civil: but be that as it may, I will tell you, Jack, that if they are to have a Port Jesus and more in Bahia, they are likely to be downright outrageous in the River Plate. For I understand you are right, we are to join meet the South African <sup>sloop</sup> ~~squadron~~, right up against the city. Yet if I am not mistaken we are likely to be there well before Lord Leyla - well before even your little squadron ...'

where  
John

'What the Devil do you mean my little squadron? It is a perfectly honourable squadron. It takes large than otherwise. Two ships of the line apart from Sufford, a fifty-gun ship, are considerable ships of war ...'

'Hush, hush, Jack. Never fly into a passion, soul. See how Stephen sees that his friend was very seriously annoyed. 'Sure you must know after all this time that we are little as an endeavour - a mellorative team, as our boys my little pass to a handsome Amazon that weighs fifteen stone a hat

shift. So we arrive, do you follow me now, well before his lordship, whom God preserve, and our natural allies, all because of our commendable zeal. Now let me beg you, for all love, to moor your ship close in against the southern shore for so much as an egg, an egg: for in a considerable city fanaticism can swell to a most surprising and horrible extent.'

At the end of the particularly grave adagio Jack put down his bow and said, 'Should you dislike it very much if we were to leave Bahia out of our plans? Our water and the cabbages have held out uncommon well and I had as soon push on quietly, if you understand me, to the River Plate, where there is a great resort of merchantmen and all sort of people that supply their needs, chandlers, smiths and the like: you are not dependent on the local werewolf. Not that I have anything to say against werewolves: the gentlewoman was perfectly civil, and her cabbages have stood up admirably.'

'I should not dislike it at all. Bahia has by all accounts some tolerable strands, but nothing in the way of lakes or marshland within striking distance: Jacob and I have an immense amount of sorting, reconstituting, classifying and preserving to do, and I had as soon sail on northwards – quietly, as you put it so well, quietly putting our collections in order.'

Quietly indeed they sailed along, with gentle breezes that wafted them generally northwards at something in the nature of five miles in the hour, northwards to even warmer seas. Little activity was called for, apart from the nice adjustment of the sails, and although the exact routine of the ship was never relaxed nor her very strict rules of cleanliness, these long sunny days with a soldier's wind seemed to many the ideal of a seaman's life – regular, steady, traditional meals with the exact allowance of grog; hornpipes in the last dogwatch, the deep melody of the Doctor's 'cello from the cabin and the cheerful sound of the gunroom's dinner; the future lost in a haze somewhere north of the equator.

So the golden days went by, and Stephen's mound of tiny skins mounted up, very carefully dried and treated against mites, against the voracious

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shift. So we arrive, do you follow us, now, well before her lordship, when God  
 preserve, and our national allies, all because of our commendable zeal. Now  
 let me beg you, for all love, to move your ship also in against the southern  
 shore, and restrain to come as it were among the sheltering trees, and hence to  
 send ashore for so much as an egg, an egg: for in a considerable way fanaticism  
 and resentment can swell to a most surprising and horrible extent.

At the end of the particularly gross adagio, Jack put down his  
 bow and said 'Should you distrust it very much if we were to leave  
 Bahua out of our plans? Our water, and the ~~best~~ cabbages here  
 be held out unobscured well and I had as soon push on ~~right~~  
 quickly, if you understand me, to the River Plate, where there  
 all sort is a great resort of merchantmen and all sorts of ~~sort~~  
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 sorting, classifying and preserving to do, and I had as soon sail on  
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 in order.

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So they indeed they sailed away, with gentle breezes that cooled them  
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 The deep melody of the Captain's cell from the cabin and the cheerful  
 sound of the gunroom's dinner. The fulmar lost in the haze somewhere  
 north of the equator.

So these golden days went by, and Stephen's mound of tanned skins  
 mounded up, very carefully dried and treated against insects, the voracious

cockroaches that no amount of sulphurous fumigation could eliminate from the ultimate depths of the hold, their survivors breeding with extraordinary rapidity.

By the time they were in flying-fish water again, the *Surprise* and her people had settled down to this very agreeable form of life – some few cases of sunburn and alleged moon-pall by night, to occupy Poll Skeeping and Maggie, and a series of quite deep, painful wounds or rather hook-billed bites from those parakeets that did not choose to be tamed; but for once, for *once*, no steady dosing for the pox. With a perfectly competent, conscientious, but by no means tyrannical first lieutenant, Jack Aubrey and his clerk could devote their hours to gathering all the scattered surveying material from the various notebooks and journals and cast it into the regular form most valued by the Hydrographical Department. They were quite near the end of their work on the immense south Pacific crescent, at the northern tip of the Chonos Archipelago, which Jack had surveyed in freezing drizzle with a team of zealous and remarkably amiable young Chilean officer-cadets when the expected news came below. With the Master's duty, Mr Wells begged to tell Captain Aubrey that the leading-marks for the River Plate were clear from the masthead, almost due north-north-west.

They were clearer still by the last dogwatch, when the declining sun lit them from behind; and in the morning the *Surprise* was well into the whole vast bay. All day long, with a gently favouring breeze they sailed up it until both shores could clearly be seen, and a fair amount of shipping; but never a sign of a man-of-war.

Farther, farther, with no more than her foretopsail now: a pause for dinner; and drinking his coffee on deck afterwards Jack said to Stephen, 'May I ask you and Dr Jacob to run up to the island with Wantage and make sure that our salute will be returned? This reception is so very curious that I should like to make quite certain. Mr Harding, please be so good as to have the blue cutter put over the side.'

The island was the chief of the many administrative centres: it was from the battery high on the seaward cliff that salutes were answered; and usually the place was like a fairly busy hive, with customs, quarantine and harbour-dues officials swarming all over it, together with soldiers, sailors, marines and those grave gentlemen in long black coats, black-scabbarded swords, black neckcloths and black wigs who were said to be very high in the administration. At present the place was singularly quiet, almost motionless, and since a salute was rarely returned without a good deal of bustle, the silence made all hands uneasy. It was known throughout the service that an unreturned salute was practically a *casus belli*. In any event it was the gravest insult and one that put an end to all communication with the shore. And to fire a salute without assurance that it would be returned was strictly forbidden. The question did not often arise, but in this case the atmosphere was so uncommon that Jack did not intend to run the risk.

Yet while the coxswain was summoning his boat's crew Harding

cockroaches that lurked in the little recesses of the hobs, their survivors breeding with extraordinary rapidity

By the time they were in flying-foot water again, the Surprise and her people had settled down to this very agreeable form of life - some few cases of sunburn (or moon-pull by night) to occupy Pelt Skerping and Niggie, and a series of quite deep, painful wounds or rather hook-billed bites from those parasites that did not choose to be tamed, but for once, for once no steady dosing for the pox. With a perfectly competent, conscientious by no means tyrannical first lieutenant Jack Aubrey and his clerks, could devote their hours to gathering all the scattered survey material from its notebooks and journals and cast it in the regular form most valued by the Hydrographical Department. They were quite near the end of their immense cruise, at the northern tip of the Chaos Archipelago, surveyed with a lean of zeal and remarkably amiable young Chilean officer, cadet when the expected news came below. With the master's duty, Mr Wells begged to tell the Captain Aubrey that the leading marks for the River Plate were clear from the masthead

They were clearer still by the last dog watch, when the declining sun lit them from behind; and in the morning <sup>they were</sup> well into the white vast bay. All day, with a favourable breeze, <sup>she</sup> sailed up it until bold shores could be seen and a fair amount of shipping: but never a sign of a man-of-war.

Farther, farther, with no more than <sup>one</sup> topmast now: a pain for dinner; and drinking coffee on deck afterwards Jack said to Stephen: 'May I ask you and Dr Jacob to run up to the island with Wantage and make sure that our salute will be returned? This is so curious a reception that I should like to make ~~it~~ certain. & Mr Howard, please to so good as to ~~take~~ <sup>put</sup> the blue cutter <sup>over</sup> the side.'

But while the command was executing the cutter's crew Harding  
Yel

said to Jack, 'Forgive me, sir, but I believe I see a craft clearing from the lee-side. Yes, sir,' lowering his glass, 'I think it is one of their medicoes and a couple of dirty mates.' He peered again. 'Yes: a dirty, ill-looking crew in a dirty, ill-looking craft.'

They did not improve on closer acquaintance: at fifty yards from the frigate's side a man stood up and bawled 'Quarantine.'

Harding had a ladder put over and the party's leader, wearing a black coat and a yellow wig, followed by a youth with an ink-horn, came aboard quite nimbly. 'Dr Quental,' said the man in a very loud voice. 'Health. Speak Portuguese?' Wantage, who was fluent in the language, made as though to answer, but Stephen checked him. 'I am the surgeon of this ship, sir,' he said in Latin. 'Dr Maturin, at your service. I do not have the pleasure of speaking Portuguese, but I should be happy to answer any questions you choose to ask in Latin. And so will my colleague, Dr Jacob.'

Dr Quental put as good a face on it as he could, and with more ease than the company expected he repeated a list of disorders by class: '*Exanthematici? Critici? Phlogistici? Dolorosi? Quietales? Motorii? Suppressorii? Evacuatorii? Deformes? Vitia?*'

Stephen considered all these, one by one, shaking his head after due reflection and then inviting their guest to come and view what invalids the ship possessed.

Poll Skeeping and Maggie had had plenty of time: their few patients (all with mill strains or broken bones apart from one with raging toothache, to be dealt with tomorrow, when his particular friend the armourer had finished a powerful pair of forceps to his own satisfaction) were correctly rigid in their cots, washed pink, brushed and incapable of movement, almost of drawing breath, so tight-strained were the sheets. Dr Quental was much impressed, much gratified by a draught of rum, happy to accept the compliment of a neatly-cased French amputating saw, and perfectly willing to give *Surprise* a clean bill of health. He also stated that in his considered opinion the fort would not hesitate to answer the ship's salute with exactly the same number of guns; having sorted his Latin with some care while he finished his glass, he told Stephen that he was an anti-clerical, that he had nothing to do

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the galley side a man stood up and bowed 'Quarantena.'

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have the pleasure of speaking Portuguese but I should be happy to  
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deformis, vitia, to which Stephen ~~gave~~ <sup>gave</sup> all of which Stephen gravely  
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salute, and, having sorted the helm with some care, he  
told Stephen that he was an anti-clerical, that he had nothing to say

with the public burning of heretics, and that he dared say there were very good men everywhere: among Jews, for example, or blacks, or even worse.

*[The manuscript breaks off here for several pages—see O'Brian's note, opposite page—and the narrative is continued in the typescript.]*

for examp. or black, or sun

to religious intolerance and that he dared say that there were very good men everywhere. even among Jews / or worse.

the MS p 17 follows the type of MS follows

from this point I continued with the typewriter: I have change back to this again

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'Sir,' said Wantage in Stephen's ear as the Rio boat pulled away, 'his mates that did not go below with the Doctor, told me there was a rare old rumpus in the town last night, when some of people from a barque out of Boston, the Boston in the colonies, stood up at a vigil and said it was great nonsense to say you were allowed only one wife: one wife at a time. "Look at King Solomon," they said; and it was taken very much amiss. Then one of them called out that he did not give a fig for the Pope of Rome, and fighting broke out. They said five Protestant houses were set on fire, and it might be much worse tomorrow, with the arrival of the Legate.'

'What's a legate?' asked Jack, when Stephen told him of this.

'In England they were usually called nuncios,' said Stephen: but in answer to a very severe look he added; 'An ambassador, as you might say – often plenipotentiary.'

'Well, I hope the silly villains have got it wrong,' said Jack with a look of strong dissatisfaction. "This is the very last moment to become religious and start looking for stakes, gunpowder and – what do you call those things?'

'Sanbenitos.'

'Just so: sanbenitos. All we want to do is to fill up our water, buy a few fresh provisions and no doubt some wholesome fruit – we do not want to be racked, scourged and burnt: we get plenty of that at sea, free, gratis and for nothing – and pay our compliment to the Governor. Oh, that *Suffolk* would come in, followed by the rest of the blue squadron, then by Lord Leyton with his ships and hey for Cape Town with never a papist in sight for the next ten thousand miles . . . I beg pardon, dear Stephen,' he added, looking earnestly into Stephen's face. 'I really did not mean to be unkind or personal.'

'I am sure you did not, my dear,' said Stephen. 'Pray when do you mean to start the salute?'

'Just as soon as the gunner tells the officer of the watch that all is right and ready, oh; and the officer of the watch tells Harding to his astonishment that we are all ready. Then, when I have begged Harding to proceed we shall, with luck, hear that fine measured boom, boom, boom. Twelve guns is usual for Rio, and I know that Harding is having the irons heated; for, do you see, with a red-hot iron in your touch-hole you cannot miss fire and have one of those embarrassing pauses in the solemn round. He is as eager as I am to have the barky as trim as the Royal yacht on occasions like this.

The day itself was by no means as trim as it would have been, but for the Legate's visitation; yet even so, at tea-time Killick, came in, followed by Grimble, a procession of two, bearing the tea-tray (a great Spanish salver captured long ago) and a reasonable amount of anchovy toast, tea-cakes and a noble muffin.

Jack took tea seriously, as well he might, being so much exposed to the elements; indeed, he finished the two-men's muffin single handed; and then, wiping his buttery fingers, he directed an intelligent, almost a political look at Stephen, paused for a while, and then said, in substance, exactly what Stephen had expected him to say. "There are, as you know better than I – far better, indeed, a good many of our people are . . ." Here he hesitated trying to find which was least offensive: Papists? Romans? Mumbo-Jumbo certainly would not do. *People of the old faith* sounded obsequious.



'Most of them are Irish, of course; though quite a few come from the English north country. And then there are the mere foreigners . . . that is to say, the foreigners.'

'There is something to be said for the word Catholics. It is in general use in Ireland.'

'Just so: thank you, Stephen. Well, in strange towns you quite often lead your band to a place where they hear what they expect to hear – a place where they are quite at home.'

'Just so. And, if you recall, I nearly always bring them back to the ship sober.'

'Indeed you do: thoughtful, contemplative and, as you say, dead sober. Now it just happened to cross my mind that was you to take them all to the cathedral, where I have no doubt the Legate will be pontificating, as is but right and proper, and if they were to be perfectly neat, fit to pass an Admiral's inspection, most uncommon solemn and pious, if you understand me, and was they to sing out good and hearty in the right places, it might tend to create a good impression, and persuade his Holiness that we were not all a band of gin-sodden raparees, given over entirely to whoredom and things I do not like even to mention. I hope you do not find my suggestion offensive, Stephen? For it is only a suggestion, to you see, not in any sense an order.'

'A very good suggestion, too. And I shall pass the word about my fellow-papists, letting them know, among other things, that it is for the honour of the ship that we should not all be blacked with a whole number of brushes – Lutherans, bigots, church-burners, destroyers of monasteries, sodomites and a number of other words that will instantly occur to your mind. But first, with your permission I will go ashore and gather what information I can: at present I swim in a sea of unknowing. The only thing that is at all clear is that upon the whole do not love us as much as they should.'

What he said was quite true. Neither the British seamen nor the Royal Navy seemed really popular. Quite early in the morning a large scow, filled with much of the city's night-soil, heaved its massy burden overboard so close to the frigate's side that her paintwork was horribly fouled and her yardarms much endangered: all this to the cry 'Filthy sods,' which the Portuguese had obviously learnt from a merchantman and which they repeated with unflagging zeal for a very long time, stopping only when some facetious hands from an incoming trawler started throwing their more putrid cargo on to *Surprise's* deck. The trawler, curiously enough, was garlanded if not with roses, then at least with some bright pink tropical flowers. Nor was she alone in this: very considerable numbers of other fishing-craft, from whalers down to one-rod tunny-men, came swarming up the bay.

During a pause in the hoots, the pelting and the obscene gestures, Stephen and Jacob returned, unhurt, unmolested, undefiled – they did indeed look very like foreigners, poor souls. They asked Jack to come below, and in the cabin Stephen said, 'Sir, I shall speak for us both, if I may, although Dr Jacob's information is of greater value than mine and his connexions far more varied. In the very first place the extreme clerical what I might call right wing means to overthrow the governor and the government tonight or tomorrow. The Legate, who has great influence with the very large service population and above all with their leaders is here to prevent or at least to soften this movement: the ultra-clericals have little in the way of armed sup-



port, and that is one of the reasons why they have made so much of this alleged Protestant business, and why we were pelted with dung. May I say how extraordinarily wise you have been not to retaliate? To continue: this is the day upon which the fishing-boats are blessed, a very considerable feast indeed, a holiday of obligation.' He looked at his watch. 'I shall not go on prating any longer, but let me beg you to come on deck now, with your glass: and if necessary to go into the top to see the Legate arrive at the top of the steps from which he blesses the fishermen and their craft.'

Jack Aubrey did exactly what he was asked to do, giving Jacob a hand at the last stage; and there they stood all three, gazing out to starboard at the far, but not so very far, side of the harbour, where a noble flight of stairs led down to the water. At the side of the step stood soldiers in scarlet cloaks; and on the water the boat's kedges dropped, sails stowed, floated quietly for their blessing. Suddenly the prodigious, all-pervading sound of the vast crowd dropped to something not far from silence, instantly filled by the glorious sound of trumpets; and as the Legate, a fine tall upright figure in a white gown, advanced to the head of the steps, the people cheered to the very vault of the sky.

'By God, he's black,' said Jack Aubrey, and a moment later his face was contorted with emotion.

'He is very happy,' murmured Stephen. 'Presently he will come over.'

Presently was a strange word to use: but while it lasted the Legate blessed, marked boats by the score, by the hundred, with holy water; and finally after an immense thunder of drums he told the assembly that the ceremony had been accomplished: they might now sail with God: It was as much a dismissal as *Ita, missa est*; but although something like silence came down upon the bay almost no one moved. They stood watching the Legate's splendid barge as it pulled straight across to the *Surprise*. The Legate came up the side like a right seaman and hurried across the deck to his father. 'Dearest Sam, you have not changed,' said Jack as they clasped hands. Then Sam knelt and patted his father's feet, a gesture as natural as the sun.

Then Stephen led his men forward, and they all kissed the Legate's ring. 'We must go,' said Sam, lifting his ear to a distant bell. 'But, sir, may I beg for my supper tonight?'

