

Marx Hardy Machiavelli Joyce Austen
Melville Montaigne Cooper Emerson Hugo
Defoe Abbot Stoker Wilde Carroll Christie Maupassant Byron Molière Grimm
Garnett Engels Schiller Hawthorne Smith Kafka
Goethe Dostoyevsky Kipling Doyle Hall
Cotton Henry Kipling Nietzsche Willis
Baum Leslie Dumas Flaubert Turgenev Balzac Crane
Burroughs Vatsyayana Verne
Curtis Tocqueville Whittman Gogol Busch
Homer Tolstoy Darwin Thoreau Twain Plato
Potter Freud Zola Lawrence Stevenson Dickens Harte
Kant Jowett Andersen London Descartes Cervantes Voltaire Cooke
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**The Strange Adventures of
Captain Dangerous, Vol. 2 Who
was a sailor, a soldier, a merchant,
a spy, a slave among the moors...**

George Augustus Sala

Imprint

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THE STRANGE ADVENTURES

OF

CAPTAIN DANGEROUS:

WHO WAS A SOLDIER, A SAILOR, A MER-
CHANT, A SPY, A SLAVE
AMONG THE MOORS, A BASHAW IN THE
SERVICE
OF THE GRAND TURK,

AND

Died at last in his own House in Hanover Square.

A NARRATIVE IN OLD-FASHIONED ENGLISH.

ATTEMPTED BY

GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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[iii]

THE STRANGE ADVENTURES

OF

CAPTAIN DANGEROUS.

A Narrative in Old fashioned English.

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

OF SUNDRY MY ADVENTURES FROM THE TIME OF MY GOING ABROAD UNTIL MY COMING TO MAN'S ESTATE (WHICH WAS ALL THE ESTATE I HAD).

A Strange Nursing-mother – rather a Stepmother of the Stoniest sort – was this Sir Basil Hopwood, Knight and Alderman of London, that contracted with the Government to take us Transports abroad. Sure there never was a man, on this side the land of Horse-leeches, that was so Hungry after money. Yet was his avarice not of the kind practised by old Audley, the money-scrivener [2] of the Commonwealth's time; or Hopkins, the wretch that saved candles' ends and yet had a thousand wax-lights blazing at his Funeral; or Guy the Bookseller, that founded the Hospital in Southwark; or even old John Elwes, Esquire, the admired Miser of these latter days. Sir Basil Hopwood was the rather of the same complexion of Entrails with that Signor Volpone whom we have all seen – at least such of us as be old Boys – in Ben Jonson's play of the *Fox*. He Money-grubbed, and Money-clutched, and Money-wrung, ay, and in a manner Money-stole, that he might live largely, and ruffle it among his brother Cits in surpassing state and splendour. He had been Lord Mayor; and on his Show-day the Equipments of chivalry had been more Sumptuous, the Banners more varied, the Entertainment at Saddlers' Hall, – where the Lord Mayor was wont to hold his Feast before the present Mansion House was built, the ancient Guildhall in King Street being then but in an ill condition for ban-

quet, — Hopwood's Entertainment, I say, had been more [3] plentifully provided with Marrowbones, Custards, Ruffs and Reeves, Baked Cygnets, Malmsey, Canary, and Hippocras, than had ever been known since the days of the Merry Mayor, who swore that King Charles the Second should take t'other bottle. He was a Parliament man, too, and had a Borough in his Pocket, for the which he kept a Warming-Pan member, — more's the shame, — besides one to serve him as a cushion to sit on.

This enormously rich man had a fine House in Bishopsgate Street, with as many rogues in blue liveries as a Rotterdam Syndic that has made three good ventures in Java. When we poor wretches, chained together, had been brought up in Carts from Aylesbury to London, on our way to be Embarked, nothing would serve this Haughty and Purse-proud Citizen but that our ragged Regiment must halt before his peddling Palace; and there the varlets in blue that attended upon him brought us out Loaves and Cheese, and Blackjacks full of two-thread Beer, which, with many disdainful gestures and uncivil words, they offered to our [4] famished lips. And my Lady Hopwood, and the fine Madams her daughters, — all laced and furbelowed, and with widows' and orphans' tears, and the blood-drops of crimped seamen and kidnapped children, twinkling in their Stomachers for gems, — were all set at their Bowery window, a pudding-fed Chaplain standing bowing and smirking behind them, and glozing in their ears no doubt Praises of their exceeding Charity and Humanity to wretches such as we were. But this Charity, Jack, says I to myself, is not of the Shapcott sort, and is but base metal after all. My troth, but we wanted the Bread and Cheese and Swipes; for we had had neither Bite nor Sup since we left Aylesbury Gaol seven-and-twenty hours ago. So, after a while, and the mob hallooing at us for Gallows-birds, and some Ruffians about the South-Sea House pelting us with stones, — for Luck, as they said, — we were had over London Bridge, — where with dreadful admiration I viewed the Heads and Quarters of Traitors, all shimmering in the coat of pitch i' the Sun over the North [5] Turret, — and were bestowed for the night in the Borough Clink. And hither we were pursued by the Alderman's Agents, who straightway began to drive Unholy Bargains with those among us that had Money. Now 'twas selling them Necessaries for the voyage at exorbitant rates; or promising them,

