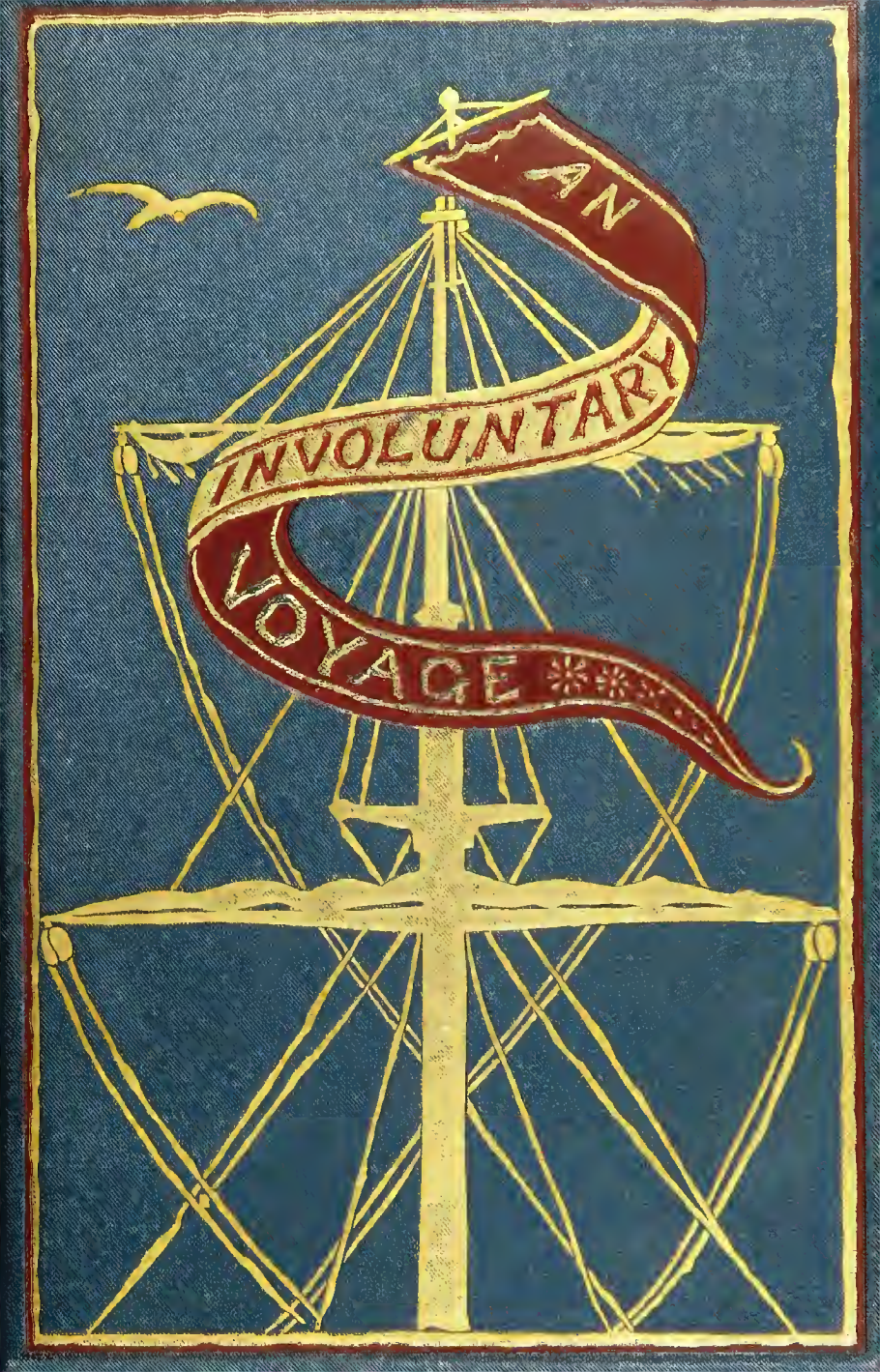
AN
INVOLUNTARY
VOYAGE

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"JOLLY COMPANIONS, EVERY ONE!"