'I shall look forward to it extremely,' said Jack, and he went below while he could still do so with a decent composure.



IN THE CLOSE-PACKED community that made up the crew of a man-of-war there was extremely little privacy: they ate, slept, washed, relieved themselves in public; in public they were flogged, unless they happened to be officers – and in that case a severe admonition was very soon made known throughout the ship. Each man and boy knew exactly what the others earned and how much the married men sent home. And although the officers sometimes had private means, and were sometimes unwilling to speak of them, they also had servants, who knew whether their masters were bearing hard up for Poverty Bay or spreading all canvas for Port Lavish itself. The paternity orders that had brought many hands aboard were the subject of often-repeated wit.

There were few Surprises therefore who were much astonished at the very strong resemblance between the Nuncio and his host. It was perfectly well known that the younger man was one of Mr Midshipman Aubrey's indiscretions when, as a long-legged youth, he had served on the South African station, and that the boy, brought up by Catholic missionaries in Mozambique, had presented himself to his father in the West Indies, bearing the present of a charm, a ju-ju, from his affectionate mother, that had kept Jack alive through some really desperate encounters. Killick was of course a fount and a reasonably honest fount of information, much of it derived from Barret Bonden, Jack's coxswain and valued friend until he was killed in battle, a source of much greater value.

From this general history, therefore, what newcomers there were in that long harbour-watch, learnt that the good fathers, having taught Sam his letters and a considerable amount of Latin – the English he picked up with no sort of trouble – destined him for the minor orders: for nothing more, because of his illegitimate birth. But Stephen Maturin who, though a bastard himself, was very well-connected, obtained a dispensation for the young man, to whom he was particularly attached: and Sam had risen very fast indeed. To be sure, he was unusually intelligent and exceptionally good-natured: but he was also very black, shining black. And this was a time when a strong current of opinion in the Church felt that the rapidly increasing black world should be given very much more attention. On the merely practical side, the very, very large number of black

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space

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men and women, slaves of or hired labourers, particularly in South America, must necessarily influence the balance of power in time. Father Panda, who was a natural-born linguist, had already done excellent work in Brazil; and now he was sent to the Argentine with greetings, and perhaps some good advice to those who were, or who were about to be, in power.

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## CHAPTER TWO

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‘MY GOD, that was a damned good dinner,’ said Captain Aubrey, rather loud, as though he were addressing the mast-head. He was not referring to his own meal with Sam, though that had been a capital feast in the naval style, ending with a truly sublime spotted dog, one at each end of the table, and improbable quantities of port. No: this was a physically far more gorgeous entertainment, a dinner given by the Governor in honour of His Excellency the Most Reverend Doctor Samuel Mputa (he had kept his mother’s name), Papal Nuncio to the Republic of the Argentine, whose government he and his allies had undoubtedly saved very recently indeed, when a numerous body of influential moderates, together with their black followers, had defected from those who were about to break out into open rebellion, and had betrayed their arsenals. It was a dinner of high ceremony, served on gold plate of more than ordinary magnificence, with some particularly valued dishes, such as the River Plate lobster in a bitter chocolate sauce, and seventy of the finest guinea-pigs ever brought down from the mountains.

To be sure, it did lack something of the family atmosphere that had hovered in the frigate’s great cabin, with every guest and servant aware of the relationship and wholly in favour of the young parson’s seamanlike ways, to say nothing of his willingness to drink his wine. Here the connexion, though not unnoticed, was much less obvious, Jack being seated, not indeed below the salt, but very much nearer to it, than his son at the very top, on the Governor’s right hand.

He uttered these fine ringing words addressed to the Nuncio, a little way below him, as he made his way cautiously down the palace steps, Killick and, absurdly, Awkward Davies hovering at no great distance – pitiless steps with no rail, very sharp edges, deep treads; and it was usual to make an inward promise of a fortnight’s or even a month’s pay to one’s patron saint before embarking on them in the darkness.

There were only six steps to go under the high-held torches when a small fat boy thrust his way through the crowd and called out, ‘Sir, oh sir, if you please! The squadron is in the gut, just stemming the tide.’

‘Thank you, Mr Wells,’ said Captain Aubrey; and craning his neck to peer in the direction of the gut he missed his step and fell into His Excellency’s waiting arms. Davies’ prodigious strength supported the double burden: they recovered their balance, and Jack, walking along quite steadily, said, ‘Sam, I am so very happy. The squadron is down there in the gut, stemming the tide. Even with this breeze they will be moored here off the island by slack water, and you will see me go aboard, ha, ha, ha! Now cut along, there’s a good fellow: you must get a decent night’s sleep.’

Chapter XX

'By God, that was a damned good dinner,' said Captain Aubrey, rather loud, as though he were addressing the mast-head. He was not referring to his meal with Sam, though that too had been a capital feast, in the naval style, ending with sublime spoiled dog, one at each end of the table, and improbable quantities of port. No: there was a physick for more gorgeous entertainment, a dinner given by the Governor in honour of the Excellency, the Most Reverend Doctor Samuel M'Pate (he kept his mother's name), Papal Nuncio in the Republic of the Argentina, whose government Sam and his allies had saved very recently indeed. <sup>of a dinner</sup> served a gold plate of more than ordinary splendour, with some particularly valued dishes, such as <sup>the</sup> River Plate lobster served in a bitter chocolate sauce, and some of the finest guinea-pigs ever brought down from the mountains.

To be sure, it lacked some of the family atmosphere that hovered about a foreign great cabin, with every guest and servant perfectly aware of the relationship and wholly in favour of the young parson's sea-like ways & his willingness to drink his wine. Here the connection, though not unnoticed, was much less obvious. Jack being seated not indeed below the salt but very much nearer to it than his

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when a numerous body of influential moderates, together with their black followers, defected from those about to break into open rebellion and betrayed their arsenals;

A decent night's sleep: there were not many people aboard the frigate who had the least expectation of such a thing. *Surprise* had three mastheads, and all were firmly occupied by the nimblest, most far-sighted young men on her books, quite irrespective of rank, and they called down every movement of their distant friends together with the even more portentous news of faintly discerned sails far down the immense estuary, conceivably the main squadron under the orders of the commander-in-chief, South African station, Lord Leyton. The *Surprise* and her tender *Ringle* would soon come under the very close, very knowing inspection of at least one senior flag-officer and of the less authoritative but sometimes even more wounding scrutiny of large numbers of officers and above all of ratings; and there was nobody aboard either of the vessels who wished his own to be mocked, fleered at or called a second-hand mud-scow. They wanted no advice on cleanliness, seamanlike appearance or the priddying of decks, no facetious observations about their attire; and even the watch below spent much of their precious sleeping-time beautifying themselves and the ship. Perhaps the most active was Killick: Captain Aubrey had served as a commodore, so he already possessed a rear-admiral's uniform: these garments had been a great source of joy to Killick, but an even greater source of anxiety – termites in Malaysia, a shameless wombat in New South Wales, while from south of the Horn to the trackless wastes of the pampas innumerable forms of vermin had gnawed or attempted to gnaw the superfine broadcloth or ruin the gold lace with their squalid dejections. During this anxious night, with so many of his shipmates scouring

The ~~squadron~~ ~~is~~ ~~staying~~ ~~the~~ ~~line~~ ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~gut~~ ~~Even~~ ~~with~~ ~~the~~ ~~best~~ ~~they~~  
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 of the South African ~~squadron~~ other two squadrons belonging to  
 the ~~command~~ under the authority of the Commander-in-Chief of the

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 observations about their attire; and when the water below spent  
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pissdales or polishing musket-cocks, begging valuable slush from the cook or (more fruitfully) from his mates to give the round-shot something of a gleam as they lay along in the garlands by the great guns – during this active time he sat in the remarkably well-lit space where the surgeons often dissected their specimens or skinned their birds, sat there with Jack's best, rarely-used sea-chest open before him, half its contents spread out on a piece of sailcloth. His face was as pale as it could be, and it expressed not only horror but anguish too: for this strong clear light showed that his zeal in earlier, darker times had robbed the cloth of all its bloom. In places it was threadbare; and the heap of clothes had something of the sad, abandoned air so evident in the second-hand barrows of Monmouth Street.

'Pass the word for Killick,' called a voice from the quarterdeck, and the cry was repeated until it echoed from the open chest itself. Automatically the steward obeyed. 'Sir,' he said faintly to the towering captain.

'Have you laid out my number one uniform?'

'Well, sir, in a manner of speaking,' said Killick. 'Which it ain't what you might call weathered very well.'

Jack had never seen his steward so deeply moved. 'Be damned to that,' he said. 'Every God-damned thing in that chest was frozen stiff week after week, off the Horn. Just look out my ribbon of the Bath, will you? It sets off an old coat very well.'

'Beg pardon, sir,' said the officer of the watch. '*Suffolk* is launching a boat.'

Very true. Her barge was lowered down in a commendable fashion and manned: her acting-captain took his place by the midshipman in the stern. They pulled across with a particular accuracy of stroke and the coxswain brought her kissing alongside with barely an impact.

Captain Simmons came aboard nimbly in spite of his packet



of letters. He saluted the quarterdeck and said, 'Good morning, sir. I thought you would like these' – holding up the bundle – 'as soon as possible.'

'Good morning, Simmons – a very good morning to you – how pleasant to see you again. You could not have judged better. We have had no news from home this many a day. Such a welcome packet: thank you very much indeed.'

'Not at all, sir. Do you choose to come back in *Suffolk's* barge with your own coxswain?'

'Thank you, Simmons, but I think I shall shift my clothes, look through the chief of these papers and then come across at about four bells.'

AT THE FOURTH STROKE he ran down to the sadly weather-beaten boat where his coxswain was already sitting in the bows with his precious burden – ran down looking very grave. The red ribbon of his order shone in the light as he came aboard the *Suffolk*, but his face was as grave as ever: this was a profoundly serious occasion and he scarcely smiled as Simmons presented his officers.

This ceremony over, he nodded to his coxswain, standing there by the mizzen, and said, 'Heave out the flag.'

The folded bundle soared aloft, followed with the utmost concentration by all hands: at exactly the right moment, the exact height to an inch, the coxswain snapped the tie and the rear-admiral's blue flag streamed out bravely in the wind, instantly greeted by the first of thirteen solemn guns, enormously loud, salutes from all the members of the blue squadron, distant cheering from *Surprise* and clouds of wheeling, discontented gulls.

'May I suggest a tour of the flagship, sir?' asked Simmons, with what cheerfulness he could muster; and together they paced along the decks, through the heady scent of powder, watched with discreet intensity by all who could decently do so and by some who could not.

of letters. He saluted the yardarm and said 'Good morning, sir: I thought you would like these' - holding up his packet - 'as soon as possible.'

'Good morning, Scummon - a very good morning to you - how pleasant to see you again. You could not have judged better: we have had no news from here this many a day. Such a welcome packet: thank you very much indeed.'

'Not at all, sir. Do you choose to come back to Suffolk to doze with your coxswain?'

'Thank you. but I think I shall stow my clothes, look through the chest of trunks, and then come across at about five bells.'

At the last stroke he ran down to the sadly weather-worn boat where his coxswain has already sitting in the bows with his precious bundle, ran down looking very grave. The red ribbon of his order shone in the light as he came aboard the Suffolk, but his face was as grave as ever. This was a profoundly serious occasion and he scarcely smiled as Scummon presented his officer.

The ceremony over, he <sup>took</sup> nodded to his coxswain, standing there by the wheel, and said 'Heave at the flag.'

The precious bundle ~~was~~ followed with intense concentration by all hands: at exactly the right moment, to exact height in a web, the coxswain snatched the ho and the rear-admiral's blue flag streamed out bravely in the wind, instantly greeted by the fire of thirteen solemn guns, enormously loud, & salutes from all the members of the blue squadron, and distant cheering from Suffolk, and clouds of uneasy seagulls complaining.

'May I suggest a boat of the flagship, sir?' asked Scummon with what could be called menace, and, together they walked along the deck, with their heavy scent of powder, watched with discreet intensity by all who could actually do so & some who could not.

'Tell me, Simmons,' said Jack as they left the main magazine, walking delicately, as well they might with so many tons of gunpowder just behind them, 'does the Admiral sail with a flag-captain?'

'He did,' said Simmons, embarrassed. 'But Captain Fielding is going home with me if *Surprise* can find room for us both.'

'Ah,' said Jack, aware that his question was untimely. 'I only asked because I thought he might answer some of my less important questions – an admiral has plenty to do without being pestered. Perhaps I might turn to his secretary.'

'I am afraid that would scarcely answer. Poor Coulter had been hauled over the coals before now for exceeding his office . . . it is very like what you and I knew aboard *Pegasus*.'

'Oh, indeed?' That had been a short, unhappy cruise when Jack was lent to the ship to take the place of her third lieutenant, shot through the head while attempting to board a Frenchman, *Pegasus* being a ship in which most people seemed to spend their time doing wrong. 'Is not *Suffolk* somewhat shorthanded?' he asked, partly to change the subject but more to learn how a ship of the line could manage with so few people: the 'tween-decks were scarcely populated.

He did not learn, because the purser's clerk, an odd long-legged spectacled man devoured by curiosity, wished to find out who Captain Aubrey was, what he was doing here, and whether they would be able to water today or tomorrow – the great casks and hoses were all laid along – and as he uttered his almost mechanical questions, so he peered eagerly with his red-rimmed short-sighted eyes into Captain Aubrey's face, apparently devoid of shame. By the time his appetite, his very considerable appetite, was satisfied they had forgotten the shortage of hands and they walked on.

It was a long inspection and in the course of it Jack met almost all his new officers again, a seamanlike set of men on the whole, and cautiously welcoming – one or two former shipmates, known long ago. But he received a general impression of anxiety and overwork, an impression that was in part overlaid by his meeting with the gunner, the master-gunner, among his twenty-four-pounders, all as trim as heavy cannon could well be and all equipped with shining Douglas sights.

A long inspection, and by the end of it, when they stood there together in the bows, gazing out towards the approaching but still distant squadron Jack had come to like his anxious, somewhat hag-ridden companion well enough to ask, 'In really heavy weather, have you not found it difficult to work the ship with so small a company?'

'I have indeed: and I have heard of it, I do assure you . . .' He was cut short by a hail from the masthead and a moment

with its attention - intelligent games and  
the deadly copper-headed bands of powder &  
tombac shot.

'Tell me, Sumner,' said Jack as they left the men engaged, walking  
delicately, as well they might, 'does the Admiral sail with a flag-captain?'

'No sir,' said Sumner, embarrassed, 'but Captain Fielding is  
going home with me if ~~Sumner~~ can find room for us.'

'Ah,' said Jack, aware that his question was untimely, 'only  
asked because I thought he might answer my less important question -  
an admiral has plenty to do without being pestered. Perhaps I  
might like to see your secretary.'

That would surely answer. Post-captain has been hauled over the coals  
for exceeding his office ... it is very late what you said I knew about  
~~Hermione~~ ~~Hermione~~. Please.

Oh, indeed? That had been a short, unhappy cruise when Jack  
was sent to the ship to take the place of his third lieutenant, shot through  
the head, a ship in which most hope seemed to spend their time  
wrong. 'Is not Suffolk a somewhat short-handed?' asked Jack  
partly to change the subject ~~and~~ but more to learn how a ship of the  
line could manage with so few people: the lower-decks was scarcely  
populated.

It was a long inspection, and in the course of it Jack met almost all  
his new officers - a seamanlike set of men upon the whole, and cautious,  
welcoming - one or two former shipmates, known long ago. But Jack  
perceived a general impression of anxiety and overwork, an impression  
that was soon overlaid by his meeting with the gunner. The master-gunner  
among his ~~lower-decks~~ <sup>in part</sup> gun-decks 2 & 3, all as trim as heavy cannon can  
well be and all equipped with long-barrelled sights.

A long inspection and by the end of it, when they stood there together  
in the bow, gazing out towards the approaching but still distant squadron,  
Jack had come to his own anxious, somewhat long-remembered companion with  
enough to ask 'Has the heavy weather, have you not found it difficult  
the ship, so short-handed as she is?'

'I have indeed: and I have heard of it, I assure you ...'

He was cut short by a hail from the mast-head and a moment

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later the message came forward: the rear-admiral was desired to go aboard the flag.

'I am afraid it will be a wet pull,' said Simmons. 'May I lend you a tarpaulin jacket?'

'If you please,' said Jack: his fine but aged uniform had not much wear left in it and he was a long, long way from home.

A wet pull it was, through an increasingly choppy sea, right into the eye of the wind: it was however shortened by the zeal of the white and blue squadrons to reach a hospitable port.

'Well, Aubrey,' said the Admiral, looking at him with a certain satisfaction. 'You have had a wet time of it, I see. You should have put on an oilskin: still, we cannot all be wise all the time. I have called you out so far from shore because there are two questions I should like to settle. The first is supplies. We are very low in everything – tobacco is quite gone – and all the way down my pursers, agents and so on have had the utmost difficulty with the locals, even in ports where we have always been welcomed and entertained. Difficulties about water, difficulties about cattle . . . even about shore-leave and common supplies – no bumboats coming off, no whores. What is it like with you in Buenos Aires? Should I push on? Things are desperate low and with the present ministry I dare not use force. How are things with you?'

'My lord, until a few days ago we had great difficulty in getting supplies of any kind, but then an eminent ecclesiastic, a Papal Nuncio particularly well known to my political adviser Dr Maturin . . .'

'Yes, yes. Sr Joseph mentioned him to me: I shall pay him some attention.'

' . . . came in and now everything is settled. We lack for nothing, and prices are very moderate. We are amply stored for the Cape, and *Surprise*, which is now bound for home with my dispatches, is in much the same case.'

'I am heartily glad to hear of it. That will be a very great relief.' Lord Leyton uttered these words, but his aged yellow face did not match them at all. His expression remained discontented, querulous, ready to find fault or to contradict. However he did say, '*Surprise*: yes, that reminds me.'

(11) 6

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'Well, Aubrey,' said the Admiral, looking at him with a certain satisfaction, 'you have had a wet pull of it, I see. You should have put on an as much as his discontented face oil-skin. Well, we cannot all be wise all the time. I have called you out could express so far because there are two questions that I wish to settle. The first is supplies. We are very low in everything - tobacco is quite gone - and all the way down my purses, agents and so on have had the utmost difficulty with the locals, even in ports where we have always been welcomed and entertained. ~~Difficulties~~ Difficulties about water, difficulties about cable ... even about common shore supplies - no bum-boats coming off, no whores. What is it like with you in Buenos Aires? Should I push on, do you think? Things are desperate low and with the present ministry in power I dare not use force. How are things with you?'