for cash in hand, to deliver them Luxuries, such as Tobacco, playing-cards, and strong waters, at the Port of Embarkation. Now 'twas substituting Light for Heavy Fetters, if the Heaviness could be Assuaged by Gold; and sometimes even negotiations were carried so far as for the convicted persons to give Drafts of Exchange, to be honoured by their Agents in London, so soon as word came from the Plantations that they had been placed in Tolerable Servitude, instead of Agonising Slavery. For although there was then, as there is now, a convenient Fiction that a Felon's goods became at once forfeit to the Crown, I never yet knew a Felon (and I have known many) that felt ever so little difficulty in keeping his property, if he had any, and [6] disposing of it according to his own Good Will and Pleasure.

The Head Gaoler of the Borough Clink—I know not how his Proper official title ran—was a colonel in the Foot Guards, who lived in Jermyn Street, St. James's, and transacted most of his High and Mighty business either at Poingdestre's Ordinary in St. Alban's Place, or at White's Chocolate House, to say naught of the Rose, or the Key in Chandos Street. Much, truly, did he concern himself about his unhappy Captives. His place was a Patent one, and was worth to him about Fifteen Hundred a year, at which sum it was farmed by Sir Basil Hopwood; who, in his turn, on the principle that "'tis scurvy money that won't stick to your fingers," underlet the place to a Company of Four Rogues, who gave him Two Thousand for that, which they managed to swell into at least Three for themselves by squeezing of Poor Prisoners, and the like crying Injustices. 'Twas Aylesbury Gaol over again, with the newest improvements and the Humours of the Town added to it. [7] So, when Sir Basil Hopwood took up a cargo of cast persons for Transportation, his underlings of the Borough Clink were only too glad to harbour them for a night or two, making a pretty profit out of the poor creatures. For all which, I doubt it not, Sir Basil Hopwood and his scoundrelly Myrmidons are, at this instant moment, Howling.

This place was a prison for Debtors as well as Criminals, and was to the full as Foul as the Tophet-pit at Aylesbury yonder. I had not been there half an hour before a Lively companion of a Gentleman Cutpurse, with a wrench at my kerchief, a twist at my arm (which nearly Broke it in twain), and a smart Blow under my Lower Jaw,

robs me of the packet of comforts (clothing, pressed beef, sugar, comfits, and the like) which my kind friends at Aylesbury had given me. The Rascal comes to me a few minutes afterwards with a packet of Soap and a Testament, which he had taken from my Bundle, and returns them to me with a Grin, telling me that it was long [8] since his Body had felt need of the one or his Soul of the other. And yet I think they would have profited considerably (pending a Right Cord) by the application of Both. So I in a corner, to moan and whimper at my Distressed condition.

A sad Sunday I spent in the Clink, —'twas on the Monday we were to start, — although, to some other of my companions, the Time passed jovially enough. For very many of the Relations and Friends of the Detained Persons came to visit them, bringing them money, victuals, clothing, and other Refreshments. 'Twas on this day I heard that one of us, who was cast for Forgery, had been offered a Free Pardon if he could lodge Five Hundred Pounds in the hands of a Person who had Great Influence near a Great Man.