AN INVOLUNTARY VOYAGE

By LUCIEN BIART

AUTHOR OF "ADVENTURES OF A YOUNG NATURALIST"

TRANSLATED BY

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CHAPTER I.

TO BATIGNOLLES.

"HERE'S to your good health, Boisjoli!"

"And here's to yours, Pinson."

The two boon companions, who were seated in the dining-room of an apartment in the Rue Nollet, having drunk to the above sentiments with grave slowness, replaced their half-emptied glasses on the table. It was an April day; small, close rain was falling; three large logs of wood were crackling and sputtering upon the hearth. M. Pinson, the Amphitryon of the occasion, was a man of middle height, strongly built, with curly hair and a quick eye, an intelligent expression, and a smiling mouth. His guest, Boisjoli, was a bigger man than he in every sense: he was taller by a head, and his features were bolder and sterner than those of M. Pinson; they were, however, just as expressive of straightforwardness and kindliness. The two friends were, to judge by appearances, in the prime of life; neither seemed to have passed his fortieth year.

They had replaced their glasses upon the table, and each of them, as if absorbed in his own reflections, was looking pensively into his plate.

"You do not eat?" said M. Pinson.

"No. I acknowledge that I have no appetite."

"The devil take you, Boisjoli!"

"Thanks, old fellow; but what is it that suggests that charitable wish just at this moment?"

"If I am not mistaken," resumed M. Pinson, "it is thirty-two years to-day since my poor mother, almost as disconsolate as myself, left me at Sainte-Barbe's."

"Thirty-two years!" repeated Boisjoli; "how the time flies."

"How wretched I was that day," continued Pinson; "hitherto my life had been always passed at my mother's side, and all of a sudden I found myself in the middle of a big room, filled with schoolboys, all eying me with mingled mockery and malice."

"Not all," remonstrated Boisjoli.

"That is true; you were there. When playtime came I went, with a swelling heart, to prowl about the gate through which my mother had vanished. The boys followed me, whispering, and watching me. I must have been like a frightened bird. The boldest among my future companions plied me with questions, but I kept silence, and I felt that my restless, awkward, embarrassed ways were exposing me to their ridicule. A big boy pushed up against me, 'to try me,' as the school phrase ran. My fist was quite a match for his, but I felt lonely and lost, and much more inclined to take my departure than to fight. You had been three months at Sainte-Barbe's then, Boisjoli; you were already among the number of the 'oldsters.' You ran to me, dispersed my persecutors, took me under your protection, and—here's your health, my dear old Boisjoli!"

"And here's yours, my dear old Pinson."

After this second toast the two friends again became silent and absorbed in thought.

"It is at times like these," said Pinson, at length, "when one is in trouble, that one likes to talk of the past. Our poor old school! We lived there nine years, Boisjoli, rising together from class to class, and contending for the prizes until that fa-

mous day on which all the first were awarded to you as the result of the general examination."

"A matter of chance, Pinson."

"And also a matter of intelligence and application, my good friend. Fortune may perhaps come to the sleeping, but knowledge is quite another thing; it is not to be attained except by work and wakefulness. Do you remember the day on which we left Sainte-Barbe's?"

"Yes, we went off straightway, and had ourselves shaved, so as to present ourselves more becomingly at the Central School."

"Out of which you came No. 1."

"And you No. 2, which is the same thing."

"When we left the Central School," resumed M. Pinson, "the director placed us in the offices of the Eastern Railway, with a promise of quick promotion. We swore to each other that we would never part—"

"You had just lost your mother, Pinson—you needed my friendship. Two years later my mother rejoined yours in the better land, and your friendship repaid me with usury for the affection she had shown you."

Tears trembled on the respective eyelids of the friends as they rose simultaneously and repaired to a small drawing-room, where they found an old servant renovating the cheerful wood fire. They seated themselves at a table which displayed preparations for coffee, and M. Pinson, continuing the conversation as though it had not been interrupted, said:

"We promised each other then that we would never part, Boisjoli, and now here you are going away."

"It cannot be helped, Pinson. It must be so; you yourself, each time that we have discussed the question, have ended by approving of my going."

"That was because the hour of your departure was far off, because it seemed to me that it would never really come."