'My lord, until a few days ago we had great difficulties in getting supplies of any kind, but then an eminent ecclesiastic, a Papal Nuncio particularly well known to my political adviser, Dr Malvern ...'

'Yes, yes: Sir Joseph mentioned him to me. I shall pay him some marked attention ...'

'... came in, and now everything is settled. We lack for nothing, and prices are very moderate. We are amply stored for the Cape, and Surprise, which is now bound for home with my dispatches, is in much the same case.'

'I am heartily glad to hear it. That will be a very great relief.' Lord Legion uttered these words, but his aged yellow face did not match him at all. His expression remained discontented, querulous, ready to find fault or to contradict. However, he did say 'Surprise: yes, that reminds me



One of the reasons that I asked you to come out was to tell you that I intend to send two of my officers home in her and to ensure that there should be no trouble about taking them and an unsatisfactory midshipman aboard your vessel.'

'You will forgive me, my lord, but *Surprise* is no longer my vessel. To be sure, I did command her, but she was on hire to the Hydrographical Department of the Admiralty until I should meet your squadron, hoist my flag and take up my new appointment. The moment I did that, *Surprise's* contract with the Admiralty came to an end. She returns to the sole ownership of her proprietor, a free agent. If you wish I will ask him whether he chooses to take these people aboard: but it is entirely at his discretion. He is at no man's command.'

'What a damned hair-splitting sea-lawyer you are, upon my word, Aubrey,' cried the Admiral. 'You can damned well go back to that half-baked privateerly donkey-frigate and give the owner my orders to take these two officers and the reefer aboard. If he makes the slightest demur or objection tell him that I shall press every man in his ship and leave him to wallow in the mud of the River Plate until she rots.' At this point the Admiral's yellow face had a curious flush and his eyes fairly blazed: one clenched fist rose and fell.

'*The slightest demur or objection . . . shall press every man . . .*' repeated Jack, rising and drawing his tarpaulin round him.

'Awkward, legalistic, cavilling sod . . .' muttered the Admiral: and then, more audibly, as he rang for his steward, 'Sit down, sit down, and drink some madeira to the squadron's supplies. Amphlett' – to the steward – 'the decanter of madeira from the coach: and a couple of glasses.' A pause, and he went on, 'I do not like to ask a political adviser to come out in this blow – the doctor physicked Prince William, did he not? I am told he is very well with His Highness. But if you would tell him that you have explained the situation and that I should take it as a personal favour if he would allow these people to go aboard his ship, I should be obliged to you.'

'Very good, sir. Now if I may I shall carry your message to Dr Maturin: if I were to take your purser and perhaps your secretary back with me to *Surprise*, my people could tell them all we know about our plentiful,

One of the reasons that I asked you to come out here was to tell you that I wished to send two of my officers home in her and to ensure that there should be no doubts about taking them and an unsatisfactory misunderstanding as to our spare vessel.

To be sure I did command her, but

You will forgive me, my lord, but Surprise is no longer my vessel. She was on hire to the Hydrographical Department of the Admiralty until I should meet you & Madison ~~at~~ <sup>leave up</sup> about my flag and <sup>take up</sup> my new appointment. The moment I have done that, Surprise's contract with the Admiralty terminates & she returns to <sup>the</sup> ~~her~~ <sup>sole</sup> ownership of her proprietor, a free agent. If you wish I will ask him if he chooses to take these people aboard: but it is entirely at his discretion. He is at no man's command.

comes to  
p23

'What a damned heart-splitting see-lawyer you are upon my word, Anstey: and the Admiral. "You can damned well go back to that half-baked privately donkey frigate, and give the owner my orders to take these two officers and the keeper aboard. If he makes the slightest demur or objection tell me that I shall press every man in his ship and leave him to wallow in the mud of the River Plate until she rot." At this point the Admiral's yellow face took

the ~~shape~~ <sup>color</sup> of a curious flint and his eyes fairly blazed: one splendid old front rose & fell.

'The slightest demur or objection ... shall press every man ...' repeated Jack, rising and drawing his <sup>finger</sup> ~~oath~~ <sup>finger</sup> round him.

'A word, legalistic, scolding sod ...' mutters the Admiral: and then, more audibly, is he raving for his stewards. 'Set down: set down, and down some madams to the surgeon's supplies. Amplett' - to the steward - 'the decanter of Madeira from the coach: and a couple of glasses. A pound, and he want on. 'I do not like to see a political adviser to come out in the blue - the Doctor physician Prince William, did he not?' - but if you would tell him that you have explained the situation and that I should take it as a personal favor if he would <sup>accept</sup> ~~take~~ these people <sup>to go home</sup> aboard his ship.'

'Very good, sir. Now, if I may I shall carry your message to Dr. Malin; if I were to take your papers back with me to Surprise, my people could tell them all we know about our Medical,

He is very well with  
Prum, I am told

*plentiful* sources of supply. The present governor is entirely on our side, and I do not think you will be disappointed.'

'Make it so, Aubrey,' said the Admiral, rising. 'And when you dine aboard me tomorrow, pray bring your political adviser. I should be happy to be acquainted with him and to offer what civilities I can. I presume he goes home in *Surprise*?'

'I cannot tell, my lord: his mission in Chile is clearly at an end – a most satisfactory end – but there may also be some duties waiting for him in South Africa and above all eastwards. He and Dr Jacob are very knowing about those parts. But in any case I mean to return to her at once, and transfer some of her hands to poor thin *Suffolk*.'

'Aye. It was the yellow jack. Off Port of Spain.'

'And I shall carry your message. Your servant, my lord, and thank you for the capital madeira.'

The pull back had the breeze and the sea right aft, and Jack went aboard *Surprise* in fine style, the side dressed by smiling seamen and officers. He asked for the Doctor, who, unused to the ceremonies attending a flag-officer, was reading in the great cabin, reading his letters from home. Jack noticed his gravity but delivered Lord Leyton's invitation and said, 'I shall be back in a few minutes: please sort out my post and I shall join you.'

On deck he gave the not unexpected order for all hands and when the particularly attentive group was assembled he said, 'Shipmates, as you know, the barky is going home. Some people are uneasy in their minds at being thrown ashore in peace-time . . .' A general murmur of agreement: intense interest. 'Well, I can take sixty-three prime seamen over to *Suffolk* with me. Aboard her it would in course be the same pay, rations and allowances as here, and in her you would find some officers you already know and a score or two of former shipmates. So let them as choose to serve on the South African station ask my clerk to set their names down on a list and I shall mark those I think best suited for the climate.'

A general buzz of strong approval, not quite a cheer, out of respect for a flag-officer, and Rear-Admiral Aubrey plunged below, where Stephen looked up with a frown, pushing Jack's heap towards him and silently going on with his own.

Sophie Aubrey had almost all the virtues of a woman who had had

plentiful source of supply. The present governor is certainly on our side, and I do not think you will be disappointed.

now

May it be said to Admiral Aubrey, 'And when you see to do about me / may bring your political adviser. I should be happy to answer his ~~requirements~~ ~~requirements~~ be acquainted with him and to offer what criticism I can.

I presume to go home a Surprise?

Just so, my lord: and indeed I mean to return to her at once, to transfer some of her hands to poor Hen Suffolk -

'Aye. It was the yellow jack.' of 2nd of Jan

'And I shall carry your message / Your servant, my lord, and thank you for the rapid message.

The pull back, with the breeze and the sea right off, and Jack went aboard Surprise in fine style, the deck dressed by smiling seamen and officers. He went aboard for the Doctor, who, minded to their ceremony was reading in the great cabin, reading his letters from home. Jack noticed his serious look, delivered his invitation, and said 'I shall be back in a few minutes; please sort out my post and I shall join you: not unexpected order

On deck he gave the ~~order~~ ~~order~~ for all hands and when the particularly attentive group was assembled he said 'Shipmates, as you know, the bark is going home. Some people are uneasy in their minds about being thrown ashore in peace-time. A general murmur of agreement: intense interest. 'Well, I can take 63 prime seamen with me. Aboard Suffolk it would in course be the same pay, rations & allowances as here, and in her you would find some officers you already know and a score or two of former shipmates. So let them that choose to serve of the South African station are my clerk to set their names down on a list and I shall mark those I think best suited for the climate.'

A general blizz of strong approval, not such a cheer, out of respect for the flag-officers, and Rear-Admiral Aubrey plunged off below, where Stephen looked up with a frown, <sup>silently</sup> Jack's head towards him and going on with his own.

Sophie Aubrey had almost all the virtues of a woman who had had

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the meagre education of her class, taught by a singularly ignorant governess – little beyond the three R's and a smattering of French together with a list of good and bad kings. She had never been encouraged to read and in fact she had read very little; but she could and did write a singularly beautiful hand. Her piano-playing was purely mechanical, yet then again she had naturally pretty manners, she was tall and slim, her complexion was quite admirable and she moved with a perfect, unconscious grace – it was a delight to see her going down the dance. But she was an indifferent, unwilling horsewoman in spite of arduous, dreaded lessons in her youth and her husband's kindly-meant encouragement: and she had never learnt to date her letters.

Jack's bundle had not come aboard arranged in order of time and although from a few hints thrown out by chance – gifts of partridges, the flowering of certain shrubs, children's holidays, birthday feasts – he slowly imposed a remote hint of sequence he could scarcely confide in it at all. He did make out that his valuable agent was managing his more distant estate – the inherited rotten borough that gave him a seat in Parliament – remarkably well, that the Woolcombe land was more prosperous than ever it had been, and that generally speaking the children's health, apart from the usual coughs, colds and one greenstick fracture, was all that could be wished.

The pattern, the history of all that these many letters told, was still very far from clear, but the hint of discord and unhappiness that he had acquired from the first random pages and that he had carried with an anxious mind to the *Suffolk* – the hint that had much increased the gravity of that ceremony – now expanded to a conscious and reasoned certainty: there had indeed been grave unhappiness at Woolcombe, and in all likelihood the unhappiness was still there.

From time to time he glanced over at Stephen, who was equally grave, but whose letters – whose dated and indeed numbered letters (for from early childhood Christine had been brought up to keep exact ornithological and botanical records) were now assembled in neatly-ordered piles that he was at present annotating in a private script, just as he would have annotated any other body of intelligence documents. From time to time Stephen felt his friend's gaze heavy upon him; but this was an exceedingly delicate affair, with very strong emotions involved, and he did not choose to broach a subject that concerned Jack even more than it concerned him: still less did he wish to force a confidence. He therefore made no observation of any kind until Jack turned



and said, 'Brother, I am most uncommon stupid today, what with the emotion of hoisting my flag – hoisting my flag, God bless us all – and having a set-to with Lord Leyton as well as coping with our people – and I cannot make head or tail of what is afoot at home, except that they do not seem to be quite friends. Have you puzzled it out? I mean, if you have had the same kind of letters?'

'I believe I have, my dear, though I may well be mistaken. You will recall that Christine went down to Woolcombe at my particular request and at dear Sophie's invitation?'

'Yes, yes: I remember it perfectly.'

'At that time your twin daughters were away, at their aunt's school in Ulster.'

'Just so. They travelled with James Callaghan, whose eldest girl is there too.'

'So at Woolcombe there was just Sophie, your young George on long leave while his ship was refitting, Christine Wood and my Brigid. Edward Heatherleigh had brought them down from the North Country, but at that point he did not stay, having at least three papers to read before the Society.'

'All this while we were moving slowly down towards Brazil.'

Stephen nodded and went on, 'Perhaps I told you that among a quantity of letters that I received at Funchal there was a note from Edward speaking of his delight, in the countryside about Woolcombe and his hope of hunting there one day?'

'I believe you did. Do you think a pot of coffee would sharpen my wits?' He touched the bell. 'You will take a cup, I am sure?'

Stephen agreed and went on. 'That was the posture of affairs: a very elegant posture too, with George and Brigid excellent good friends, often riding on a stout well-boned pony – the source, alas, of that greenstick fracture.'

'It knit very soon and it earned him another three months' leave.'

'To be sure. And this was the state of affairs when Edward came back from London. He had been charmed by the reception of his papers and he was even more charmed by the countryside; he thought it

I shall write p 6  
at again

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and said 'Brother, I am most uncommon stupid today, what <sup>(11)</sup>  
with the emotion of hoisting my flag - hoisting my flag. God bless us  
all - and having a set-to with Lord L<sup>e</sup>ighton as well as copying  
with our people - and I cannot make head or <sup>tail</sup> of what is off  
about at home, except that they do not seem anti friends. Have  
you phrased it out? I mean. If you have had the same kind of letters?'

'I believe I have, my dear, though I may well be mistaken. Christmas  
went down to Woodcombe at my particular request and at dear  
Sophie's invitation.'

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school in Ulster.'

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Society.'

'All this while we were moving slowly down towards Brazil.'

'Perhaps I told you that among a quantity of letters that I received  
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the countryside about West Woodcombe and his hope of kindly then  
one day?'

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franchise.

'It went very soon, and it earned him another three months leave:

'To be sure. And this was the state of affairs when Edward  
came back from London. He had been charmed by the reception of  
his papers and he was even more charmed by the countryside; he

ideal for fishing, for hunting fox or hare, and for recording the movements, mating, nesting and diet of an extraordinarily large number of birds, and he asserted that he should start making enquiries for a house to be let or sold, observing that although their place in the north was very well, the weather was exceptionally and increasingly severe, which his declining health could no longer endure. So Sophie, judging very rightly from his carriage, servants and evident style of living, suggested a comfortable, fair-sized house a quarter of a mile away.'

'Medenham.'

'Just so . . . which had been empty for some time, but which, with a gardens and meadows, had been carefully kept up and which was to be had at a modest rent by a tenant such as Mr Heatherleigh, and if dear Christine liked she would ask the agent for an order to view.'

The brother and sister viewed with every intention of being pleased and they came away delighted. Indeed they would have been difficult to satisfy if they had not liked Medenham, a warm, comfortable, spacious, low-built house of Charles II's time with linen-cupboards fit to shelter a troop of horses, massive furniture of another age and a considerable library, mostly of travel and natural philosophy.

The affair was soon concluded; necessities and a few servants were sent down from the north, and the new tenants moved in; the nearby families soon paid their visits, and Mr Heatherleigh and his sister were pronounced a great acquisition to the neighbourhood, particularly as Mr Heatherleigh spoke eagerly of his intention to hunt that year.

This however proved a hope not easily realized. The horses were soon in the stalls, a handsome bay mare and two promising grey geldings, but Mr Heatherleigh had a troublesome neighbour in the north who coveted his estate and when it was refused to be sold this man turned to the exceedingly complex law governing mineral deposits in those parts which, he contended, gave him the right in the peculiar jurisdiction of the province to pursue an uninterrupted vein under the adjoining land – under Edward Heatherleigh's land. Before Michaelmas, therefore, the poor man climbed into his coach again and travelled northwards to his bitter moors through the driving rain, to spend all his diminishing

ideal for fishing for hawks the fox or the hare, and for recreation in the mountains, <sup>neatly and about as an extraordinary large number of trees</sup>

(12)

said he should start making enquiries for a house to be let or sold. observing that although their place in the north was very well, the weather was exceptionally <sup>a marvellous</sup> severe, which his declining health could not longer endure bear. So Sophia, judging very rightly from his costly carriage, servant and evident style of living, at once suggested a comfortable, four-sized house not a quarter of a mile away...

'Medenham.'

Just so... which had been empty for some time, but which, with its gardens & meadows, has been carefully kept up and which was to be had at a moderate rent by a tenant such as Mr Edward. Woolcombe's own man of business was in charge of the matter and of dear Mrs Wood liked she would ask him <sup>for</sup> ~~to give~~ them an order to view.

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They viewed with every indication of being pleased and they came away delighted. Indeed they would have been difficult to satisfy if they had not liked Medenham, a warm, <sup>comfortable</sup> spacious, low-built house of Charles II's time with linen-cupboards to shelter a troop of horses ~~and~~ massive furniture of another age and a considerable library, mostly of natural <sup>travel and</sup> philosophy.

owned

The affair was soon concluded; necessaries and a few servants were sent down from the north, and the new tenants moved in; the neighbouring families soon paid their visits, and Mr Edward & his sister were <sup>very</sup> soon to be a great acquisition to the neighbourhood, particularly as Mr Edward spoke eagerly of his intention to hunt that year.

was:

This however proved a hope not easily realized. The <sup>horses</sup> ~~horses~~ were <sup>soon in the north</sup> there, a handsome bay mare and two promising grey geldings, but Mr Edward had a troublesome neighbour in the north who coveted his estate and when it was returned to be sold turned to the exceedingly complex law governing mineral deposits which, he concluded, gave him the right, ~~to pursue~~ in the peculiar jurisdiction of that <sup>province</sup> ~~part~~ (part of the county of Durham) to pursue an uninterrupted vein under the adjoining land. Before Michaelmas, therefore, the poor man climbed into his coach again and travelled northwards to his bitter moors ~~and~~ through the driving rain, to spend all his diminishing <sub>under Edward's land</sub>

energy in lawyers' meetings and vain attempts at understanding counsels' opinions on the most profoundly obscure customary laws of usage where minerals were concerned in that particular district.

During this period Christine spent much of her time at Woolcombe, and so, except for those necessary hours in the school-room with her new governess, the capable and intelligent Miss West, did Brigid, walking in and out as though it were her own home, often accompanied by her companion George, who sometimes improved his indifferent mathematics with Miss West and sometimes showed both governess and pupil the higher flights of knotting.

It was during the later part of this season when field mushrooms were to be had by the basketful for the picking that the little household began to look for the return of Mr Edward – he had uttered some general remarks about having a wheel retired and the horses shod – when a carriage was heard coming up the drive. For a few moments those who were drinking tea in the small drawing-room thought it might possibly be Mr Edward's coach, sounding soft because of the rain: but not at all – it was a common post-chaise bringing the twins earlier than usual (not at all uncommon with Sophie's sister, who would seize upon any conveyance, any travelling-companion, to send her pupils home).