Late on the Sunday afternoon, Sir Basil Hopwood came down in his coach, and with his chaplain attendant on him. We Convicts were all had to the Grate, for the Knight and Alderman would not venture further in, for fear of the Gaol Fever; and [9] he makes us a Fine Speech about the King's Mercy, — which I deny not, — and his own Infinite Goodness in providing for us in a Foreign Land. The which I question. Then he told us how we were to be very civil and obedient on the voyage to those who were set over us, refraining from cursing, swearing, gaming, or singing of profane songs, on pain of immediate and smart chastisement; and having said this, and the chaplain having given us his Benediction, he gat him gone, and we were rid of so much Rapacious and Luxurious Hypocrisy. We lay in the yard that night, wrapped in such extra Garments as some of us were Fortunate enough to have; and I sobbed myself to sleep, wishing, I well remember, that it might never be Day again, but that my Sorrows might all be closed in by the Merciful Curtain of Eternal Night.

So on the Monday morning we were driven down — a body of Sir Basil Hopwood's own company of the Trainbands guarding us — to Shayler's Stairs, near unto the church of St. Mary Overy; and there —

we were in [10] number about a hundred—put on board a Hoy, which straightway, the tide being toward, bore down the river for Gravesend.

By this time I found that, almost insensibly, as it were, I had become separated from my old companions the Blacks, and that I was more than ever Alone. The greatest likelihood is, that Authority deemed it advisable to break up, for good and all, the Formidable Confederacy they had laid hold of, and to prevent those Dangerous Men from ever again making Head together. But my whole Life was but a kind of Shifting and uncertain Vision, and I took little note of the personages with whom I came in contact, till looking around me, in a dull listlessness about the Hoy, I found myself, cheek by jowl, with a motley crew, seemingly picked up hap-hazard from all the gaols in England. But 'twas all one to me, and I did not much care. Such a Stupor of Misery came over me, that for a time I almost forgot my good Quaker Friends, and the lessons they had taught me; that I felt myself once more drifting into being a dangerous [11] little brute; and that seeing the Master of the Hoy, a thirsty-looking man, lifting a great stone-bottle to his lips, I longed to serve him as I had served Corporal Foss with the demijohn of Brandy in the upper chamber of the Stag o' Tyne.

We landed not at Gravesend, but were forthwith removed to a bark called *The Humane Hopwood*, in compliment, I suppose, to Sir Basil, and which, after lying three days in the Downs, put into Deal to complete her complement of Unfortunate Persons. And I remember that, before making Deal, we saw a stranded Brig on the Goodwins, which was said to be a Leghorne, very rich with oils and silks; round which were gathered—just as you may see obscene Birds of Prey gathered round a dead carcass, and picking the Flesh from its bones—at least a score of luggers belonging to the Deal Boatmen. These worthies had knocked holes in the hull of the wreck, and were busily hauling out packages and casks into their craft, coming to blows sometimes with axes and marlin-spikes as to who should [12] have the Biggest Booty. And it was said on Board that they would not unfrequently decoy by false signals, or positively haul, a vessel in distress on to those same Goodwins,—in whose fatal depths so many tall Ships lie Engulfed,—in order to have the Plunder of her, which was more profitable than the Salvage, that

being in the long-run mostly swallowed up by the Crimps and Longshore Lawyers of Deal and other Ports, who were wont to buy the Boatmen's rights at a Ruinous Discount. Salvage Men, indeed, these Boatmen might well be called; for when I was young it was their manner to act with an extreme of Savage Barbarity, thinking far less of saving Human Life than of clutching at the waifs and strays of a Rich Cargo. And then up would sheer a Custom-House cutter or a Revenue Pink, the skipper and his crew fierce in their Defence of the Laws of the Land, the Admiralty Droits, and their own twentieths; and from Hard blows with fists and spikes, matters would often come to the arbitrament of cutlasses and firearms; so that naval Engagements [13] of a Miniature kind have often raged between the Deal Boatmen and the King's Officers. Surely the world was a Hard and a Cruel and a Brutal one, when I was young—bating the Poor-Laws, which were more merciful than at present; for now that I am old the Gazettes are full of the Tender Valour and Merciful Devotion of the Deal Boatmen, who, in the most tempestuous weather, will leave their warm beds, their wives and bairns, and put off, with the Sea running mountains high, to rescue Distaught Vessels and the Precious Lives that are within them. The Salvage Men of my time were brave enough, but they were likewise unconscionable rogues.