"I have now been fifteen years," said Boisjoli, "vegetating

in the insignificant place which, when I first entered upon it, I regarded merely as a stepping-stone to the highest employment."

"Justice has never been done to you."

"Oh yes it has, my dear fellow! But in our dear country all the talents, in fact, walk about the streets seeking work, and the leading posts are few in number. What I have lacked, and it is the same story in your own case, is a patron who, being himself high up on the ladder, could have aided me to scale it, and procured me a chance of showing what I am fit for. Nevertheless, if, like you, I possessed a small fortune—"

"When I came into my five thousand francs a year, Boisjoli, I told you what I now tell you again, that half belongs to you."

"I know, Pinson, and I have accepted that half. Perhaps I shall come and claim it from you one of these days. In the meantime I want to win that same independence which enables you to work at your own hours—in fact, to do justice to yourself. Among us, let me say once more, all the avenues to fortune are thronged, there are many more called than chosen. The war that has just broken out in the United States offers a good opportunity to men of our profession; I want to go thither and try my fortune. I have given myself ten years in which to realize an income; at the end of that time, rich or poor, I will return."

"And those ten years, can you bring them back to me? Shall we ever see each other again? Am I immortal? Are you?

"It was agreed, Pinson, that we should dine together for the last time gayly. It is too late to recede from my resolution; I must start to-morrow, and I will do so. Come, fill my glass with your old Cognac. To your good health!"

This time the glasses were emptied. M. Pinson, despite his habitual sobriety, insisted on drinking to his friend's prosperous journey, complete success, and speedy return. The friends,

who were both, at bottom, of a jovial turn, recovered their spirits by degrees, and fell back upon the more cheerful and happy reminiscences of their youth. Then "Do you remember?" was repeated many times, and first came smiles, to be succeeded by laughter. No doubt three or four glasses of the toothsome Cognac, in which the two old schoolfellows drank several fresh toasts, contributed not a little to their merriment.

"If you were as true a friend as you pretend to be," said Boisjoli, as he held his glass between the lamp and his eye, admiring the limpid liquid, "you would come with me to-morrow—"

"To the station?" cried M. Pinson. "Did you imagine for a moment that I should fail in so simple an obligation as that?"

"No, indeed; but when I say that you ought to accompany me—"

"Were you thinking of taking me to New York?"

"*In medio veritas*, as we used to say at Sainte-Barbe's," resumed Boisjoli, sententiously. "Listen to me, Pinson; you are free, you have neither a post to fill nor a wife and children to leave; there is nothing to keep you here, and Calais is only seven hours from Paris."

"Hum!" said M. Pinson, "you cheat me out of my grand-discovery scene. I had long ago made up my mind to do what you wish, and I reckoned on giving you a surprise by taking my place beside you in the railway carriage that is to convey you to the frontier."

"Bravo!" cried Boisjoli; "I reckoned upon that too, and I drink to your idea. Only, you must admit that, since your mind was already made up, you have granted me nothing. What harm would it do you to come with me to London? You don't know the English capital, for, obstinate Parisian as you are, you have never put your foot out of your native city."

"I beg your pardon; I am acquainted with Versailles," said M. Pinson, gravely.

"Come with me so far as London."

"Why not so far as Liverpool?" cried the engineer, starting up from his chair.

"That is just what I was thinking," answered Boisjoli, quietly; "why not so far as Liverpool? By doing this, you would, in the course of a few days, have seen the sea, England, its capital, one of its great industrial centres, and the fine steamer *Canada*, in which I am to cross the ocean, into the bargain. What say you? Is it settled?

"But you start at nine in the morning?"

"At nine fifteen, my good friend."

"I must have a passport."

"What for? Passports are abolished."

"A trunk, then."

"Nonsense! What a fuss you make about nothing. You will want a travelling-bag, and, as the old song has it, two shirts, as many pocket-handkerchiefs, and a pair of socks."

"I have an appointment with Viollet-le-Duc for the day after to-morrow."

"You have until eight o'clock to-morrow morning to inform him that an unexpected journey obliges you to defer your interview for a week."

"And if he be annoyed?"

"He will recover from his annoyance, especially when he learns the motive of your absence."