The letters that described this homecoming varied; but Stephen, who knew those concerned extremely well, saw the Aubrey girls hurrying in, tired, cross and hungry, intensely jealous at seeing Brigid sitting there by their mother, warm, prettily dressed and well-fed. 'Are you still here?' asked Charlotte. 'You are always here!' cried Fanny, and there was some motion towards pushing her off the sofa, strongly repelled by George. Clearly Sophie and Christine dealt with the situation – the clack and din of the accompanying County Armagh maidservant was a great help – and the Aubrey girls were taken away, washed and fed, while Christine led Brigid home, desiring Padeen to carry the twins' trunk indoors and settle with the postillion.

'As I see it, dear Jack,' said Stephen, 'the twins' jealousy, exacerbated by the weariness of travelling, extreme hunger and the hot squalor of a post-chaise, exploded into open violence when they saw Brigid there, brushed and in a handsome garment sitting in the most favoured place next to their mother.

(11)

energy in lawyers' meetings and vain attempt at understanding counsels' opinion on the profoundly obscure customary laws of the usages where minerals were concerned in that particular district.

*Volume* During this time <sup>previous</sup> Christine spent much of her time at Woolcombe and except for these necessary hours in the school-room with her new governess, the capable and intelligent Miss West, did Bridgid, waltz in and out as if it were her own home, often accompanied by her companion George, who sometimes improved his indifferent mathematics with Miss West and sometimes showed both governess and pupil to higher flights of geometry.

*ital* It was during the latter part of this season, when field mushrooms were to be had for the picking, that the little household began to look for the return of Mr Edward - he had <sup>written</sup> ~~given~~ some general remarks about having a wheel retires and the horses shod - when a carriage heard coming up the drive. For a few moments those who were drinking tea in the small drawing-room thought it might possibly be Mr Edward's coach, sounding soft because of the rain; but not at all - it was a common post-chaise bringing the twins earlier than usual (not at all uncommon with Sophie's sister, who would seize upon any conveyance, any travelling-companion, to send her pupils home)

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'As I see it, my dear,' said Stephen, 'the twins' jealousy, exacerbated by the weariness of travelling, ~~be~~ extreme hunger, and the hot sector of a post-chaise, exploded into ~~not~~ open violence when she saw Bridgid, peevishly dressed, washed and sitting in the most favoured place next to the mother,

A good night's sleep, a body-bath of warm water, fresh clothes and a substantial breakfast is likely to restore all their amiability.'

'I am sure you are right,' said Jack, but he did not believe it. He knew, far better than Stephen, that there was little amiability to restore. Not from the beginning, when the little girls were virtually one being, but quite early, he had seen this jealousy directed by a mutual common understanding against any person, any creature even, for whom their gentle and affectionate mother showed a particular liking. Their father, being a sort of household god, was exempt, and so were some of the minor animals; but not George, who was accused of siding with Brigid against them and of running after her like a little dog.

It was an unhappy state of affairs, above all that Edward Heatherleigh was away in the north and that in his absence Christine was staying at Woolhampton, where her support for Brigid increased the atmosphere of ill-will.

'Sometimes I count the remaining days of holiday on the calendar,' write Sophie. 'They seem to stretch on and on, and I am so afraid that Christine and I may quarrel. Sometimes I see her check the angry words when the twins are particularly unkind: and rather than have that I am minded to suggest that she and Padeen should travel up to the north to stay with dear Edward, at least until the girls go back to school. I know that she is particularly anxious to escape the attentions, the very pronounced attentions, of Captain Miller.'

'I do not think I know about Captain Miller,' said Stephen. 'What is his ship?'

'Oh no: he is only a soldier,' said Jack. 'He has a moderate estate the other side of Caxley. A surprising number of pheasants; but a sad coxcomb, I fear. I only say 'How d'ye do?' when we meet. A soldier: his regiment was posted to Sierra Leone at one time. That will be the Admiral,'

A good night sleep, a body-bath of warm water, fresh clothes and a substantial breakfast is likely to restore all their amiability.'

'I am sure you are right,' said Jack, but he did not believe it. He knew, far better than Stephen, that there was little amiability to restore. Not from the beginning, when the little girls were virtually one being, but ~~and quite early~~, he had seen this jealousy directed, at almost any (by a male common understanding) against any person, any creature even, for whom their gentle and obedient mother showed a particular liking. Their father, being a sort of household god, was exempt, and so were some of the minor animals; but not George, who was accused of siding with Bridget against them and of running after her like a little dog.

It was an unhappy state of affairs, above all now that Mr Edward was away in the north and that Christine was staying, at Woolhampton, where her support for in his absence Bridget increased the atmosphere of ill-will.

~~'Fortunately the end of the holidays is not very very far away,' wrote Sophie, 'and then they can go back to Ulster, their school where they have quite a lot of friends who are neither prettier nor cleverer or better at French than themselves.'~~

'Sometimes I count the remaining days of holiday on the calendar,' wrote Sophie. 'They seem to stretch on and on, and I am so afraid that Christine and I may quarrel. Sometimes I see her slip the angry words when the turns are particularly unkind; and rather than have that I am minded to suggest that she and Padeen should travel up to the north to stay with dear Edward, at least until the girls go back to school. I know that she is particularly anxious to escape the attentions, the very pronounced attentions of Captain Miller.'

'I do not think I do know about Captain Miller,' said Stephen.

'He has a moderate estate the other side of Casley,' said Jack.

'A surprising quantity of pheasants; but a sad coxcomb, I fear. I only say "How d'ye do?" when we meet. A ~~set~~ soldier; you know. ~~The~~ ~~man~~ was posted to Sierra Leone at one time.' That will be the Admiral.'

he said, breaking off as the salute began, doubled and redoubled by echoes and by the citadel's prodigious reply to Leyton's civility.

'The Admiral is at hand,' said Jack in the flattened silence, 'and I should have told you before that he begs the favour of passage home for his flag-captain and another unfortunate whose name I forget. And I rather think, brother, that I have pledged your word in exchange for the moving of sixty-odd prime hands to *Suffolk*, which can hardly win her anchors else. Oh, they were so happy when . . .'

'Wittles is up,' said Killick, and the scent of toasted cheese wafted in with him.

They ate in silence, intently, hungrily; and then, resting his fork, Jack said, 'I have had what I think is an idea worthy of Newton: but during the night I must spend the rest of my time reading the rest of my letters and unless they contradict me I shall tell you at breakfast: for once that is eaten, *Surprise* must make sail.'

(R)

he said as the salute began, doubled and redoubled by echoes and on the citadels prodigious reply to Lord Leyburn's civility

'The Admiral is at hand,' said Jack, 'and I should have told you before that he begs the favour of passage home for his flag-captain and another unfortunate whose name I forget. I rather think, brother, that I have pledged your word in exchange for the recovery of sixty odd ~~prisoners~~ <sup>prisoners</sup> from hands to Suffolk, which we hardly won her anchorage else. Oh, they were so happy when -'

'Yettles is up,' said Kellier, and the seat of wailed cheers wafted in with him.

They ate in silence, intently, hungry, and then resting for food. Jack said 'I have had what I think is an idea worthy of Newton: but during the night I shall send the rest of our kites <sup>unless</sup> & ~~rather~~ they ~~contracted~~ contracted me I shall let you a breakfast: for one that is eaten. Supper must make suit.'

## CHAPTER THREE

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THE DIMINISHED but still well-manned *Surprise* and her lithe fore-and-aft companion *Ringle* swung easily at their moorings on the making tide not far from the imposing *Suffolk*, and they gazed at the South African squadron farther inshore, actively victualling, watering and getting ready to move into various docks and yards beyond the citadel for repairs, some of them urgent.

'Good morning, Stephen,' said Jack as his friend walked into the cabin.

'Good morning to you, my dear,' said Stephen.

'You have done your writing, I see?'

'So I have too: a simple harsh direction that Brigid shall be delivered into the hands of the bearer and carried aboard – whichever vessel we decide upon – there to be in her father's custody: this is, as I understand it, a necessary legal form in case any of Diana's relatives should object. It is, I hope entirely softened by a most affectionate private note to Christine and her brother, inviting them to join us.'

'I have done much the same, simply requiring Sophie to come aboard with the utmost dispatch, bringing a minimum of impediments, and of course the girls.'

Each eyed the other's letter, which looked more like a laboured study than a simple note; and Jack said, 'Well, let us at least have a preliminary cup, and then we can ask Harding to join us.' Some moments later he touched the bell, and said to Killick, 'Ask Mr Harding to walk in. Mr Harding, pray sit down – may I pour you a cup of coffee? Now you know very well that *Surprise* and *Ringle* are to return to Portsmouth with all possible speed to deliver a certain number of officers to the Commander-in-Chief, together with the Doctor's communications and my dispatches. You may find it possible to shape your course without any impropriety so that you touch at Shelmerston before heading for Plymouth. If it is feasible, you, a firm-natured married man, will post straight to Woolcombe and there hand this letter to my wife and this to Mrs Wood, her near neighbour. Our hope, do you see, is to convey both ladies, together with Mrs Wood's brother, the three children

Chapter III

The diminished but still well-manned Surprise and her like four-and-a-half rigged companion Ringle swung easily at their moorings on the making tide. Not far from the imposing Suffolk, and they gazed at the South African squadron farther inshore, adonely richly, water, and getting ready to move with various docks and yards beyond the citadel for repairs, some of them urgent.

'Good morning, Stephen,' said Jack as his friend walked into the cabin.  
'Good morning to you, my dear,' said Stephen.  
'You have done your writing, I see?'

'So I have too: a simple <sup>direct</sup> ~~request~~ that Budget shall be delivered into the hands of the bearer to be carried aboard - whenever vessel we decide upon, this is, I understand, a necessary legal form in case any of Diana's relatives should object. It is, I hope, entirely collin by a most affectionate private note to Christine and her brother, inviting them to join us.

'I have done much the same, simply requesting Sophie to come aboard with the utmost despatch, bringing a minimum of impedimenta, and to carry the goods.

Back upon the other's letter, which looked more like a laboured study than a simple note; & then Jack said 'Well, let us at least have a preliminary cup, & then we can add hardly to you us.' Some words later he touched the bell, and said to Kellie 'Ask Mr Hardy to walk in. Mr Hardy, may not do so - may I <sup>bring</sup> ~~bring~~ you a cup of coffee?' Now you know very well that Surprise & Ringle are to return to Portsmouth with all possible dispatch speed to deliver to deliver a certain number of officers, to the C. & G. C., together with the Colonel's messages & my despatches. You may find it possible to shape your course so that you touch at Shelmersdon without any impedimenta before heading for Plymouth. If it is feasible you, from Woolcombe Woolcombe Woolcombe will post straight over to Woolcombe, & there hand this letter to my wife, and this to Mrs Woolcombe, her near neighbour. Our hope, do you see, is to carry both ladies, the Woolcombe children,

together with Mr Wood's books,

and the strict minimum of attendants to the Cape, either catching the squadron before it leaves the River Plate or joining company during the voyage – they will almost certainly water at Saint Helena – or simply at the Cape itself. Now you know both vessels through and through; and you know more than I do about children, attendants and the married state. When you have heard the ladies express their views on baggage and on these points you will form an opinion on the irreducible minimum and choose your conveyance accordingly. *Ringle* is undoubtedly faster than *Surprise*, but I should not like to have her passengers unduly cramped – given a disgust of the sea – for the sake of a few days.’

‘Two ladies, one gentleman, three children, and I suppose three or four maids and a man.’

‘It does of course depend on whether the gentleman chooses to come,’ observed Jack. ‘Mr Harding, you will read these letters if you please: they are in no way confidential.’

‘I make no doubt that the gentleman will come,’ said Stephen.

Harding, a poised middle-aged lieutenant, read the letters with attention. The others watched him. ‘Well, sir,’ he said at last, ‘Well, gentlemen: I am of opinion that *Ringle* is the right choice. I was perpetually easing my sheet when she was in company with *Surprise*, though indeed there are few faster frigates. The passengers will not lie altogether at their ease, to be sure, but they will have the delight of seeing the bow-wave flung wide to leeward and the wake racing away, everything alive and tearing through the water. They would be dull souls that did not love that: and if I may be so bold, Miss Bridget loved it purely last time she was afloat in a blow. Anyhow, you would want *Ringle* as a tender, sir.’

‘Very true: so you think all these people could be crammed in?’

‘I should take my davy on it, sir.’

‘Very well. You can sail with *Surprise*, then; and she will deliver my officers, passengers and despatches at Portsmouth, then run down to be laid up in Sepping’s yard, while you return with your passengers in *Ringle*.

and the strict minimum of attendants to the Cape, either catching the Regaden before it leaves the River Plate, joining company during the voyage - we shall almost certainly water at St Helena - or simply at the Cape itself. Now you know both vessels through and there; and you know more than I do about children, attendants and the married state. What you have heard the ladies express their views <sup>beginning with</sup> on these points you will form an opinion on the irreducible minimum & choose your vessel accordingly. Ranga is undoubtedly faster than Surprise, but I would not have her passengers unshakably cramped - given a disgust of the sea - for the sake of a few days.

Two ladies, one gentleman, three children, and I suppose fifteen or four maid and a man.

It does of course depend upon whether the gentleman chooses to come. observed Jack. Mr Harding, you will read the letter: they are not in any way confidential.

I make no doubt that the gentleman will come, said Stephen.

Harding, a <sup>aged</sup> posed middle-aged man, read the letter with attention. The others watched him. Well, sir, he said at <sup>last</sup> ~~last~~ Well, gentlemen: I am of opinion that Ranga is the regular choice. I was perfectly easy of my sheet when in company with Surprise, though indeed there are few faster frigates. They will not lie at their ease to business, but they will have the delight of the bow-wave flying <sup>to leeward</sup> and the wake racing away, every way about & tearing through the water. They would be dull souls as did not love that; and if I may be so bold, Miss Bridget loved it precisely last time she was afloat in a blow. Anyhow you would want Ranga as a tender, sir.

- Very true: so you think all those people could be crammed in?
- I should take my own cut of it.
- Very well. You can sail with Surprise, then; and she will deliver my officers passengers & dispatches at Portsmouth, then if row down to be laid up in Rappin's yard.

Miss  
Miss  
& Mrs } Ditch

'Very good, sir,' said Harding, folding the letters away in his bosom. 'So now, since the gentlemen for Portsmouth are already aboard *Surprise*, I shall ask permission to take my leave and wish you and *Suffolk* a happy, prosperous voyage. And Doctor, how I hope you and your mate may bag a brace or two of phoenixes.'

They shook hands and parted. 'There is a fine fellow,' said Jack. 'He can sail the schooner very, very hard indeed: it was the right choice. But I think he was not mistaken when he said they would not always lie at their ease.'

'It would be ill-natured on my part to suggest that he might be influenced by the certainty, under Providence, of coming back to your blue squadron and acting as tender to the imposing great *Suffolk* under your command: I shall not say it however, although my lower being does feel exceptionally bad-tempered today. Jack, with your idea you have wholly forestalled me. You spoke of a notion worthy of Newton, but you did not elaborate: and I was only waiting for an opportunity of telling you mine.'

'Pray do so now, dear Stephen: I am sure it would be more luminous.'

'What I was going to say was that you had no idea of the fundamental difference between a mere landlubber and a seaman.'

'Oh was you, indeed?'

'You may toss your head in that superior way, but you have never been a *mere* landlubber. You were introduced to the ocean as an infant child; you boated before you knew the difference between right and wrong; you went positively to sea under Captain Willis well before puberty. Far from you the wondering calf-like gaze of those who watch the intrepid mariner traverse the tossing deck – the gaze almost instantly followed by a feeling of unavoidable and certain death, cold death, followed by furious uncontrollable heaves and

III

'Very good, sir.' said Harold, folding the letters away in his bosom. 'So now, since the gentlemen ~~to be~~<sup>for</sup> ~~to~~ Portsmouth are already aboard Surprise, I shall ask of permission to take my leave and wish you a Saltol & happy, prosperous voyage. And Douli, how I hope you both & your mate will buy a brace or two of Phoenixes.'

They shook hands and parted. 'There is a fine fellow,' said Jack. 'He can sail the schooner very, very hard indeed: it was the right choice. But I think he was right when he said they would not always lie at their ease.'

'It would be ill-natured on my part to suggest that he might be influenced by the certainty, under provisions, of coming back to your true salvation and acting as tender to the infamous great Saltol under your command: I shall not say, it however, although my lower <sup>body</sup> nature does feel exceptionally ill-tempered today. Jack, with your idea you have wholly forestalled me. You speak of a notion worthy of Newton, but you did not elaborate: and I was only waiting for an opportunity of telling you so.

'Pray do so now, dear Stephen: I am sure it would be most luminous.'

'What I was going to say was that you had no idea of the fundamental difference between a <sup>man</sup> landlubber and a seaman.'

'Oh, but was you, indeed?'

'You may toss your head in the superior way, but you have never been a mere landlubber. You were <sup>introduced</sup> dipped in the ocean as an infant child; you boated before you knew the difference between right and wrong; you went positively to sea under Captain White well before puberty. Far from you the wondrous calf-life gaze of those that watch the sulphur mines traverse the bosoms deep - the gaze almost instantly followed ~~by~~ by the feeling of unavoidable & certain death, cold death, followed by furious uncontrollable heave and

shameless vomiting, morbid frigor and despair. They, with some slight recovery and even an upright position, the sight of these god-like creatures stalking about the nightmare deck in their uncouth garments, uttering their brutish cries, haling upon ropes great and small – finding their way by night – reaching the stated port – all this reduces the lubber to a state of laudable and permanent humility. No, no, my good sir, you may say what you please, but there is a great gulf fixed between the landlubber – the landlubber who comes late to things that float – and the true-born seaman: a gulf as great as that between a sheep and a seal.'

'Very true,' said Jack, who had had the training of some of the sheep.

'Now you are to consider,' Stephen went on, 'that my Brigid was not only baptized in sea-water, but dipped before she could walk. When we were ashore she rejoiced in boats, when we were afloat she delighted in heavy sea, never minding in the least when they soaked her through and through – nimble in the rigging, the darling of the upper-yardmen. She often explains the rigging to me, and I have seen old hands like Tobin nod with approval. No, my dear Jack, what I should have said had you not in essence said it before me, was that one (however young) who has sea-legs, sea-sense and a knowledge both acquired and to some degree as it were instinctive of the sea's very nature itself bears down all frippery land-based experience, however old.'