The wind proved false to us at Deal, and we had to wait a weary ten days there. Captain Handsell was our commander. He was a man who knew but one course of proceeding. 'Twas always a word and a blow with him. By the same token the blow generally came first, and the word that followed was sure to be a bad one. The Captain of a Ship, from a Fishing Smack to a [14] Three-Decker, was in those days a cruel and merciless Despot. 'Twas only the size of his ship and the number of his Equipage that decided the question whether he was to be a Petty Tyrant or a Tremendous One. His Empire was as undisputed as that of a Schoolmaster. Who was to gainsay him? To whom, at Sea, could his victims appeal? To the Sharks and Grampuses, the Dolphins and the Bonettas? He was privileged to beat, to fetter, to starve, to kick, to curse his Seamen. Even his Passengers trembled at the sight of this Bashaw of Blue-water; for he had Irons and Rations of Mouldy Biscuit for them too, if they offended him; and many a Beautiful and Haughty Lady pay-

ing full cabin-passage has bowed down before the wrath of a vulgar Skipper, who, at home, she would have thought unworthy to Black her Shoes, and who would be seething in the revelry of a Tavern in Rotherhithe, while she would be footing it in the Saloons of St. James's. Yet for a little time, at the outset of his voyage, the Skipper had his superior; the Bashaw had [15] a Vizier who was bigger than he. There was a Terrible Man called the Pilot. He cared no more for the Captain than the Archbishop of Canterbury cares for a Charity-Boy. He gave him a piece of his mind whenever he chose, and he would have his own Way, and had it. It was the delight of the Seamen to see their Tyrant and Bully degraded for a time under the supreme authority of the Pilot, who drank the Skipper's rum; who had the best Beef and Burgoo at the Skipper's table; who wore, if he was so minded, the Skipper's tarpaulin; who used the Skipper's telescope, and thumbed his charts, and kicked his Cabin-boy, and swore his oaths, till, but for the fear of the Trinity House, I think the Skipper would have been mighty glad to fling him over the taffrail. But the reign of this Great Mogul of Lights and Points and Creeks soon came to an end. A River Pilot was the lesser evil, a Channel Pilot was the greater one; but both were got rid of at last. Then the Skipper was himself again. He would drink himself blind with Punch [16] in the forenoon, or cob his cabin-boy to Death's door after dinner for a frolic. He could play the very Devil among the Hands, and they perforce bore with his capricious cruelty; for there is no running away from a Ship at Sea. Jack Shark is Gaoler, and keeps the door tight. There is but one way out of it, and that is to Mutiny, and hey for the Black Flag and a Pirate's Free and Jovial Life! [A] But Mutiny is Hanging, and Piracy is Hanging, and Gibbetting too; and how seldom it is that you find Bold Hearts who have Stuff enough in them to Run the Great Risk! As on sea, so it is on land. That Ugly Halter dances before a man's eyes, and dazes him away from the Firmest Resolve. For how long will Schoolboys endure the hideous enormities of a Gnawbit before they come to the Supreme Revolt of a Barring-out! And for how long will a People suffer the mad tyranny of a Ruler, who outrages their Laws, who strangles their Liberties, who fleeces and [17] squeezes and tramples upon them, before they take Heart of Grace, and up Pike and Musket, and down-derry-down with your Ruler, who is ordinarily the

basest of Poltroons, and runs away in a fright so soon as the first Goose is bold enough to cry out that the Capitol *shall* be saved!

Nothing of this did I think aboard *The Humane Hopwood*. I was too young to have any thought at all, save of rage and anguish when it pleased Captain Handsell, being in a cheerful mood, to belabour me, till I was black and blue, with a rope's end. At the beginning of the voyage I was put into the hold, ironed, with the rest of the convicts, who were only permitted to come on deck twice a day, morning and evening, for a few Mouthfuls of Fresh air; who were fed on the vilest biscuit and the most putrid water, getting but a scrap of fat pork and a dram of Rum that was like Fire twice a week, and who were treated, generally, much like Negroes on the Middle Passage. But by and by,—say after ten days; but I took little account of Time in this floating Purgatory,—Captain [18] Handsell had me unironed; and his cabin-boy, a poor weakly little lad, that could not stand much beating, being dead of that and a flux, and so thrown overboard without any more words being said about it—(he was but a little Scottish castaway from Edinburgh, who had been kidnapped late one night in the Grass Market, and sold to a Greenock skipper trading in that line for a hundred pound Scots—not above eight pounds of our currency)—and there is no Crowner's Quest at sea, I was promoted to the Vacant Post. I was Strong enough now, and the Wound in my side gave me no more pain; and I think I grew daily stronger and more hardened under the shower of blows which the Skipper very liberally dealt out to me; I hardly know with more plenitude when he was vexed, or when he was pleased. But I was not the same bleating little Lamb that the Wolfish Gnawbit used to torture. No, no; John Dangerous's apprenticeship had been useful to him. Even as college-lads graduate in [19] their Latin and Greek, so I had graduated upon braining the Grenadier with the demijohn. I could take kicks and cuffs, but I could likewise give them. And so, as this Roaring Skipper made me a Block to vent his spite upon, I would struggle with, and bite, and kick his shins till sometimes we managed to fall together on the cabin-floor and tumble about there,—pull he, pull I, and a kick together!—till the Watch would look down the skylight upon us, grinning, and chuckle hoarsely that old Belzey, as they called their commander (being a diminutive for Beelzebub), and his young Imp were having a tussle.