"But—"

"Come, Pinson, make haste and dish up your very last argument, it is getting late."

"I will go," said the engineer.

"I was sure of it," cried Boisjoli, as he shook his friend's hand warmly. "That's all right. Here's your health once more, old Pinson."

"To our friendship, Boisjoli!"

"To-morrow at the Northern Railway Station."

"At nine o'clock."

"Good-night."

"Good-night."

When Boisjoli was gone, M. Pinson walked all round his little drawing-room many times before he went into his bedroom. There he opened the wardrobe in which his linen was kept, and contemplated the rows of shirts, stockings, and handkerchiefs artistically arranged by his old housekeeper Marguerite, after which he informed that worthy personage of his intentions. Marguerite, who, during ten years passed in the service of M. Pinson, had never known him to be absent for twenty-four hours, treated the communication as a jest.

"Bring me a travelling-bag," said M. Pinson; "I will pack my things to-night."

"A travelling-bag!" repeated the old woman; "where shall I find one, sir. I never saw such a thing belonging to you."

Marguerite spoke truly. M. Pinson, whose business was transacted either at the Paris or the Panton Railway Station, had never visited any place outside his natal city in the course of the years during which he had been employed by the Eastern Railway, except Saint Cloud, Versailles, and Château Thierry, where he had passed a few days with Boisjoli, who was then engaged in building a viaduct. It was, therefore, arranged that at daybreak—that is to say, at seven o'clock in the morning—Marguerite should go out and purchase a travelling-bag and a "railway pocket," as the articles which English tourists denominate "couriers' bags" are called in Paris.

At long past midnight M. Pinson was still awake. The idea of this journey, so suddenly resolved upon, was worrying him somewhat.

"Bah!" said he to himself, at length; "it will do me good to get away for a while, for I am becoming quite an old fogy. But what a change in my life Boisjoli's absence will make! Good-bye to all our controversies, and all our tasks in common,

to our games of chess and bézique and dominoes, to our long talks in winter, to—and he, how will he do without me?"

At last the engineer fell asleep.

On the following day, the 28th of April, 1853, at a quarter-past nine in the morning, M. Pinson and his friend took their places in the train for Calais.

The two engineers were to reach London at ten o'clock in the evening, to pass three days there, and then proceed to Liverpool, at which port Boisjoli was to go on board the *Canada*. While he should be steaming towards America, which France formerly possessed almost entirely, where Washington founded a model republic, and whence the wealthy uncles of our former dramas and novels once had a salutary custom of returning, now "honored" only "in the breach," M. Pinson would peacefully return to Paris.

THE TRAVELLERS.

CHAPTER II.

BETWEEN PARIS AND LONDON.

It was five o'clock in the evening when the two friends arrived at Calais, the ancient Caletum of the Romans. They had barely time to eat some sandwiches, and to drink a glass of rum-and-water, which the lady attendant at the refreshment-bar assured M. Pinson was an infallible specific against sea-sickness, before they had to go on board the steamer *Avon*.

Boisjoli was not acquainted with the Channel, but he had sailed upon the Mediterranean, a fact which gave him for the moment a marked superiority over his friend. M. Pinson, whose nautical exploits were restricted to one excursion upon the lake at Enghien, ten years previously, frankly exhibited his astonishment at the sight of so many ships. The sky was cloudy, the waves, lashed by a strong breeze, were tipped at their edges with a light foam, which the sailors call a fleece. The metallic aspect of the liquid immensity extending before him far beyond his vision impressed M. Pinson unpleasantly. He shivered slightly, and thought of his warm rooms in the Rue Nollet.

A hundred passengers of both sexes, and every age and nation, were crowding, pushing, and bustling upon the narrow deck of the *Avon*. Near the mainmast stood a travelling-carriage, strongly secured by stout ropes, and surmounted by an imperial. An English gentleman, shaved, cravated, and gloved with an absolute correctness which belongs to that methodical race only, advanced, preceded by a tall footman in livery, and courteously escorting a middle-aged lady. The Englishman and his com-

panion, to the profound amazement of the other passengers on board the *Avon*, proceeded to mount the imperial. This being safely accomplished, the male and female servants in attendance handed up to the noble couple a supply of rugs, shawls, bottles, glasses, and general provisions more than sufficient for a long sea passage.