'Oh come, Stephen, Charlotte and what's her name are not exactly crones. As I remember they only date from the Mauritius campaign.'

'They might have been born with Helen of Troy as far as that is concerned. Aboard, particularly aboard so lithe and eager a vessel as *Ringle*, Brigid must bear them down; and a just equilibrium will be reached, with mutual respect and no bullying.'

THERE WERE MANY vantage-points high above the harbour that

- all this reduces the lubber to state of land-lubber & permanent

TH

slower slower

shameless vomiting, morbid fidget and despair. Then, with some slight recovery and even an upright position. He seized of these god-like creature wading the night-wind deck in their unsmooth garments, uttering their bristling cries, taking upon ropes great & small - finding their way by night - reaching the stowed port! No, no, my good ser, you may say what you like, but there is a great gulf fixed between the land-lubber - the land-lubber who comes late to things that float - and the true born seaman; a gulf as great as that between a sheep and a seal.

'Very true,' said Jack, who had had the strains of some of the sheep.

'Now you are to consider,' Stephen went on, 'that my Dringal was not only baptized in sea-water, but dipped before she could walk. When we were ashore she rejoiced in boats, when we were at sea she floated she delighted in heavy seas, never minding in the least when they soaked her through and through - mumble in the rigging, the darts of the upper yardmen. She often explains the rigging to me, and I have seen wise old hands like Tobin nod with approval. No, my dear Jack, what I should have said had you not in essence said it before me, was that one (however young) who has sea-legs, sea-sense, and a knowledge both accrued & in some degree as it were instinctive of the sea's very nature itself, beats down all foppish land-based experience, however old.'

'Oh come, Stephen: Charlotte & what's her name are not exactly clones. As I remember they only date from the Mauritius <sup>campaign</sup> ~~campaign~~ <sup>companion</sup>.' -

'They might have been born with Helen of Troy as far as that is concerned. Aboard, particularly aboard so little <sup>and snug</sup> vessel as Rough, she must bear them down: <sup>and a just equilibrium with her</sup> <sup>with hunched respect</sup> <sup>& no bullying</sup>

There were many <sup>Venture</sup> ~~ventures~~ ponds about the harbours that

Madonna?

Jack and Stephen used to climb, once a reasonable period had elapsed, a period in which a well-handled weatherly craft with favourable winds (and as far as could be told they had been favourable) could reasonably be expected to sail out and back; and Stephen had the pleasure of seeing some moderately upland birds and the bizarre mating habits of a colony of variegated scorpions, while the sun passed over the almost invariable translucent sky; but Jack always made his descent to the still fairly active yards (Lord Leyton's mainmast footing still gave great trouble) with hope disappointed.

By now *Suffolk* was in very fine fig, and since Jack was blessed with an experienced and upon the whole intelligent wardroom, the gun-crews, at least in dumb-show, were as brisk as he could wish while the small-arms men (who could, within limits, fire their pieces) were all well above the average. Her stores were completed – prime salt beef from the immense ranches, smaller amounts of moderate pork, a remarkably agreeable army biscuit, tobacco in industrial quantities – while for daily use flesh-boats plied to and from the butchers stalls along the quay, and flat-bottomed craft brought fruit and vegetables in unlimited amount. As a peace-maker the Nuncio had worked wonders, though to be sure commercial enterprise had played its part.

'It is only a Friday,' said Jack, when he and his first lieutenant (he sailed without a flag-captain) had made sure that there was not a becket out of place and that all Suffolks were present, correctly shaved and provided with all that was required. 'It is only a Friday, but I think I shall stroll up well beyond our usual mound with a telescope. Do you choose to come, Stephen?'

'I do, too: we might see some of the first migrants.'

Up and up: fairly easy going now that they were used to the land; and as they rose the horizon increased enormously, the empty horizon, though in with the land there were some lateen-rigged fishermen.

The mound they chose was thinly covered with a sparse herbage in which there grew a small particularly vicious cactus, while in the many bare places the earth showed

Jack & Stephen climbed once a fairly reasonable time had elapsed, and Stephen had at least the delight of some <sup>moderately</sup> ~~reasonably~~ upland birds and the bizarre mating habits of a colony of variegated scorpions while the sun passed over the almost invariably <sup>prize</sup> translucent sky; but Jack made his descent to the still fairly active yards (Lord L's ship was in the last stages of painting) with hope disappointed.

. (Climate)

Suffolk by now was in very fine fag, and since Jack was blessed with an experienced, settled and upon the whole intelligent headroom, the gun-crew, at least in dumb show, were as brisk as he could wish, while the small arms men (who could, with leading fire their pieces) were well above the average. His stores were of course complete - from prime salt beef from the immense tanks, water straight from the cisterns fed in the morning, an <sup>irresistibly agreeable</sup> ~~eminently palatable~~ army biscuit - while for every day was the fresh beef piled in and fro, while flat-bottomed craft brought fruit and vegetables in unnumbered quantity from the butcher's stalls along the quay. As a peace-maker the Nuncio had worked wonders; though to be sure, commercial eagerness had its share.

After history of cold ports

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'It is only a Friday,' said Jack, when he and his first lieutenant (he said sailed without a flag captain) had made sure that there was not a becket out of Maci and that all Suffolks were present, correctly shaven and provided with all that was required, 'It is only a Friday, but I think I shall stroll up beyond our usual mound with a telescope. Do you choose to come?'

'I do, too: we might see some of the first migrants.'

Up and up: fairly easy going now that they were used to the land; and as they rose the horizon increased enormously, the empty horizon, though in spite of land there were some ~~fish~~ fishermen - lateen-rigged.

The mound on which they sat was thickly covered with a sparse herbage, <sup>caulicous</sup> but in the many bare places the earth showed in what there grew, small <sup>and</sup> particularly warm caelins

dull purplish red: a landscape more wholly foreign they had never seen, although they had travelled very, very widely – it was, after all, their calling.

‘Dear Lord,’ said Jack, sitting comfortably down, his back to a rock, after a piercing search of the nearer sea and the northern horizon, ‘how I long for Woolcombe and the green Woolhampton downs, speckled with sheep. Woolcombe and the soft dew falling: the cawing of rooks. When I was a mere post-captain, you know, and there was this prospect of peace, I used to console myself, particularly when I was solvent again with that dear prize-money and Cousin Edward’s land doing so well – I used to console myself with the thought of restoring the place to what it was when I was a boy, before my father lost his head about the Stock Exchange, when we had a pack of hounds and a damned good huntsman and when the water-bailiff kept the streams as neat as a man-of-war: full of trout and the odd salmon on the spring run. Lord, we had such sport, such fun! There was an old hound called Captain, and he always hit off the line after a check. “Hark to Captain” we would cry, and they all followed him like a single creature. Lord! How I longed to be back! Now of course I must stand my trick as a flag-officer: and most uncommon lucky I am to *have* it to do. But I do so long to be back, sometimes, under Hamble Down, showing George how to work out a line. Stephen, you can have no idea how beautiful it is.’

‘Can I not?’

‘Oh of course you can, of course you can. I am sure the Glens of Avoca are even finer. I do beg your pardon. But, do you see, it was *my* childhood.’

‘Have you noticed that small vessel right in with the land, almost beneath us, under the cliff? Her sails are all in a line.’

Jack leapt to his feet. ‘By God, she’s *Ringle*,’ he cried. ‘She must have stood inshore . . .’ The voice and the explanation died on the downward slope.

‘I should never have believed

dull people to: a landscape as ~~strangely~~ wholly foreign that  
had ever seen. although they had travelled not indeed from pole to  
pole but very, very widely - it was like all their calling.

'Dear Lord,' said Jack after a merciful search of the mugh  
sea and the northern horizon, 'how I long for Woolcomb, and  
the soft green Woolhampton down, speckled with sheep. Woolcomb  
and the soft new falling. When I was a mere post-captain, you  
know, and there was this prospect of peace, I used to console  
myself, particularly when I was solvent again with that dear Mr  
money and Cousin Edward's land doing so well, I used to console  
myself with the thought of restoring the place to what it was when  
I was a boy, before my father lost his head about the Stock Exchange  
when we had a pack of hounds and a damned good huntsman, and  
the water-bailiff kept the stream as trim as a man-of-war: full of  
fish, and the odd salmon at the spring tides. Lord, we had such  
sport, such fun! There was an old hound called Captain, and he  
always led the line off after a check - they followed him like an  
cavalier. Lord, how I longed to be back! Now of course I  
have to serve my track as a flag-officer: as most unromantic being  
I am to have it to do. But how I long to be back, sometimes,  
under thumb, down, showing George how to work out a line.  
Stephen, you can have no idea how beautiful it is.'

'Can I not?' I am sure the Great and Above are over there

'Oh, of course you can, of course you can. I beg your pardon.'

'Have you noticed that small vessel right in with the land, a light  
beneath us, under the cliff?' Her sad smile in his

Jack leapt to his feet. 'By God, she's Rugh!' he  
cried. 'She must have stood inshore . . . ' (his voice and  
his explanation died in the downward. 'I should never have

Believed

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that a man so tall and stout could have moved so fast,' murmured Stephen, fixing the schooner in his glass. He liked to believe that he could make out Brigid and Christine with Edward Heatherleigh clinging to a spar behind them, but it was clearly time to descend.

The perilous slope, the milder slope, the mule-track, the paved road, and at last the quays with Jack still far, far ahead, though now moving more like an admiral.

*Ringle* was a beautifully-proportioned vessel and it was only when there was a tight knot of people on her fo'c'sle that one saw how small she was in fact. Kindly hands heaved on the mooring ropes to let Stephen step aboard from the quay, and clear over the general din he heard the Aubrey twins' shrill cry, raised for the seventh time, 'Why are you not wearing your admiral's uniform?' while at the same time his own Brigid slipped through the throng and whispered 'Dearest Papa' as he bent to kiss her. Christine was just behind, and looking up from the child's shining, happy, sun-browned face he said, 'Dear Christine, she does you infinite credit. Edward, my dear sir, how do you do? How happy I am to see you.'

The visitors' cabins had long since been prepared, and now the admiral's barge carried them over: after their extraordinarily rapid but somewhat cramped voyage they were amazed by the scale of a ship of the line. 'It is almost as good as Grignon's hotel,' said Charlotte, which earned her a sour look from Killick. 'And have you noticed that the sails are square?' asked her sister, to which Brigid replied, 'Don't you know the odds between a ship and a schooner?' with such firmness and such effect that Stephen saw, with infinite satisfaction, that a decent balance had been established. Then again, Brigid knew quantities of old Surprises, some of whom had taught her the ropes: these she found out and asked them how they did, calling them by name,

that a tall man so stout could have moved so fast, said Stephen. They  
 the schooner with her gun. He hoped to believe that he could wave out  
 Christine and Boryd with Edward Heathcliff clinging to a spar behind  
 them, but it was clearly time to descend. (35)

The previous slope, the market slope, the market slope the paved road and  
 at last the quays with faxes still far ahead, but many new men were  
 an admiral.

~~At~~ Ruyter was a beautifully proportioned vessel and it was  
 only when there was a tight knot of people on her jolly that one  
 saw how small she was in fact. Kindly hands heaved a  
 mooring rope to let Stephen slip aboard from a quay and clear  
 over the general din he heard the Abbey twin's shrill cry, raised  
 for the seventh time 'Why are you not wearing your uniform?'  
 which at the same time his own Boryd slipped through the throng  
 and whispered 'Dearest Papa,' as he bent to kiss him.  
 Christine was just behind her, and looking at her from the child's  
 shrunken, happy, triumphant face he said 'Dear Christine, she does  
 you infinite credit. Edward, my dear son, how do you do?'

The visitors' cabins had long since been prepared, and now  
 the admiral's barge carried them over: after a somewhat cramped  
 but phenomenally rapid voyage they were amazed by the scale  
 of a ship of the line. 'It is almost as good as Grogan's hotel,'  
 said Charlotte, which brought her a comical look from Wilkes. And  
 'Have you noticed that the sails are square?' asked her sister, to  
 which Boryd answered <sup>replied</sup> 'Don't you know the difference between a  
 ship and a schooner?' with such firmness, and to such effect  
 that Stephen saw, with infinite satisfaction, that his theory had  
 not been mistaken, that a decent balance had been restored. And  
 not only that, but Boryd knew quantities of old Surprises\*, found  
 them out and asked them how they did, calling them by name,

\* some of whom had bought her the rope,

which put her head and shoulders above any passenger but Mrs Aubrey. In any case the twins never entered into competition: as might have been predicted, they had been dreadfully seasick, confined to their bunks, horrible to see and worse to hear from the very beginning until a few days ago, so that they had acquired no sea-legs, no fundamental knowledge; and even now they were incapable of distinguishing a bowline from a rolling-hitch.

Yet in a surprisingly short time as it is measured by days the new inhabitants of the *Suffolk*, even the more stupid of the Aubrey girls, took bells for granted, the ritual swabbing of decks, set meals (less Spartan now that they lay in port) and the many and very fine gradations that separated the rear-admiral from the boy, third-class. Stephen observed, with a mute but intense satisfaction, that here his daughter had not the least air of being a stranger in the house, a friend's child accepted for that friend's sake: here, with so many friends and accompanied by Padeen, an old Surprise of remarkable standing and authority, she was very much at home. Yet as far as he could see she did not flaunt her sea-going knowledge, but as soon as the twins were willing to be peaceable she was both kind and companion-like.

Very soon they had explored almost every part of the ship from the safer tops (propelled by Padeen and other seamen) to the echoing vaults of the darkened hold, where facetious midshipmen and first class volunteers would terrify them with sepulchral moans and waving sheets.

'Dearest Stephen,' said Sophie, passing him a cup of tea in the cabin, 'I cannot tell you how glad I am that our daughters are friends again: there was a time when I almost despaired – when I should have whipped them if I had not thought

which put her head and shoulders above every passenger but Mrs Aubrey.

\* (to follow p7) Furthermore, the women, as might have been predicted, had been dreadfully seasick, confined to their bunks, worried to see & worse to hear, from the very beginning until a few days ago, so that they had acquired no sea-legs, no fundamental knowledge, so that even now they were & incapable of distinguishing between a rolling hatch and a bowline.

In a surprisingly short time as it is measured by days the new inhabitants of the Suffolk, particularly the children, soon bells for granted, the relief swimming of decks, set meals (but Spackin now that they lay in port), the many & very fine gradations that separated the rear admiral from the boy third class. Stephen observed, with a well but unlearned satisfaction, that here his daughter, though ~~supported of & aided by Paderon, an old Surpriser of remarkable standing and authority~~ had not the least air of being a stranger in the house, a friend's child accepted for that friend's sake: here, with so many friends and accompanied by Paderon, an old Surpriser of remarkable standing & authority, ~~and accompanied with such a fund of sea-guy knowledge~~ she was very much at home. Yet as far as he could see she did not flaunt her sea-guy knowledge, but as soon as the time was willing to be peaceable she was both kind and & companionable.

Very soon they had explored almost every part of the ship from the safer tops (propelled Paderon & other seamen) to the echoing vaults of the darkened hold where faceless undertakers and first class volunteers would terrify them with sepulchral moan & waving sheets.

'Dearest Stephen, said Sophie, passing him a cup of tea in the cabin. 'I cannot tell you how glad I am that our daughters are friends again: there was a time at home when I almost despaired - when I should have supposed them of (had not things

it would do more harm than good. It only made me dogged when I was young.'

'I cannot imagine you being whipped, Sophie,' said Christine.

'But I was, and quite often too. My mother would make us stand with our faces to the wall and whip the back of our legs with a thin sheaf of willow-wands: I do not think it ever improved my French verbs or arithmetic or even my manners.'

'I knew some Dominican nuns who did that,' said Stephen. 'They whipped my Saavedra cousins until they bled: I had thought it was only Catholic. Jack hardly ever flogs: discourages it, indeed. How do you find him, my dear?'

'Oh, very well, I thank you,' said Sophie, blushing. 'I must admit he is rather thinner than I could wish: but he does *love* having his flag, and I am so very, very happy for him. It was Prince William who sent us the news, with his best compliments, which I thought wonderfully polite.'

The three little girls came in, since if there was tea there might also, in the nature of things, be cake, or at least muffin. On seeing Stephen they stopped, not looking very wise, and made a concerted bob: then Brigid ran over to him and said, 'Oh sir, the Admiral says a Portuguee came in with the flood and he hopes there may be some mail. A boat pulled across to the flag not long since.'

'I shall go upstairs – I shall go on deck, and ask whether it would be proper to enquire. Ladies, forgive me, I beg.'

No. It would be most improper. Jack was surprised that a man who had seen so much sea-time could suppose the thing possible or even decent – it was not exactly mutinous but it would deserve and certainly receive an exceptionally harsh reproach. But in any case Stephen was talking great nonsense. The Portuguese had been aboard Lord Leyton this hour and more and there

It would do more harm than good. It only made me dogged when I was young.

'I cannot imagine you being whipped, Sophie,' said Christine.

'But I ~~am~~ was, and quite often too. My mother would make us stand with our faces to the wall and whip the back of our legs with a scourge made of willow-wands: I do not think it ever improved my French verbs or arithmetic or even <sup>my</sup> manners.'

'I knew some Dominican nuns etc who did that,' said Stephen. 'They whipped my Saavedra cousins until they bled: I had ~~scolded~~ scolded it was only Catholic. Jack hardly ever flogs; discourages it, indeed. How do you find her, my dear?'

'Oh, very well. I ~~trust~~ trust you,' said Sophie, blushing. 'I must admit he is rather sterner than I could ~~wish~~ wish: but he does love having less flog, and I am so very very happy for him: it was Prince William who sent us the news, with his best compliments which I thought ~~was~~ were wonderfully polite.'

The ~~other~~ three little girls came in, since of them was (for there might also be the names of things, be cake, or at least mutton or seeing Stephen they stopped, not looking very wise, and ~~then~~ and made a concerted bow; then Bridget ran over to him and said 'Oh sir, the Admiral says a Portuguese came in with the flood and he hopes there may be some mail. A boat pulled across to the flag, not long since.'

'I shall go upstairs - I shall go on deck, and ask whether it would be proper to enquire. Ladies, forgive me, I beg.'