Thus it came about that among these unthinking Seamen I grew to be called Pug (who, I have heard, is the Lesser Fiend), or Little Brimstone, or young Pitchladle. And then I, in my Impish way, would offer to fight them too, resenting their scurril nicknames, and telling them that I had but one name, which was Jack Dangerous.

The oddest thing in the world was that [20] the Skipper, Ungovernable Brute as he was, seemed to take a kind of liking for me through my Resistance to him.

"What a young Tiger-cub it is!" he would say sometimes, swaying about his Rope's End, as if undecided whether to hit me or not. "Lie down, Rawbones! Lie down, Tearem!"

"You go to hit me again," I would cry, all hot and flurried; "I'll mark you, I will, you Tarpaulin Hedgehog!"

Then in a Rage he would make a Rush at me, and Welt me sorely; but oftener he would Relent, and opening his Locker would give me a slice of Sausage, or a white Biscuit, or a nip of curious Nantz.

At last he gave up maltreating me altogether. "If you'd been of the same kidney as Sawney M'Gillicuddy," he said, speaking of the poor little Scottish lad who Died, "I'd have made you food for fishes long ago. 'Slid, my younker, but they should 'a had their meat tender enough, or there's no vartue in hackled hemp for a lacing! But you've got a Heart, my lad; and if you're [21] not hanged before you're out of your Teens, you'll show the World that you can Bite as well as Bark some of these days."

So I became a prime Favourite with Captain Handsell; and, in the Expansion of his Liking towards me, he began to give me instruction in the vocation in which a portion of my life has since (with no small Distinction, though I say it that should not) been passed. Of scientific Navigation this very Rude and Boorish person knew little, if any thing; but as a Practical Seaman he had much skill and experience. Indeed, if the Hands had not enjoyed a lively Faith in the solid sea-going Qualities of "Foul-Weather Bob," as they called him when they did not choose to give him his demoniacal appellation, they would have Mutinied, and sent him, Lashed to a grating, on a voyage of Discovery at least twice in every Twenty-Four Hours. For he led them a most Fearful Life.

I had imparted to him that I was somewhat of a scholar, and that Captain Night had taught me something besides stealing [22] the King's Deer. There was a Bible on Board, which the Skipper never read,—and read, indeed, he was scarcely able to do,—but which he turned to the unseemly use, when he had been over-cruel to his crew, of swearing them upon it, that they would not inform against him when they got into port. For this was an odd medley of a man, and had his moments of Remorse for evil-doing, or else of Fear as to what might be the Consequences when he reached a Land where some degree of Law and Justice were recognised. At some times he would propitiate his crew with donatives of Rum, or even of Money; but the next day he would have his Cruelty Fit on again, and use his men with ten times more Fierceness and Arbitrary Barbarity. But to this Bible and a volume of Nautical Tables our Library was confined; and as he troubled himself very little about the latter, I was set to read to him sometimes after dinner from the Good Book. But he was ever coarse and ungovernable, and would have no Righteous Doctrine or Tender Precepts, but only took [23] delight when I read to him from the Old Scriptures the stories of the Jews, their bloody wars, and how their captains and men of war slew their Thousands and their Tens of Thousands in Battle. And with shame I own that 'twas these Furious Narratives that I liked also; and with exceeding pleasure read of Joshua his victories, and Samson his achievements, and Gideon how he battled, and Agag how they hewed him in pieces. Little cockering books I see now put forth, with pretty decoying pictures, which little children are bidden to read. Stories from the Old Testament are dressed up in pretty sugared language. Oh, you makers of these little books! oh, you fond mothers who place them so deftly in your children's hands! bethink you whether this strong meat is fit for Babes. An old man, whose life has been passed in Storms and Stratagems and Violence, not innocent of blood-spilling, bids you beware! Let the children read that other Book, its Sweet and Tender Counsels, its examples of Mercy and Love to all Mankind. But if I had a child five or six years old, [24] would I let him fill himself with the horrible chronicles of Lust, and Spoliation, and Hatred, and Murder, and Revenge? "Why shouldn't I torture the cat?" asks little Tommy. "Didn't the man in the Good Book tie blazing Torches to the foxes' tails?" And little Tommy has some show of reason on his side. Let the children grow