"Very practical people, those English," said M. Pinson; "but why should they perch themselves on the imperial atop of their carriage in so sharp a wind? If I were they, I should stow myself snugly away in the inside."

"Ah, but they want to see the country to better advantage," said Boisjoli.

"The country!" exclaimed M. Pinson, waving his hand expressively towards the uniform surface spread out before them.

"You forget that we are within twenty miles of Dover," replied Boisjoli, "and the English coast will come into view as soon as we begin to lose sight of the French coast."

The steamer set itself in motion, and M. Pinson, seated in the forepart of the little vessel, gazed thoughtfully at the receding land.

"The poets are right," said he suddenly; "one cannot quit one's country without a pang. Poor old France! I can hardly believe that there exists any other land so well worth living in, and I don't think one wants a stronger proof of that than the multitude of foreigners who come to visit our country, and who end by establishing themselves there, never to leave it more."

"You forget free America, Pinson. Emigrants rush to that 'promised land' by hundreds of thousands."

"I respect America, Boisjoli: you are going to live there, and that makes the country sacred to me. But necessity, and nothing else, drives those thousands of emigrants to its hospitable shores; while it is not necessity which attracts all the races of the earth to us. Europeans, Asiatics, Africans, Americans, and the people of Oceania resort to us because of our

polished and sociable manners, and our kindly disposition. And then our museums, our schools, our cookery! Dear France! Hardly a quarter of an hour ago I trod that shore which is still before my eyes, and already I begin to fear that I shall tread it no more."

Then M. Pinson sank into silence, and watched the gradual enshrouding by the mist of the light-house, the graceful belfry of the Hôtel de Ville, the church of Notre Dame, all those buildings of which the people of Calais are so proud. M. Pinson, although he had never been out of Paris, was not only skilful as an engineer, but learned in history and geography; and he also possessed a somewhat extensive knowledge of zoology. He recalled to mind that this old town, Calais, rapidly becoming invisible, had been besieged in 1347, by Edward III., King of England, and distinguished by the patriotic devotion of Eustache de Saint Pierre. After two centuries of captivity, Calais, always faithful to France, had been reconquered by the valiant François de Guise, who had already won great renown for his defence of Metz, and for the battle of Reutz.

The engineer, still gazing towards the receding shore, imparted his historical reminiscences to his friend, who supplemented them by impressions of his own. Little by little Boisjoli left off replying, except in the briefest sentences, which dropped at length into monosyllables, and ultimately he kept complete silence. M. Pinson leaned towards him, and looked at him anxiously.

"What's the matter?" he asked.

"With me? Nothing."

"You are quite pale."

"Perhaps so, but it is nothing; only a little qualmishness; it will pass off."

Here M. Pinson, turning his eyes towards the deck of the steamer, exclaimed in astonishment:

"How extraordinary!"

The fact was that half an hour of navigation had singularly transformed the scene. Instead of the noisy bustle and chatter of starting, comparative silence reigned on board the *Avon*.

Seated on benches or on huge coils of rope were men, women, and children, with pale faces and fixed eyes, wiping the damps of illness from their brows, and sniffing at scent-bottles or oranges or lemons. There was a heavy sea on, and the demon of sea-sickness had already seized upon its victims. The young gentleman who had set his foot almost disdainfully upon the deck, a cigar between his lips and a glass gracefully fixed in one eye, now clutched a rope with one hand to hold himself up, while the other recklessly disarranged the symmetry of the "parting" of his lustrous hair. Here a young husband was supporting his young wife, who persisted in believing that her last moment had come; there a poor mother was hardly able to look after her little boy, who, perfectly well, and enjoying his liberty, was roaming about from poop to prow, and in more or less danger. The most lamentable spectacle was, however, that presented by the two passengers who had deposited themselves on the imperial, atop of the travelling carriage. My lord and my lady, each leaning over a side of the vehicle, with pale and agonized countenance, called in vain, the one for his man, the other for her maid. The servants, who were no doubt as ill as their employers, neither came nor answered. The sailors, with mocking smiles upon their tanned faces, went to and fro among the unhappy wretches who encumbered their ship, and many of whom seriously believed themselves to be dying.