No. It would be most improper. Jack was surprised that a man who had seen so much sea time could suppose such a thing possible or even decent - it was not exactly mutinous but it would deserve and most receive an exceedingly bitter reproof.

But in any case Stephen was talking great nonsense. The Portuguese had been aboard Lord Lexington this hour and were and were and were

had been no sign of mail – nothing handed up the side, no passing out of bags, no hurrying to and fro. No. The boat had done nothing more than deliver a gentleman, the gentleman in regimentals who was now walking up and down the quarterdeck with the Admiral, arm in arm. ‘I have been staring at him with my glass, in this ill-bred fashion, for some little time,’ said Jack. ‘For although I think I know the face and carriage I cannot put a name to either. Should you like to take a look?’

‘Sure, it is very ill-bred: but I might, to make you easy.’ Stephen took the telescope, focused it, and almost at once, as the two men on the far ship turned, he said coldly, ‘It is Henry Miller. He was at Trinity in my time and he killed Edward Taaffe in the Fifteen Acres when I was in my last year.’

‘Miller? Yes, of course, my neighbour over by Caxley. He must be related to the Admiral – Miller is Lord Leyton’s family name, and that person over there often spoke of a peerage going to some fairly close connexion. Cousin, of course: they would not be walking arm in arm, otherwise.’ After a pause Jack went on, ‘What do you mean by your Fifteen Acres?’

‘It is a space in the Phoenix Park – you know the great park in Dublin, I am sure?’ Jack nodded. ‘And that is where people go, particularly the young men of Trinity, to settle matters of honour.’

‘Just so: and he killed a gunner officer in Malta, too. He is said to be a very good shot; and he has capital pistols. I have heard him called Hair-Trigger Miller; and to be sure I have seen him bring down a great many pheasants.’

‘Would you say he was a quarrelsome man, at all?’

‘I scarcely know him. We are necessarily acquainted, but he is not the sort of man whose acquaintance I should value – in short, I do not like him. It is not the fighting. As you know, duels are much more usual in the army than with us, or even the Marines. And anyhow you and I have both been out from time to time . . . cannot top it the Holy Joe.’

nothing carried up the side,

is no sign of mail - / no handkerchiefs out of bags, no hussying to and fro. No. The boat had done nothing more than deliver the gentleman the gentleman in regimentals who is walking up and down the quai side with the Admiral arm in arm. I have been staring at his wife in my glass in this ill-bred fashion for some little time, for although I think I know the face I cannot put a name to it. Will you take a look?

'Sure it's very ill-bred: but I might, to ~~be~~ make you easy. The boat took the telescope, ~~focus~~ focused, and almost at once, as the wife was a bit far ship behind, he said coldly. 'It is Henry Miller. He was at Trinité and he killed Edward Taaffe & a Fillein Green when I was in my last year.'

'Miller? ~~Yes, that is Lord Leyland's family name. There must be~~ You, of course, my neighbor over by Cayley: he must be related to the Admiral - Miller is Lord Leyland's family name, and the man I know often spoke of a passage given to some fairly close connection. Common, of course: they would not be walking arm in arm, else. After a pause Jack went on. 'He killed a guinea hen for a Malto too. He is said - obviously, to be a very good shot, not capable for a pilot: I have heard him called Star-Trigger Miller, and to be sure I have seen him bring down a great many pheasants.'

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'Would you say he was a Rascallous man at all?'

'I scarcely know him. We are necessarily acquainted, ~~but I do~~ he is not ~~the kind of~~ man whom acquaintance I should value. In short I do not like him. It is not the fighting. Such an animal would not stand in the army then with us, as you know, and anyhow we have took him out from time to time.'



Jack stared out over the water and went on. 'For all I know he may be well enough liked in his regiment: but his reputation in the neighbourhood is so indifferent that I was astonished to learn that he had called on Edward and Christine when they settled in Medenham, and then at Woolcombe when Christine was staying there, with Edward so far in the north. I have no room to blackguard a man for incontinence, being no model myself: but there are limits . . . You know very well, Stephen, how much influence a man with a large household and a considerable estate can bring to bear on his dependents – his dependents' daughters – and there were some very ugly tales of girls in child being turned away. I *know* very little: yet his conduct does seem to match with the general reprobation.'

'He is not married, I take it?'

'No, nor ever has been. Being almost next in succession to the Leyton title, he is said to be saving himself up for some very brilliant match.'

'Can you square a man's valuing a peerage very highly with his going out and risking his life so often?'

'Yes, if he is an unusually resentful unloved creature and at the same time an uncommon good shot.'

'Sir, if you please,' said the officer of the watch, stepping aft and taking off his hat, 'Flag is breaking out a signal.' Speaking in the high, staccato, expressionless voice usual on such occasions, the duty-midshipman piped up, 'Flag to *Suffolk*: Admiral invites Rear-Admiral and Doctor M-A-T-U-R-I-N to dinner at a quarter past three: repeat a quarter past three o'clock.'

'Rear-Admiral to flag: very happy,' said Jack in italics. Then he hurried aft to Stephen's point of discreet withdrawal. 'Stephen, I have engaged you to dine with the Admiral tomorrow: I hope you do not mind it?'

'I do not mind it, my dear: and it would make not odds if I did. We are all worms under the harrow, in the service: even you,

Jack stood over the water and went on.

'For all I know he may be well enough liked in his regiment, but his reputation in the neighbourhood is so excellent that I was surprised to hear that he had called on Edward and Christine when they sailed in Melanham, and then at Woolcomb when Christine was staying there with Edward so busy in the north. I have no room to blackguard, man for incontinence, being no model myself; but there are limits... You know very well, Stephen, how much influence a few men with a large household and a considerable estate can bring to bear on his dependants - his dependants' daughters - and there were some very ugly tales of girls in child being turned away. I know very little, yet his conduct does seem to match with the general reputation.'

'He is not married, I take it?'

'No. Not ever has been. Sure he is next in succession to Leyta title, he is said to be saving himself up for some very brilliant match.'

'Can you square a man's valuing a peerage very highly with his going out and risking his life so often?'

'Yes, if he is an unusually resentful creature and at the same time a very good shot.'

'Sit, if you please,' said the officer of the watch, sleepily, and taking off his hat. 'Flag is breaking out a signal.'

Speaking in the high, staccato, expressionless voice usual on such occasions, midshipman popped up 'Flag to Suffolk: Admiral invites Rear-Admiral and Doctor MATURIA to dinner at quarter past three, repeat a quarter past three.'

OK HODGE

'Rear-Admiral to flag: very happy,' said Jack in stiches & then speaking more like a human being. 'Pass the word for to Doctor. Stephen, (in a proud tone, and then leaning over the table) I have engaged you to dine with the Admiral tomorrow: I hope you do not mind it?'

'I do not mind it, my dear; and it would make no odds if I did. We are all worried under the harrow, in the service - even you.'

Jack, scintillating in gold lace, are but one of us. *I say come, and he cometh: for I am a centurion.* I have met few admirals: some high, mighty and almost certainly constipated; others small, jolly, good company: reading men, even. Besides, I long for men's company: the prattle of the little girls – much though I love them – drives me to an earlier and earlier breakfast, to a later and even later dinner, so that presently the two will meet, as they did in Avicenna's tale. They come to me with a pelagic crab, a starfish, a piece of common wrack, and standing by my side they cry, "Oh sir, pray tell us what it is," so that I am tempted to utter obscene blasphemy. Oh how I long for dear Jacob's return!

'I believe our departure depends largely on that,' said Jack gravely; and then after a pause, 'I tell you what, Stephen,' he cried, 'it is long since we had a real great-gun exercise. The last powder-hoy, for a trifle of whiskey – you know the Irish drink, Stephen, I am sure?'

'I have never heard of it,' said Stephen.

'– gave us a little surplus, so that the gunner is actually at a loss to stow it: nothing could be happier. And if that does not deafen, astound and silence the little girls there is the Devil in it. I shall give orders directly. The whole *shooting-match!*" Jack did not often stumble on a witticism, and this one gave him particular delight: he repeated it twice.

The whole shooting-match it was, indeed: *Suffolk* might not have been called a very taut ship, nor more than ordinarily crack, but she could never have been likened to the Margate hoy; and in any case she now carried many Surprises, long used to their captain's ways and his rigid insistence upon very high

Jack, fairly scintillating in gold lace, are but one of us. I say come, and  
be comid. for I am a centurion. But in any case, I should like to  
 meet the admiral. I have met few: some high-mighty, and almost  
 certainly constipated, other small, jolly, and good company. Readers,  
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'I believe our departure depends largely on that,' said Jack  
 gravely; and then he paused. 'I tell you what, Stephen,' he cried.  
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 for a little of whiskey - you know the sort down, Stephen, I am  
 sure?'

'I have never heard of it,' said Stephen.

'- gave us a little surplus, so that the grimmer is actually <sup>41</sup>  
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 I shall give orders directly. The whole shooting match!' - Jack  
 did not often stumble on a nickname, and then one gave him  
 particular delight.

The whole shooting match it was, indeed: Suffolk might not have  
 been called a very land ship, or more than ordinarily coarse, but it  
 could never have been named to a Margate boy, and in our  
 up case it had carried many surprises, long used in their  
 Captain's ways, and his rigid insistence upon every high

standards indeed. The breeze being both steady and favourable Jack laid on his favourite, most profitable form of exercise, one calculated to promote zeal, speed and above all accuracy, to knit a gun-crew into an immensely cooperative whole – never a word passing, never a word called for – and to promote the most valuable sort of competition. The most experienced gun-captains and the older, wiser midshipmen were at the three forward guns; and bitter shame would fall upon any following gun that could not keep up with them in speed or accuracy.

The first three guns had been ordered to fire high, to leave something for the rest of the broadside; and Jack, as a particular treat, silencer or gob-stopper for the little girls, had with Mr Meares the gunner contrived a flimsy but coherent structure that under very light and worn-out canvas would drift until it was abreast of the man-of-war, which would then pound it with the most rapid broadside compatible with the *Suffolk's* timbers – a broadside rolling, but only just rolling.

'Target's away,' hailed the foretopmast lookout. 'On deck, there, target's away.'

'From forward aft as she bears,' called Jack; and there was a long, tense silence, broken only by the gentle wind in the rigging. The little girls, in white frocks, stood on tip-toe: just behind them Sophie and Christine, almost equally tense. The captain of Number One glared along his sights, the lanyard in his right hand, his left making very slight delicate motions to swivel or elevate the huge gun-barrel right or left, up or down a trifle. 'Fire!' he cried and heaved on the lanyard: the hammer shot forward and with barely a perceptible pause the gun uttered its prodigious roar, a great jet of smoke and flame enveloping the cannon-ball and the gun-carriage and cannon raced inboard with a screech of trunions under the arched bodies of the crew until the whole was brought up short with a great twang

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standards indeed. The breeze being both strong and favourable

- Jack had laid on his favourite, most profitable form of exercise, one calculated to promote zeal, speed, & above all accuracy, to wit a gun crew into an unusually active cooperation while - never a word passing, never a word called for - and to promote the most valuable sort of competition. The most experienced gun-captains and the oldest men were at the three forward guns; and better than would fall upon any following gun that could not keep up with them in speed or accuracy.

The first three guns had been ordered to fire high, to leave shells for the rest of the broadside; and Jack, as a particular treat silence or gob-stopped for the little girls, had, with the gunner, Mr Mexico, contrived a flimsy but coherent structure that would not drift or waver until it was advised of the man-of-war. which would then pound it with the most rapid broadside compatible with Safford's timber - rolling, but only just rolling.

'Target's away.' hailed the foretopmast lookout. 'On deck, there. Target's away.'

From forward as she bears, called Jack, and there was a long, tense silence, broken only by the gentle wind in the rigging. The little girls, in volute tracks, stood a tip-toe: just behind them Sophia and Christine, almost equally tense. The captain of Number One glanced along the sight. The target in her right hand. her left made very slight delicate movements to swivel or elevate the long gun-barrel right or left, ~~up~~ up or down a little. 'Fire!' he cried and heard on the target: the hammer shot forward and with betsey on lead perceptible pause the gun uttered its prodigious roar. a great jet of smoke and flame enveloping the cannon ball and the racing gun-carriage and barrel racing inboard with a scream of friction under the attached bodies of its crew until the whole was brought up short with a great thump

of the tackles; but already there were immensely active hands cleaning any smouldering remnants from the gun, swabbing the barrel, ramming down the next charge of powder, then the ball, then the wads, well thumped down, the crew barely pausing for breath but running the whole mass up against the side with a crash, where the gun-captain pricked and primed his cock, unmoved by the truly appalling discharge of his right-hand neighbour as he and his mates made all fast and levelled the warm gun again.

The firing went clean down the battleship's side at a fine even pace, and even the aftermost piece had its shot at the frail remnant that drifted by. But by then the little girls had almost no voice to screech with nor even the emotional power to do so: the enormous and repeated din, the vibration of the ship and the air, the great flashes and the dense clouds of smoke drifting away to leeward had overpowered them; and the near-stupefaction of their elders was very impressive too. Sophie had seen sloops and moderate frigates at gun-exercise, but never a ship of the line, and she was quite remarkably perturbed, not only by the unconscionable din but infinitely more by the reflection that this was what his profession inflicted upon her husband: or at least the way of life to which it exposed him. Christine, to be sure, had fired many and many a fowling-piece and even upon occasion a rifled gun, but nothing imaginably on this scale, and she remained quite mute, holding Brigid's hand, until after a good deal of calling-out right forward the cry came down, 'On deck, on deck there. Target's away, sir.'

So it was, a great long affair of all kinds of old casks and nameless objects from the entire squadron clapped together and furnished with enough cloth of a sort to carry the whole downwind. The target appeared on the starboard bow, towed by boats that cast off as soon as it was well on course. An active intelligent master's mate ran down the broadside: 'No fire until the Admiral gives the word: then count

by the tactics: but already their eyes were incessantly active hands clearing any smouldering remains from the gun, swabbing the barrel, tamping down the next charge of powder. In the back, then the mess, all clumped down, and baring paucity for the break running the whole mess up up against the side <sup>of the</sup> ~~with~~ the captain yanked and steered her cock, unmoving by the truly appalling <sup>breaking</sup> of his neighbour as by and his mate made all fast and levelled the warm gun again.

The firing went clear down the battleship's side at a few fine even paces, and even the sternmost piece had its shot at the frail remnant that drifted by. But by then the little girls had almost no voice to screech nor even the emotional power to do so: the enormous and repeated din, the vibration of the ship and the air, the great flash and a dense cloud of smoke drifting away to leeward had overpowered them; and the near-stupor of their elders was very impressive too. Sophie had seen sloops & moderate frigates at gun exercise, but never a ship of the line, and she was quite remarkably pumbed, not only by the unconceivable din but intensely more ~~to~~ by the reflection that this was what her profession subject her husband to. Christine, to be sure, had fired many and many a fowling piece and even a rifled gun on occasion, but nothing unquadrably on this scale, and she remained quite mute, holding Bridget's hand, until after a good deal of calling out right forward the cry came down, 'On deck. On deck there Target's away, sir.'

So it was, a great long translucent efflux of all kinds of old cans and nameless objects, clapped together and furnished with enough cloth of a sort to carry to whole downwind. The target appeared on the starboard bow, loomed to by boat that cast off ~~at once~~ as soon as the ~~target~~ it was well on course. An active intelligent waiter came down to broadcast 'No fire until the Admiral gives the word: then come

two between each shot.'

A profound silence: the target drifted half way down the *Suffolk's* length. 'Fire,' said Jack.

The first gun and before it quite ran in the second and so clear along down to the last: and when the smoke cleared and the last repeated echo died away there was nothing but tossing water to be seen. The little girls had strength enough to utter a last gasping 'Oh,' and then they were led away, exhausted: but not before a furious Killick had appeared on the quarterdeck waving a full-dress coat. 'Which I had it all laid out a quarter of an hour long past. Ain't you got . . .' He was going to say 'no shame?' but disapproving looks, coupled with Jack's compliance and a call for the barge checked his zeal.

With a following breeze and a very well-inclined crew the barge fairly skimmed across the sea, hooking on only a matter of seconds late. In any case Lord Leyton was in a good mood – he could be jovial and he could be damned crabbed: but this was a good day. He had heard much of Dr Maturin's acquaintance, close acquaintance, with Prince William, who, in view of his elder brother's constitution, was likely to be king in the early foreseeable future. 'Well, Aubrey,' he cried giving his guest a hand as he came aboard, 'you very nearly split the heavens with that damned great rolling broadside – God's my life, thunder and lightning was nothing to compare. Don't I wish you may not have started more than a dozen of your timbers, ha, ha, ha! And don't I wish you may have come by your powder honestly, ha, ha, ha, ha! Allow me to present my young cousin Randolph Miller' – beckoning to a soldier in regimentals, smiling just behind him. 'But of course you know him already, you are neighbours in the country.'

'How do you do, sir?' said Jack, accepting Miller's proffered

*[The manuscript here has been considerably reworked by the author. Pages 105 and 107 (both marked by O'Brian as page 15 of Chapter Three) are different versions of the same material. Page 105 seems to be the later draft, as it corresponds more closely to the typescript.]*

count was between each shot.

A profound silence: the largest drifted half way down the Subark's length. 'Fire,' said Jack.

The first gun: and before it quite ran in the second and so close along the line down to the last. When the smoke cleared and the last repeated echo died away there was nothly but tossing water to the sea. The little girls had strength enough to utter a last gasping Oh, and they were led away exultant: but not before a furious Killeck had appeared on the ~~unavoidable~~ warning, full-dress coat, 'What! I had it all laid out a quarter of an hour long past. Ain't you got...

He was going to say 'No shame?' but disapproving look, coupled with Jane's instant compliance and a call for the barge checked his zeal.

44 With a following breeze and a very well inclined crew the barge fairly skimmed across the sea, hooping on only a matter of seconds late. In any case Lord Leyton was in a good mood - he could be jovial and he could be damned crabbed - but this was a good day. He had heard more of Dr. Maturin's acquaintance, close acquaintances, with the Prince William. ~~the Duke of Clarence~~, who, in view of his elder brother's constitution, was likely to be king in the fairly near future. 'Well, Harkney,' he cried, giving the guest a hand as he came aboard. 'You very nearly split the heavens with that damned great ruddy broadside - God's my life. Thunder and lightning was nothly to compare. Don't I wish you may not have started more than a dozen of your ~~limbers~~, he, he, he! And don't I wish you may have counted your powder honestly, he, he, he, he! Allow me to present my young cousin Randolph Miller - 'beck on to a soldier in regimentals, surely just behind us - 'head of course you know him already, you are neighbours in the country.'