up; wait till their stomachs are strong enough to digest this potent victual. It is hard indeed for one who has been a Protestant alway to have to confess that when such indiscreet reading is placed in children's hands, those crafty Romish ecclesiastics speak not altogether foolishly when they tell us that the mere Word slayeth. But on this point I am agreed to consult Doctor Dubiety, and to be bound by his decision.

In so reading to the Skipper every day, I did not forget to exercise myself in that other art of Writing, and was in time serviceable enough to be able to keep, in something like a rational and legible form the Log of *The Humane Hopwood*, which [25] heretofore had been a kind of cabalistic Register, full of blots, crosses, half-moons, and zigzags, like the chalk score of an unlettered Ale-wife. And the more I read (of surely the grandest and simplest language in the world), the more I discovered how ignorant I was of that essential art of Spelling, and blushed at the vile manner in which the Petition I had written to the King of England was set down. And before we came to our voyage's end, I had made a noticeable improvement in the Curious Mystery of writing Plain English.

One day as the Skipper was taking Tobacco (for he was a great Smoker), he said to me, "Jack, do you know what you are, lad?"

"Your cabin-boy," I answered; "bound to fetch and carry: hempen wages, and not much better treated than a dog."

"You lie, you scum," Captain Handsell answered pleasantly. "You go snacks with me in the very best, and your beef is boiled in my own copper. But 't isn't that I mean. [26] Do you know how you hail on the World's books? what the number of your mess in Life is?"

"Yes," I replied; "I'm a Transport. Was to have been hanged; but I wrote out a Petition, and the Gentlemen in London gave it to the King, God bless him!"

"Vastly well, mate!" continued the Captain. "Do you know what a Transport is?"

"No; something very bad, I suppose; though I don't see that he can be much worse off than a cabin-boy that's been cast for Death, and lain in gaol with a bayonet-wound he got from a Grenadier,—

let alone having been among the Blacks, and paid anigh to Death by Gnawbit, — when he was born a Gentleman."

"You lie again. To be a Transport is worse than aught you've had. Why a cat in an oven without claws is an Angel of bliss along of a Transport! You're living in a land of beans and bacon now, in a land of milk and honey and new rum. Wait till you get to Jamaica. The hundred and odd [27] vagabonds that I've got aboard will be given over to the Sheriff at Port Royal, and he'll sell 'em by auction; and for as long as they're sent across the herring-pond they'll be slaves, and worse than slaves, to the planters; for the black Niggers themselves, rot 'em! make a mock of a Newgate bird. Hard work in the blazing sun, scarce enough to eat to keep body and soul together, the cat-o'-nine-tails every day, with the cow-hide for a change; and, when your term's out, not a Joe in your pocket to help you to get back to your own country again. That's the life of a Transport, my hearty. Why, it's worse cheer than one of my own hands gets here on shipboard!"

"I think I'd rather be hanged," I said, with something like a Trembling come over me at the Picture the Skipper had drawn.

"I should rather think you would; but such isn't your luck, little Jack Dangerous. What would you say if I was to tell you that you ain't a Transport at all?"

I stammered out something, I know not what, but could make no substantial reply. [28]

"Not a bit of it," continued Captain Handsell, who by this time was getting somewhat Brisk with his afternoon's Punch. "Hang it, who's afraid? I like thee, lad. I'm off my bargain, and don't care a salt herring if I'm a loser by a few broad pieces in not sticking to it. I tell thee, Jack, thou'rt Free, as Free as I am; leastways if we get to Jamaica without going to Davy Jones's Locker; for on blue water no man can say he's Free. No; not the Skipper even."