M. Pinson was too good-natured to find any amusement in the grotesque scenes which surrounded him; and, besides, the increasing paleness of his friend made him uneasy.

"It is nothing, it is nothing," Boisjoli muttered faintly; "I know this terrible sea-sickness of old; I served an appren-

ticeship to it on my voyage to Algiers, but I am in for it again. As for you, Pinson, you are always in luck: you come in for property, and you escape sea-sickness. Could you get me some brandy-and-water? I think that would put me all right."

M. Pinson rose from his seat with the utmost alacrity, and started off in a straight line to fulfil this errand of friendship; but, to his great surprise, the rolling of the ship made him swerve suddenly, and he came down plump on the back of a fat lady, who, despite his profuse apologies, received him with anything but a benediction. Surprised at having lost his balance, and feeling the deck move under his feet, M. Pinson advanced with the utmost caution, holding on by the ropes each time that a pitch or a roll flung him forward or sideward. At length he reached the bar, procured the desired brandy-and-water, and set out on his return journey towards his friend. He had taken just three steps when the little steamer lifted on a wave, dipped suddenly to the right, and the unlucky engineer had to let go his prize and catch hold of the gunnel in order to avoid falling. The glass, flung to a distance, dispersed its contents over an unfortunate passenger seated close to the chimney, who flattered himself that he was safe from the wind, and every other kind of misadventure. M. Pinson picked up the empty glass with a shamefaced air, and, not without a regretful thought of the warm atmosphere of his rooms in the Rue Nollet, and their motionless floor, returned to the bar. Once more he procured the desired beverage, and resumed his journey towards the vessel's prow with great caution. He had reached the mainmast in safety when a gentleman stepped up to him, and very politely taking the glass out of his hand, with the simple explanation, "For a lady, sir," straightway presented the restorative mixture to a young lady with languishing eyes.

M. Pinson, who was much too well-bred to make the slight-

est remonstrance, bravely returned to the bar, and speedily reappeared with a third glass of brandy-and-water. Five steps more and Boisjoli would have been placed in possession of it, when a lady, placing herself in front of M. Pinson, said to him in a soft, imploring tone,

"For my husband, sir!"

The engineer had not had time to reply before the happy husband was sipping the liquor for which another was waiting in vain.

M. Pinson, a little angry this time, made a fourth trip to the bar, and there he was requested to restore the glasses which he had taken away. The steward and his boy spoke English only, a language of which M. Pinson did not understand a word; he replied in French to questions which no one was putting to him, and these cross purposes might have gone on indefinitely had not a passenger, who was not sea-sick, come to his aid in the capacity of interpreter. He was intrusted with a fourth glass, and this time he took the precaution to wrap up his prize in his handkerchief, so as to conceal it, for, according to his calculation, there were on board the *Avon* several dozens of wives, sisters, and mothers, and Boisjoli was in serious danger of getting nothing to drink until they should reach Dover, to say nothing of the uneasiness which he must then be suffering from the prolonged absence of his friend. The truth was, however, that Boisjoli was too ill to be uneasy about anybody; the poor wretch was conscious of only one desire, that of gaining the port and leaving behind him the accursed Channel, whose chopping seas often inflict the agonies of sea-sickness upon the most hardened travellers.

The steamer entered the port at the very moment when M. Pinson, carrying his fourth glass, reached his friend's side. The pitching and rolling ceased, as if by enchantment, and Boisjoli, suddenly cured, was able to enjoy the delicious beverage which had been procured with so much difficulty. The

M. PINSON'S BOLDNESS IN THE CAUSE OF FRIENDSHIP.

two engineers stepped on shore, and followed the other passengers in the direction of the railway station. Boisjoli, who was accustomed to leave his luggage to the care of the railway companies, thought of nothing beyond settling himself comfortably in a carriage with his friend; but, being warned in time by a compatriot that they would have to disinter their own property from amid a vast heap of trunks and packages, and get it placed in the train which was almost ready to start, the two engineers were obliged to abandon their chosen corners and do duty as porters. Boisjoli got through the ordeal very well, but M. Pinson's travelling-bag was not forthcoming. After much research he at length discovered it on a shelf, at such a height that he had to ask for a ladder in order to get at it. If English travellers grumble at the slowness of the French custom-house officials in classifying the luggage at the arrival stations, so did Boisjoli and M. Pinson anathematize the carelessness of the English companies, who, however, have since then adopted the French system. Although, as it was night, they could not see anything, the two engineers had too much experience not to judge of the road they were travelling over by the slight bumps which they felt.