'How do you do, Sir?' said Jack. (any Miller's professed accepting)



two between each shot.

A profound silence: the target drifted half way down the Suffolk's length. 'Fire,' said Jack.

The first gun and before it went down a the second and so clear down to the last: and when the smoke cleared and the last repeated echo died away there were twelve but some losing water to be seen. The little girls had strength enough to say a last gasping Oh, and then they were led away, exhausted: but not before a furious Killion appeared on the quarterdeck waving a fist down coat. 'What I had it all laid out a quarter of an hour long past. And you got ...' He was going to say 'no shame,' but disapproving look, coupled with faint compliance and his call for a baggy checked, hurried. /44

The barge fairly raced over the smooth water with the morning tide and they were not perceptibly late, and in any case Lord Peyton, willing to be affable before Dr Mallin, of whose influence with the Duke of Clarence he had heard strange things, greeted them pleasantly enough. 'By God, Aubrey,' he said 'you fairly split the heavens with that last rolling shot. Don't I wish you may not have started more than a score of your timber; and may I trust you came to your powder honestly, he, he, he. Dr Mallin, how do you do, sir? Prince William spoke most kindly of you when last we met. Said you were most uncommon clever. May I ~~not~~ name my cousin, Captain Miller - though now I come to think on it, perhaps, physician takes rank over an army officer?'

Miller  
5 m  
Capt  
11 m

'How do you do, sir?' said Stephen, bowing. And the how do you does were repeated by Jack and Miller and some other guests, as they made their way, often giving preference, to the Admiral's splendid. Eight they sat down, and with the servants behind and chairs they were by no means crowded. Jack, as a flag-officer sat at the Admiral's right, with the Admiral's cousin opposite. 'I

hand.

‘And this, sir, is Dr Maturin, I presume?’ said Lord Leyton. ‘How kind of you to come. I have had a particular desire to meet you ever since the Duke of Clarence told me you were a most uncommonly learned man. I am not particularly learned myself, but I love to surround myself with those that are. May I introduce you to Captain Miller, my cousin Randolph – but now I come to reflect, perhaps a Doctor of Medicine takes rank over a simple soldier . . .’

‘Not at all, my lord: but it so happens that we were at Trinity at much the same time, so I already have that honour.’

‘Indeed he was: Trinity College, Dublin. Well then, if he too were at Trinity, then he too is one of the learned – it stands to reason. And I dare say he can split an infinitive as quick as any man. But may I introduce . . .’

Presently they were called to the Admiral’s truly splendid dining-cabin, which could seat ten people easily, each with a servant behind his chair and plenty of room for those who came hurrying in with dishes and tureens, sauceboats, trays of bread and of course very large quantities of wine – a grateful Sancerre with the bonito, an Haut-Brion with the admirable duck and an ancient burgundy with the roast beef: unhappily it was corked. The chaplain on Stephen’s right murmured something about ‘a quaint reminiscence of antiquity’ and Jack did not empty his glass; but their host took no notice of his formal first sip and none of his officers showed any sign of awareness. ‘Stoicism?’ asked Stephen privately. ‘Dislike of offending the great man? Discipline? Stark insensibility?’

When it came to the port, however, the case was altered: all hands, including the parson, drank eagerly; and when they reached the loyal toast there was no man who did not drain his brimming glass and murmur, ‘God bless him,’ with real feeling, and emptied it.

hand.

'And this, sir, is Dr. Malton. I presume?' said Lord. 'How kind of you to come. I have had a particular desire to see you ever since Dr. of Clarendon told me that you were a most uncommonly fit learned man. I am not particularly learned myself, but I love to surround myself with those that are. May I pre-entertain you by joining <sup>with</sup> some Randolph - but now I come to reflect, perhaps the doctor of medicine takes care over soldiers...'

'Not at all, my lord: but it so happens that we were at Trinity College together, so I already have that honour.'

So he was, Trinity College Dublin. So if he too was at Trinity, <sup>him</sup> he too is one of the learned: it stands to reason. And why I introduce...'

Presently they were called to dinner <sup>an</sup> at a table <sup>of instruction as good as any man</sup> of the Admiral's truly splendid dining-cabin, which could fit people easily with a servant behind each chair and plenty of room for those who came hurried in with dishes and tureens, sauceboats, trays of bread, and of ~~or~~ <sup>course</sup> very large quantities of wine - a grateful Sancerre with the bouillie, <sup>or Haut-Boron</sup> ~~or Haut-Boron~~ with the admiral's duck, and a burgundy of an outlandish year with the roast beef: unhappily, it was corked. The chaplain <sup>to</sup> stepped right murmured something about 'a quantity of antiquity,' and Lord did not empty his glass; but their host did not notice his first sip and none of his officers showed any sign of awareness. 'Stoicism?' asked said Stephen gravely 'Decline of officious great man? Stark insensibility?'

When it came to the port, however, the case was altered: all hands, including the parson, drank eagerly; and when it came to his loyal toast there was no man who did not raise his drinking glass and mutter 'God bless him' with real feeling, having emptied it.

5 1/4  
4 1/2  
6 x 5 1/2  
30 1/2  
4 1/2  
4 1/2

30 0 000  
4 1/2  
4 1/2

manuscript

on with face

After this ceremony and the chaplain's grace, Lord Leyton observed that although the glass was sinking it was still quite a fine afternoon, and some of them might like to take their coffee, and perhaps some brandy, on deck.

There were general sounds of agreement, a general movement, though with due regard for precedence, and the Admiral keeping Jack by his side until the room was free, said, in answer to his thanks and congratulations, 'Not at all, not at all, my dear fellow – a very simple little feast: though I must admit that they have capital beef in these parts. But did you notice anything about the burgundy?'

'No, sir: capital wine.'

'Well, I am glad of that. For a moment I thought – but, however, what I wanted to tell you before coffee was that I should like you to weigh on the ebb and to proceed to Saint Helena under a very easy sail and there to wait in that damned uneasy roadstead until you see me plain. Then you must weigh and carry on for the Cape: there is not room for all three squadrons to lie there safely together in a strong sou'wester. But that will already make a very impressive show of force, I believe.'

'Certainly, sir.'

'And then I should like you to take my nephew along with you. As you may know, he has been given an appointment at the Cape, and the sooner he is there the better – you might even lend him your tender for the last few days, if the wind drops, as it so often does as you approach the coast. Now let us hurry on deck, before all those God-damned soldiers have drunk all the brandy.'

On deck Captain Miller at once came up to Jack and said, 'Sir, I hear with great pleasure that Mrs Aubrey and

After the ceremony and the chaplain's grace, Lord Heyton observed that although the glass was sunny it was still a very fine afternoon, and some of them might like to have their coffee on deck perhaps some brandy on deck

There was general sounds of agreement, a general movement though with due regard to precedence, and the Admiral reappearing Jack by his side until the room was free, said, in answer to her thanks and congratulation 'Not at all, not at all, my dear fellow - a very simple little feat, though I must admit that they have capered about here. But did you notice anything about the butchery?'

'No, sir: <sup>excellent</sup> Capital work.'

'Well, I am glad of that. For a moment I thought - but, however, what I wanted to tell you before coffee is that I should like you to weigh on the <sup>ebb</sup> and to proceed to St Helen's under a very easy sail, there to wait in that damned uneasy badstead until you see me clear <sup>on horizon</sup>. Then you must weigh and carry on for the Cape: there is not room for all <sup>of us</sup> these squabblers to lie there safely together in a stony sea-coast. But that will already show a very impressive show of force.'

'Certainly, sir.'

~~And then I should like you to take my wife along with you. As you may know, her father has been given an appointment at the Cape, and the sooner he is there the better - you might even know him by your trade for the last few days. Now let us hurry on deck, before all these God-damned soldiers have drunk all in for us.'~~

On deck Captain Miller at once ran up to him and said 'Sir, I have with great pleasure that Mrs Aubrey and

Mrs Wood are both aboard you, and that perhaps we may be shipmates far as the Cape. Allow me to fetch you a glass of brandy.' Coming back with the glass in his hand he cried, 'My dear cousin has just told me that you will be so very kind as to take me with you. Thank you very much indeed. I did myself the pleasure of waiting on Mr Heatherleigh when he and his sister – whom I already knew and admired from my days in Sierra Leone – were settling at Medenham; and later I called on Mrs Aubrey and Mrs Wood at Woolcombe when you were still at sea – I must congratulate you on your children, sir.'

Jack looked at him with some surprise. Their degree of acquaintance did not warrant anything like this familiarity. 'Has the man drunk too much?' he wondered inwardly: aloud he said, 'Forgive me, if you

*[The first paragraph of the manuscript here was eliminated in the author's typescript version.]*

lies with go  
at the end of  
res. In 17

for the Cape

'You will carry on still under a fairly easy sail, and I  
make no doubt that we shall overtake you a little south of  
Cape Horn - at all events well before Hoands, where I mean to  
put in so that we may all reach the Cape together in full vig.  
And from that point as I should like you to take my course  
along with you. As you may know, he has an appointment at the  
Cape, and the sooner he is there the better: you might even find  
him your leader for the last few days, so that he can report  
promptly and send up one of the best horses before there  
is any competition. Now let us hurry on deck, before the  
God-damn soldiers have done all the drangy.'

Sources: though  
more is not

He would break up the ladder and rig it all when a gale of  
of breeze was wafting from the ocean - As soon as Jack had followed  
him into the open air he was accosted by Miller, who took his arm  
and said 'See it is with in greatest pleasure that I heard that Mr  
Anbury and Mr Wood are both aboard you. Attendant to fetch you

mean out the  
the property of

~~Jack of the Cape~~ ~~the Cape~~ and it is  
not impossible that perhaps we may be struck as far as the  
Cape.' He came back carrying the brandy and took so delight  
he cried, 'Yes, my dear cousin tells me that you will be so very kind  
as to take me with you after the squadron has refreshed at Hoands,  
and I thank you very very much indeed. I did myself the  
pleasure of writing Mr Weatherly and Mr and Mrs Siler - whom  
I already knew well, and advised ~~for~~ from my days in Sierra Leone -  
now selling at Madenham; and all later I called on Mr Anbury and  
Mr Wood at Woolcomb when you were still at sea - I must  
congratulate you on your children's success;

Jack looked at him with some surprise. Their degree of acquaintance  
did not warrant anything like this familiarity. Has the fellow  
drunk to mind? he wondered inwardly: aloud he said 'Forgive me if you

please,' and walked across the deck to where Dr Maturin was listening sullenly to Lord Leyton's harangue – his detailed explanation of how he was going to tell Napoleon how he could have avoided defeat at Waterloo. 'Aubrey,' cried Leyton, turning, 'cannot you persuade or even order Dr Maturin to stay while I have my interview with the Emperor – with General Buonaparte, I should say? I can read the French pretty well, with a dictionary at hand, but I cannot speak it with anything like the Doctor's fluency.'

'Oh come, my lord,' said Stephen, 'what you say sounds

*[The typescript ends here.]*

Mrs Wood are both aboard you, and that perhaps we may be  
 shipwrecked as far as the Cape. Allow us to fetch you a glass of  
 brandy. He came over carrying it and cried 'Yes.  
 How my dear cousin tells me that you will be so very kind as  
 to take us with you when you return very much indeed. I did  
 myself the pleasure of waiting on Mr Heatheridge when he and his  
 sister - when I already knew and admired from my days in  
 Sierra Leone - were settling at Medford; and will I also  
 called on Mrs Aubrey and Mrs Wood at Woolcomb when you  
 were still at sea. I must congratulate you on your children, sir.

after the  
 return he  
 to board

Jack looked at him with some surprise. Their degree of acquaintance  
 did not warrant anything less than familiarity. 'Had the man  
 struck too much?' he wondered inwardly, and aloud he said

'Forgive me if you please,' and he walked over the deck to  
 where Dr Mathew was listening intently to Lord Heylour's harangue -  
 a detail detailed/explanation of how he was going to kill Napoleon  
 how he could have avoided defeat at Waterloo. 'Aubrey,'  
 he cried, turning. 'Cannot you persuade or even <sup>order</sup> Dr Mathew  
 to stay while I have my interview with the Emperor - with  
 Napoleon. I should say. I can read the French pretty well,  
 with a dictionary, but I cannot really speak it.'

passing

Q. 3

'Oh come, my lord,' said Slepley. 'What you say sounds <sup>(18)</sup>  
 very like the French of the northern provinces; and I do assure  
 you I have patient aboard to whom I owe my first duty. To  
 say nothing of what awaits us at the Cape.'

is that?

'My lord,' said Jack, 'even an admiral cannot overrule  
 a medical man - it is in the Articles of War - and even if  
 he could he would have no success with Mathew. You may  
 turn a bear from his vomit, but I do solemnly affirm that



(11)

The First Lord of the Admiralty could not learn Malcolm from his  
 set course. However though it may be. But here is my letter  
 and the barge is alongside: I thank you very heartily indeed  
 for your hospitality, and I shall most willingly carry your  
 message to the Capt. Good day to you, my lord. Com. Slethen.

An admiral's barge, though spacious, is still a public place  
 and they said little as they returned to the ship:

No: I shall have to rearrange  
 these pages of on the typewriter

And I must remember to tell the girl  
 about my missing shoes

If I go back to the TCQ I might  
 look for pen-cartridges

what she is doing in 'em'

151123  
 151123  
 151123



the bears of the largest size could not drive Malvern from what he thought right. And I do assure you you look lord that who we have some people on the sea - list in a very parlous state.

How do you do mean - par parlous?

Well my lord, nip and tuck, as you might say, or touch and go. And it is my impression that as soon as his asseload, Dr. Jacob comes aboard he means to operation operate on a strangles betwixt.

A trisling of the guts, my lord: the poor soul, swelling above because his shipmates feel him twice at every nod; and he stinks below: The patient is a sailman's mate.

Well. I am sorry for him, but I am sure to have nothing to recommend but a double handful of small - shot followed by a pint of castor oil. Yet it is really a medical's business & I shall certainly have it to. How would it be a very bloody affair?

Shockingly so, I fear: though with clips & swabs we shall try to diminish the flow.

I might mention to the Miller the walking miles to see the castles of banks and hollows - geldings, for that matter. The Amiral grove of the last sacks with unmov'd pleasure. 'You never yet felt something less the full Trade, clear of the land and its turbulence. said the Amiral, and he described the little girth by pointing to the spysails ~~shaded from full and drawing, seeing a perceptible forward~~ ~~page large by the massive slope~~ ~~and presently, my dear, he said~~ ~~me. You will know you have to your old Suffolk, and perhaps you~~ ~~may not see so many surgeons there~~

presently he formed the whole South Africa squadron into the sailing order, sending his guests back to their ships in the most manner.

Truly, once they had sunk the land it was the first sails: nearly 300 miles in his full day, never touching back nor sheet, and even the Suffolk kept in splendor, two his wind then Keene navigators Heasen and Daniel, who would so have loved



draws the almost purely straight lines cutting the parallels at even angles. But how they enjoyed their occasional northern aberrations, the not infrequent whales, the almost steady complement of quite a large variety of shams and even rays!

Jack Or is himself began to grow rather offensive knowledgeable about sea-going affairs but Paden (to be bright remained strange, incorrect and largely incomprehensible for the first four months) managed to keep them within tones, and what he could not do Birgi did. It did not make them very pleasant companions, but it rendered them tolerable; and the southern coast of Africa and the Portuguese possessions came daily nearer

Muller, who called on the ladies almost every day to suggest for present or background (what will success depend on what) was much excited by the prospect of Louisa, and he climbed as far as dared to catch a first glimpse of the shore - conceivably a suitor of power, status and indeed perhaps marriage.

A dimness on the western horizon, some days, very exact observations of Sun, moon, planets, and a wonderful timely eclipse of one of Jupiter's satellites gave them their time to the minute of ever less

'Now it can come that or high water,' said Harding, the Suffolk's first lieutenant and a first mate. ~~At~~ Now you know exactly what we are.

He said this in ~~Cabot~~ the presence of Admiral ~~Barber~~ (no man astronomer himself) who shook his head at the words: so did everyone else in the chartroom, sometimes unexpectably. But imperceptibly at last, within seconds the sky split with a most enormous roar - so prodigious that the women, well accustomed to sea-borne weather, rushed shrieking with their mothers be.

All night it fell on and the ~~Admiral~~ St. John's Fire appeared of or they separated ~~parts~~ and the bowsprit. Three crests were blown out of the tall: tops in a foot stout, and the foot of yellow. With ~~some~~ infinite pain, on a deck that never for a moment stopped turning



manner

(116)

chose ~~about~~ about in the most extravagant manner, they stowed all that could be stowed and then turned to the pump for the very serious mass of water still below, and to pass swabs and bucket for the knee-deep water that washed from side to side of the sea-depth. The captain, cabin and the lieutenant's stow-~~room~~

A heavy night, not nothing to eat but wet biscuit & corn; but it did clear before dawn and rising sun showed not only a beautiful clear but the coast of Loanda. Well its town and its <sup>of shore</sup> day. The sea was still grievously troubled and there were half a dozen fishing-boats at least half-wrecked or worse. The South African squallies as a whole had <sup>fair</sup> to very early in the night - their topsail were above the horizon, - so Suffolk picked up the fishermen, a lowly then took carried them with <sup>Loanda</sup> <sub>Loanda</sub>, having signalled his intention to a squadron

They were most lovingly received - many of the fishermen were relatives - and they were feasted (though at short notice) in the most splendid, which as far as the exhausted hands were concerned ~~was~~ went down very well indeed. The Admiral commanding squadron was housed in a rapidly brushed governor's: the nominal white squadron had no flag-officer at all; but Jack who was a lieut. admiral of the blue, lived with all his family and senior officers, in the former military command, next to still not inconsiderable barracks

In spite of the shortness of the storm the ships had suffered ~~extremely~~ extremely and he, Jack and the other captives were almost perpetually in the well-equipped and capable decay. One day, as they were coming back to the Governor's house - a single strand with singularly coconut palms and their usually birds - Spilken met them and the Admiral asked after his health.