And then he told me, to my exceeding Amazement and Delight, of what an Iniquitous Transaction I had very nearly been made the victim. It seems that although the Pardon granted me after the Petition I had sent to his Majesty was conditional on my transporting myself to the Plantations, further influence had been made for me in

London,—by whom I knew not then, but I have since discovered,—and on the very Day of the arrival of our condemned crew in London, an Entire and Free Pardon had been issued for John Dangerous and lodged [29] in the hands of Sir Basil Hopwood at his House in Bishopsgate Street. Along with this merciful Document there came a letter from one of his Majesty's principal Secretaries of State, in which directions were given that I was to be delivered over to a person who was my Guardian. And that I was in no danger of being again given up to the villains Cadwallader and Talmash, or their Instrument Gnawbit, was clear, I think, from what Captain Hand-sell told me:—That the Person bringing the letter—the Pardon itself being in the hands of a King's Messenger—had the appearance, although dressed in a lay habit, of being a Foreign Ecclesiastic. The crafty Extortioner of a Knight and Alderman makes answer that I had not come with the other Transports to London, but had been left sick at Brentford, in the care of an agent of his there; but he entreats the Foreign Person to go visit Newgate, where he had another gang of unhappy persons for Transportation, and see if I had arrived. And all this while the wretch knew that I was safely clapped up in the yard of the [30] Borough Clink. And the Foreign Person being met at the Old Bailey by one of Hopwood's creatures, this Thing takes him to walk on the leads of the Sessions House, praying him not to enter the gaol, where many had lately been stricken with the Distemper, and by and by up comes a Messenger all hot as it seemed with express riding,—though his sweat and dust were all Forged,—and says that a gang of Ruffians have broken up the Cage of Brentford, where, for greater safety, the Boy Dangerous had been bestowed; that these Ruffians were supposed to be the remnant of the Blacks of Charlwood Chase who had escaped from capture; and that they had stolen away the Boy Dangerous, and made clear off with him. And, indeed, it was a curious circumstance that Brentford Cage was that day broken into (the Times were very Lawless), and a Strange Boy taken out therefrom. But Hopwood had artfully separated me from the Blacks who were in Newgate, and placed me among a stranger mob of riffraff in the Borough Clink. The Newgate Gang were [31] in due time taken, not to Gravesend, but straight away from the Pool to Richmond in Virginia; whereas I was conveyed to Gravesend and Deal, and shipped off to Jamaica in *The Humane Hopwood*. And what do you think was the object of this

Humane Scoundrel in thus sequestrating the King's Pardon and robbing me of my liberty, and perhaps of the occasion of returning to the state of a Gentleman, in which I was Born? 'Twas simply to kidnap me, and make a wretched profit of twenty or thirty pounds,—the Commander of his Ship going him half in the adventure,—by selling me in the West Indies, where white boys not being Transports were then much in demand, to be brought up as clerks and cash-keepers to the Planters. Sure there was never such a Diabolical Plot for so sorry an end; but a vast number of paltry conspiracies, carried out with Infernal Cunning and Ingenuity, had made, in the course of years, Sir Basil Hopwood rich and mighty, a Knight and Alderman, Parliament man and ex-Lord Mayor. To carry out these designs was [32] just part of the ordinary calling of a Shipmaster in those days. 'Twas looked upon as the simplest matter of business in the world. To kidnap a child was such an everyday deed of devilry, that the slightest amount of pains was deemed sufficing to conceal the abominable thing. And thus the Foreign Person saw with dolorous Eyes the convoy of convicts take their departure from Newgate to ship on board the Virginian vessel at St. Katherine's Stairs, while poor little Jack Dangerous was being smuggled away from Gravesend to Jamaica.

And to Jamaica I should have gone to be sold as a Slave, but for the strange occurrence of the Captain taking a liking to me. He dared not have kept me among the convicts, as the Sheriff at Port Royal would have had a List in Duplicate of their names sent out by a fast-sailing King's Ship; for the Government at Home had some faint Suspicion of the prevailing custom of Kidnapping, and made some Feeble Attempts to stop it. But he would have kept me on board as a ship-boy till the Auction of the [33] Transports was over, and then he would have coolly sold me, for as much as I would fetch, to some Merchant of Kingston or Port Royal, who was used to deal in flesh and blood, and who, in due course, would have transferred me, at a profit, to some up-country planter.

"But that shall never be, Jack my hearty," Captain Handsell exclaimed, when, after many more pipes of Tobacco and rummers of Punch, he had explained these wonderful things to me. "I shall lose my half share in the venture, and shall have to tell a rare lie to yonder old Skin-a-flea-for-the-hide-and-fat in London; but what o' that?"