"H'm! what would you say to that?" M. Pinson would ask his friend from time to time.

"Uneven level here and there."

"And the speed?"

"Truly remarkable."

"This proves that the control of the State, by which we set so much store in France, is not indispensable for doing things well."

"Nevertheless, I'm for that same control," said M. Pinson; "under it we travel safely, smoothly, and rapidly."

Two hours later the travellers emerged from the train in London, where they found all the cab-drivers on strike. The two Frenchmen, considerably at a loss to know how to dispose

of themselves, walked out of the station, and perceiving from afar a signboard which represented a superb red lion, with the following legend in large letters,

"FRENCH SPOKEN HERE,"

they turned their steps in the direction of the hostelry thus recommended to their exiled hearts.

CHAPTER III.

THE RED LION.

THE friends, who for a little while had felt very uncomfortble, entered the *Red Lion* inn with light hearts, their spirits having been instantaneously raised by the inscription in capital letters, "French spoken here."

"Since we left Calais," said M. Pinson, "I have frequently wished that I could exchange all the Latin and Greek which I learned once on a time for a few dozen English phrases. We must look like simpletons, Boisjoli, my dear fellow, to these people who are speaking the noble idiom of Shakespeare all around us, while we don't understand a word they are saying. And when I reflect that henceforth you will have to express yourself altogether in that language, I become more unhappy about you than ever."

"For the last fortnight," replied Boisjoli, "I have been working hard at English; and I already know a great many familiar sayings; only, up to the present time, I have not found any opportunity of coming out with them."

A fat man, with a protuberant stomach, red whiskers, and a clean-shaven chin, advanced towards the travellers with a propitiatory air, and asked them in English what were their "orders."

"We want supper and beds," answered Boisjoli. "We are Frenchmen, and we speak very little English."

The host replied in a sentence which, judging by the bow that accompanied it, was of a courteous nature.

"What do you say?" asked Boisjoli.

Again the innkeeper spoke, and again unintelligibly.

"We French, we speak no English," said M. Pinson.

Once more the innkeeper bowed, and then, raising his voice as though he were addressing deaf men, he said, carefully separating his words:

"Pray give your orders, gentlemen!"

"We French!" cried M. Pinson, with all the strength of his lungs.

"We hungry, we want to eat," said Boisjoli.

"And to sleep," added his friend, as, with expressive pantomime, he leaned his head on one hand and closed his eyes.

The innkeeper took this to mean that M. Pinson was suffering from toothache, and recommended to him a mouthful of gin to be used as a gargle. Each of the speakers, hoping to make himself understood by the other, spoke louder and louder, and this scene would have lasted long had not a bystander, who was sipping a glass of whiskey (a kind of spirit made from barley, and much appreciated in England), approached the two friends and asked them what they wanted.

"We were induced to come here on the faith of the signboard," replied Boisjoli, "as, unfortunately, neither I nor my friend can speak English. We want supper and beds."

"The waiter who speaks French is absent this evening, gentlemen," said the obliging interpreter, after a short conversation with the innkeeper; "but I have explained your wishes to the master of the *Red Lion*, and you shall be attended to immediately."

M. Pinson and his friend were then conducted to a room in which were two small, narrow beds. Half an hour later they were regaled with cold ham and ale, with which, in the absence of better fare, they endeavored to be satisfied. Towards midnight, after having deplored the narrowness of the beds, the hardness of the mattresses, and the total absence of the pillows, they at length fell asleep.

It was broad day when M. Pinson woke, and looked about him with surprise.