'Thank you, ser.' said Stephen. 'He has shown the most remarkable improvement and I think I shall operate in the next two days, now that Jacob is better. Perhaps I shall mention it to Captain Miller.'

'Yes, indeed: he loves medical matters. But it is not particularly



is it?

'Oh, no. Nothing like an amputation. You open intelligently and you are on the spot at once.'

'Well, in that case it would be very kind of you, I am sure.'

Stephen ~~came~~ ~~called~~ on the military headquarters, and when he found Miller already there, not to his surprise although it was an almost daily occurrence, but surprising in the way the bundles of flowers had increased and in Christine's marked unfavourable ~~extreme~~ expression.

'Oh Captain Miller,' he said, accompanying him to the door, 'I happened to tell the Admiral that I was probably operation again, too favourable here in tomorrow. Specified you here to attend?'

'Is it a bloody operation?'

'Oh no, not what one should really really bloody. If your first incision is badly mistaken it can be somewhat distressing, but we do not usually mistake.'

'I am sure you do not. But if I may I will excuse myself for these occasions though with <sup>many</sup> thanks for your polite attention.'

'Good day to you, sir.'

'Stephen, my dear,' said Christine, 'I am afraid I must beg you ~~to~~ to tell that man not to call unless he is invited. It is becoming quite a nuisance - a wonderfully confident nuisance. He spent a long time talking to me through all this fiasco and tells me that when he had taken up his appointed position at the Cape and when he had married the woman he had chosen there would be virtually nobody in the colony to compete with him in wealth and influence. I have met with some fools in my life, even some <sup>God-damned</sup> ~~some~~ fools, and a good many of them; but I have never met with such a confident ass as Miller: I suppose he



of completely blinded by his position, appointment and I dare say wealth, as well as gross stupidity. Stephen, please get me rid of him. He is making his traducers as well as himself.

'My dear, I shall attend to.'

It was <sup>on 10th or</sup> when the South African squadron was fit for sea that the Admiral ordered them to sea, there to carry out a very considerable grab-gun exercise fairly close in shore to the Peace View Portuguese friends. The last preparation had not yet taken place before Stephen Mathews met ~~of~~ Captain Miller. 'Oh Captain Miller, he said & detached him self from his friends. 'I have message for you. (lowy his voice) Mrs Wood begs you will not call again with a invitation. Miller could not at first grasp the message. Though his complacence sunk and faded. Stephen repeated his words.

'It is not true,' cried Miller. 'Christine never said that.'

'I assure you those were his words.'

'Then were not.'

'You give me the lie?' cried Stephen, very low, approaching his face.

'Yes,' cried Miller, and struck him hard. (who had resumed a will like midwife)

'You will affront your friends,' said Stephen. 'These gentlemen - ~~far~~ ~~far~~ nodding towards Hardy and Joseph, will attend to my interests. Good day to you, sit. until early tomorrow morning. It touched his hat and walked on.

Hardy was obliged to have them to buy some particularly choice handkerchiefs for his wife, and Stephen said 'Oh my dear Jacob, how sorry I am to entangle you with that silly little affair even before you have answered half your questions on your most admirable report of the Algerine. ~~Sh~~ Shall we have time for a small, well-planned unembellished heroic ~~signature~~ before going deeply into politics? I should like to get word of it to Sir Joseph directly, since we must start off early tomorrow afternoon.

'I should imagine, so - really better, less patient with a simple hero. It is no great matter and I have already copied the essence of my report.

And a simple affair of the kind, if no greater matter either; small, ~~rough~~



on the level ground behind the groynes, c. 100 yds. away, not with a shield. His men and a local surgeon. You expect no serious injury?

'No. A pierced shoulder at the most.'

'Very well. Let us look at our patient & perhaps operate at once, one at the cost of landing him when the execution is over.'

In fact, although the operation went perfectly well. The man Hauer was landed ~~at~~ at the Admiral's particular request, on this ground: the first that it stood to reach some gun or other ~~tree~~ would burst or overload, and second, that the toady of broadside was at once less feeling & excited the blood; whereas as shown he would be perfectly calm and used under Mrs Aubrey's & Mr. Wood's care.

But the Admiral was worried, very much more worried, by his ~~two~~ nephews advice in the morning and by the rumors, brought by the Admiral's secretary that Miller had flatly refused to fight with ~~any~~ <sup>sword</sup>. He would fight or he would not fight. Matrimus second would have none of it: it was their principle who had been struck - it was he who chose the weapons. That was always the case: it always had been the case. It was the Law of Moses.

'Of course it is,' said the Admiral. 'I always preferred the gentleman's weapon who I went out: except when I was the aggressor and had to take the other man's choice.' 'Pray, Mr. Matrimus,' he went on, 'pray tell me and see if you can catch them. Tell him privately from me that if he will fight he is disgraced for ever & can expect no notice from me - no from the Ministry.' And tell me a sword wound would given by a reasonably decent creation is not so wicked, particularly if dressed it with marshmall and heartsease.'

~~was~~ the few went

On the field, from which so-courteous outlooked had been shooed with appalling violence, the scene was only just not ridiculous. Miller had been urged forward by his second and he kept telling them that it was perfectly unfair - he knew everything about pistols: he would meet any man with a pistol. But he knew nothing about swords



They stare, faced, kept telling him it was the law of the dead. He could either apologize on his knees, using any terms his adversary saw fit to impose, or he must fight. There was no time ways about. Mr Marlin whispered into his ear "You uncle will not speak to you if you do not fight"

They thrust a sword into his hand, pointed by <sup>himself</sup> toward his adversary. The chief second held them on his outstretched blade. cried 'Gentlemen, engage,' and strode back

Two, three or even four clashes, and Miller's flew into the air, it landing between them. Stephen put his ~~own~~ foot on it and his ~~own~~ sword point against. 'Do you withdraw?' he asked. 'Miller do you withdraw your words entirely?' 'I do. Entirely.'

intily 'Yes? Then we have said enough. Good-day to you, gentlemen of and I thank you for ~~for~~ your presence

'He ~~sprang~~ shared all with a set of facts,' said Wamarrigh into Kellian's eager ear. He was Miller's servant and he cordially disliked his master; but since he was a child and grandchild of Copley (from he had ~~at~~ learnt to express himself in gentler expression - not that there had any ~~of~~ currency whatsoever with killing or ruin. Feels of the lower de. d.

'Where does he show himself now?'

'Why, in the little cabin behind his lordship; and I doubt he comes out ~~of~~ out so soon. ~~But~~ it is fair wonderful what a face of brass will do, but I doubt anyone could face the country - the highest country, the part ~~see~~ around us, or in London - having as it were as a man refused to fight. I remember how his lordship went out half-dozen times when I was young - and always bloodied his sword... Comy-ber he could, and vanished off.'

Kellian delighted in pineapple-shrub and in pigs' trotters; but they did not nearly reach his high and exalted pleasure in very spiritually ~~obscure~~ obscure (which alas he could never remember accurately or even at all) stories, however improbable and accounts of high life.



He did not come on deck. The next day. That of the <sup>prodigious, thus</sup> ~~prodigious~~ very moving great gun exercise; nor did he appear for the small arm exercise in which he had trained some of the Marines. From time to time he turned into the mess room, when almost nobody was there. His appearance never altered ~~apparently~~ to pick up a newspaper from its <sup>perpetually</sup> unaltered small size, complexion, yet he frequently changed his uniform, blaming his ~~strait~~ <sup>strait</sup> for any up

Some days of quick multiplied ~~Sat. St. St. St.~~ weather showed the squadron and it was ~~possibly during these hours~~ sitting in the cabin that possible and it was well have been during the conversation



No: there is much a lot of TSS - LOL's decider or part of it - missing  
It is not in the MS binder: but I remember now that there was a  
table-plan in the lower L. margin

Also, I cannot find it: lost pages. have lost eff. MS chapters  
on the almost daily basis of my life: could there be a  
malignant hand?

In this case I may be able to rebuild the odd pages: but  
I shall have to first and concentrate what vols I still possess

⇒ JA pulls age across barely let  
LOL big elderly interested jovial 'split the heavens'  
uninterested in SM's friendship with Clarence - transmute praise  
- present Capt Miller 'my cousin'

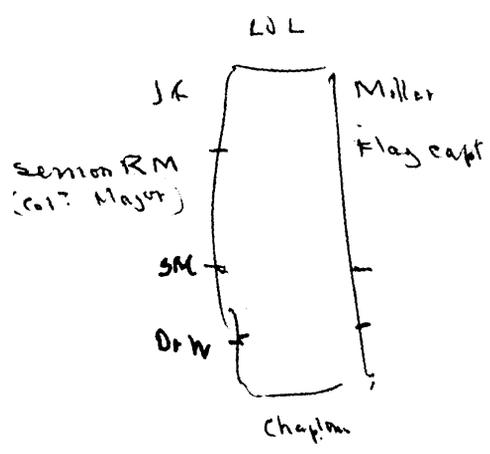
seating

Miller over-familiar

comes out  
at coffee

? doesn't  
message Jacob  
is: where Dr J is aboard  
pretty spy but rather wary

can  
line



afterwards privately  
LOL asks JA to  
proceed land to St Helene  
under easy sail, taking Miller  
(who has an appointment military  
appointment at the Cape) & to  
lie off in the indifferent holding ground  
& as soon as sails are seen to weigh  
(show of force)  
perhaps as some of the sentries  
are dull sailors Miller might be lent  
tender (? name)

we read through for  
use of ship

work out Suffolk's  
wardroom



# AFTERWORD

by Richard Snow

THE OTHER DAY I heard Patrick O'Brian receive about as high a compliment as a writer can get. An old friend of mine, a professor of history and literature, had just read *Master and Commander* again for the first time in a decade. "How well it holds up!" he exclaimed. "It's amazing. That first meeting, it's like –" He waved his hand as he searched for a comparison. "It's like Prince Hal meeting Falstaff."

The meeting, of course, takes place between Lieutenant (for just a few more hours) Aubrey, and a weedy-looking little physician named Maturin. It was a contentious meeting, and might well have led swiftly to the death of one of the two – most likely the young naval officer. Instead, of course, it led to the greatest friendship of modern literature, and ushered millions of twentieth-century citizens into a world warmed and clouded by sea-coal fire, rationalized and tormented by the architects of the Enlightenment, fed salvers of steaming offal washed down with suicidal quantities of claret and port, and defended by hundreds of close-packed seaborne towns whose elders' grasp of mathematics, physics, ballistics, and meteorology was all that stood between the residents and extinction.

My friend who made the Shakespeare comparison, Fredric Smoler, had come early to this harsh, seductive world, back when its creator's books were struggling to find an audience in the United States. Lippincott, Stein & Day, *Master and Commander*, *Post Captain*, *HMS Surprise* . . . the publishers tried and withdrew – after *Desolation Island*, permanently. Or so it seemed. During the years of drought, Patrick O'Brian's acolytes did what they could to keep Jack Aubrey and Stephen Maturin in their lives. They opened accounts at the great English bookstore Hatchards; they wrote to booksellers in Canada; the most fortunate of them acquired, along with the precious novels, a correspondence with the lively and generous-spirited Richard Ollard, O'Brian's English editor, and himself a formidably accomplished historian and a superb writer. Another friend of mine, the journalist Mark Horowitz (who would later publish an influential profile of Patrick O'Brian in the *New York Times Magazine*), had left New York to become a belligerently loyal Angeleno, and sent Fred and me messages saying that every bookshop in Los Angeles stocked imported O'Brian novels – and how do you like that, you haughty Manhattanites? (Surely this can't have been entirely true, and yet Mark always seemed to have read the latest one before we did.) In the meantime, of course, we proselytized, with the predictable success:

Them: I've read all the Hornblower novels, and that's enough for me.

Us: But that's like saying, I've read *Robinson Crusoe* so there's no reason for me to look at Dickens.

Such harangues often ended with an indulgent smirk from the victim. And why not? If this writer was really all that good, everybody would know about him, right?

It's a fair question, and eventually Starling Lawrence answered it. He is the editor-in-chief of W. W. Norton & Company, and in 1990 O'Brian's agent, Vivien Green, pressed a copy of *The Reverse of the Medal* on him as he was leaving London bound for New York. By the time he disembarked at JFK he had been won over: he would bring out the next O'Brian, *The Letter of Marque*. This was a courageous decision; the series had already failed here, and it is considerably more costly to publish a writer than it is to pester your friends about him across a dinner table.

But it turned out to be the right time. All those scattered little enclaves glowing with O'Brian enthusiasm were ready to reach combustion. The resulting blaze created rather than destroyed; so far it has cooked up five million copies and an admirable motion picture that will continue to spread the word for years to come. (That the movie became the object of some prissy reproach for not more fully unfurling the characters of Stephen and Jack only ratifies the power of the books that gave it birth.) This American enthusiasm sent ripples back across the Atlantic. On a visit to London in the mid-1990s, I was gratified to see that O'Brian's novels had been moved out of "Naval Fiction," a bookstore section we alas don't have over here, across the aisle into "Literature."

So in a very short time everybody finally did know about Patrick O'Brian, to a degree that when he visited our shores he attracted a following of a dedication and willingness to travel great distances to be in The Presence that seems to me equaled only by that of the Grateful Dead or the Rolling Stones. And, like Mick Jagger, he never disappointed. What writer since Hemingway – and perhaps Fitzgerald – has looked so thoroughly the way you'd want him to? Clean-shaven, slim, slightly below middle height but giving the impression of that "wiry strength" more often found in novels than on the speaker's podium, and with the affect of bemusement that was, I think, a sort of courtesy to soften the impact of those daunting eyebrows and the comprehension, wit, and, occasionally, caustic scorn that flicked from him unceasingly. And then he was gone. Gone not merely from New York and Los Angeles and Seattle and all the other cities where people of high consequence were now wild to get him to their dinner parties, but from the world.

AND YET, as the surprising volume you are holding reminds us, he is not gone at all. When death took Patrick O'Brian, this book had not been given a name. It had advanced only three chapters, 65 handwritten pages, most of which had been typed and given preliminary corrections by O'Brian (I say "preliminary" because there are, here and there, a few repetitions that this most scrupulous of writers would not have permitted himself). O'Brian in holograph offers advantages and drawbacks. I find his handwriting both exquisite and difficult to read, but persevering through it offers the pleasures of a wonderful bloodless duel that Stephen engineers, and a casual sketch of a seating arrangement that has the electrifying effect of making the principals seem entirely like living people. "21" is a fragment, of course, and one would expect such a document to be little more than a forlorn remnant. After all, O'Brian had been composing it during a melancholy time. His wife, Mary, had died; he was alone; he was eighty-five years old; and his newfound fame had brought his life under media

scrutiny that would have dismayed people far less protective of their privacy than he.

But just look at “21”! There is no sense of harassment or desolation here, no loss of focus, nor of energy. And if it ends too soon, it is nonetheless a rich distillation – a summary of sorts – of all that has, over thousands of pages and tens of thousands of miles, won O’Brian such passionate admirers. First of all, there is the language – and here I mean not O’Brian’s prose but what he gives his characters to say. He insisted that their speech was an accurate reflection of how early nineteenth-century people talked; but I believe it is a brilliant poetic invention, complex yet so wholly consistent that we in time learn to speak it almost through the same process we would follow acquiring a foreign language. It never ceases to show us that this is a world at once remote and familiar, and the conveying of that familiarity is, I think, a feat of the imagination that far surpasses, say, J. R. R. Tolkien’s kingdoms of dwarfs and sorcerers.

We get to be introduced to Jack and Stephen one last time, and how keen the pleasure remains: Stephen abashed in the composition of his heavily-coded love letter; Jack with elephantine, ignorant delicacy discussing the Church of Rome with his closest friend. And here is Killick, his insolence for once extinguished by the calamity that has befallen Jack’s best uniform during freezing weeks off the Horn. Now come the curiously stirring details: the men begging slush from the galley to give the shot in the garlands a pleasing sheen; Stephen clipping the tip of his pen “with a minute pair of metal jaws made for the purpose.” To be sure, there’s no battle in these pages, but the great-gun exercise on the Sussex gives a highly satisfactory sense of the violence and power that men like Jack Aubrey controlled. And any disappointment at the lack of a frigate duel must be eradicated by the presence of the humor that quietly leavens every paragraph. Jack, explaining how he acquired the extra gunpowder necessary for his spectacular exercise, says he’d bribed “the last powder-hoy, for a trifle of whiskey – you know the Irish drink, Stephen, I am sure?” “I have never heard of it,” says Stephen. This tiny exchange is marvelously appealing: both men are being funny; both men understand one another perfectly.

Their amity suggests what I find so moving about this last work from Patrick O’Brian’s hand. Some of the novels end with their principals settled and content, some with them in poverty and peril. It is, of course, impossible to say where “21” would have left them. I’m sure the egregious Captain Miller would have reappeared to work some malice after Stephen’s humiliation of him. And Jack’s money-making initiatives would likely have put him on the metaphorical lee-shore.

Right now, however, we are able to visit these friends we have followed so very far in a rare state of almost perfect felicity. Jack has seen his black son ably discharging important duties. Sophie and his daughters are with him; Brigid is with her father, she’s thriving, and Stephen is with a woman who is very dear to him. Jack is flying a rear-admiral’s flag aboard a ship of the line. So we can leave them sailing through fair, sweet days – Stephen with his dissections, Jack with his “sacred blue flag,” Killick muttering darkly over the toasted cheese – embarked on a voyage like the one that opens the book: “Quietly indeed they sailed along, with gentle breezes that wafted them generally northwards at something in the nature of five miles in the hour, north-

wards to even warmer seas. Little activity was called for, apart from the nice adjustment of the sails, and although the exact routine of the ship was never relaxed nor her very strict rules of cleanliness, these long sunny days with a soldier's wind seemed to many the ideal of a seaman's life – regular, steady, traditional meals with the exact allowance of grog; hornpipes in the last dog-watch, the deep melody of the Doctor's 'cello from the cabin and the cheerful sound of the gunroom's dinner; the future lost in a haze somewhere north of the equator.”

Remember that this was written at a time when the author was lonely and tormented. Yet Patrick O'Brian has given a farewell to his followers that is as gracious as it is gallant. And we, in turn, may find some solace in the thought that of all people, this man would not have hated to be taken out of action much as Nelson was: deep in triumph, shedding glory on the service he loved, and still at the peak of his powers.