"Is this really true?" said he; "I am not in the Rue Nollet: I am not even in France, but in the capital city of England. The sea rolls between me and Batignolles—actually the sea! It needs all my friendship for that good fellow asleep there"—here M. Pinson glanced towards the bed occupied by his friend—"to restrain me from setting out this very moment for my dear and beautiful Paris, where, if the hotel people don't speak French particularly well, they at least understand it perfectly."

Boisjoli awoke, and the two friends betook themselves to studying the prospect from one of the windows of their room, a window of the guillotine order of construction, equally inconvenient and dangerous, which, long exploded in France, is still held in honor in the English metropolis. Except for the strange cries which reached their ears from the street, and the dingy aspect of the houses, the travellers might have thought that they had not quitted Paris. M. Pinson rang the bell, and the Irish servant-girl appeared.

"Is the waiter who speaks French in the house?" asked the engineer.

The girl nodded affirmatively and left the room. In a few minutes she returned, carrying a canful of hot water.

"That's all right," said M. Pinson, "but send us the waiter who speaks French, the—waiter—who—speaks—French."

"Yes, sir."

The girl again left the room. During her absence M. Pinson and his friend profited by the hot water she had brought them, and proceeded to dress themselves leisurely.

At about ten o'clock they went down to the general dining-room, and found themselves in the presence of half-a-dozen Englishmen, who were all eating eggs.

The host approached.

"The French waiter?" demanded M. Pinson, politely.

The innkeeper smiled pleasantly, and drew from his waistcoat pocket a scrap of paper, which he presented to the strangers. On this was written, "The French waiter will not be back until the afternoon. These gentlemen will kindly excuse his absence, and have patience."

"Let us have patience," said Boisjoli, laughing.

"And breakfast," added M. Pinson.

Hardly had the two friends taken their seats, when, without waiting for orders, the Irish servant-girl set a tray before them on which was placed a teapot, four eggs, and as many soppets of bread and butter.

"The *carte?*" cried M. Pinson.

"The *carte?*" cried Boisjoli, only more loudly.

"The *carte!*" repeated the girl, in a tone of bewilderment.

Then she shook her head from right to left, and from left to right, to signify a negative.

What did she think they were asking for? Ah, that is a mystery which even time itself can never solve.

"We are stupid to ask for the *carte*," said Pinson—"it will be in English, and no use to us. Come, Boisjoli; among the phrases you have learned off by heart, is there not one suitable to the emergencies of breakfast-time."

"I can ask," said Boisjoli, gravely, "for turtle-soup, plum-pudding, and a rabbit."

"But," objected M. Pinson, "with all the good-will in the world, we cannot breakfast on turtle-soup and plum-pudding; you had better save up your English until dinner-time, when it will come in handy. Charles the Fifth was right, Boisjoli: one is doubly a man if one speaks two languages, trebly a man if one speaks three, and so on. Now I understand our inferiority when confronted with these Germans and English. If ever I have children, they shall learn English, no matter at what cost to them and myself."

"If we were to ask for a beefsteak?" suggested Boisjoli.

"A capital idea!" cried M. Pinson; "the word 'beefsteak' is English, and this time they will understand us."

He beckoned to the servant-girl, and shouted at her:

"Beefsteak! beefsteak *aux pommes* (with fried potatoes). Do you understand?"

She smiled, she understood! so correctly, indeed, that in five minutes she set before the friends a large slice of fried beef and a dish of boiled potatoes.

M. Pinson and his friend were too prudent to protest. The meat was savory, and they breakfasted copiously, without any distrust of the beer which was offered to them, and which was, in fact, as heady as the best wines of their native land. They rose from the table, rather surprised at finding their spirits so much elated, and at about noon they turned out, to find their way, haphazard, about the great city which they were in haste to see.

The contrast between London and Paris could not fail to strike them at once. London is the vaster city, but Paris is handsomer, lighter, more airy. London is an immense capital of labor, Paris an elegant resort of pleasure. London forges bales of iron, and carries loads of coal; Paris deals in stuffs, feathers, and flowers. No two cities, so near each other in point of actual distance, could be more dissimilar of aspect and in their respective customs. The two engineers criticised a little, admired much, and walked about all day. Towards six o'clock in the evening they found themselves before the entrance of a French restaurant, where the waiters were at their posts, and where they might dine according to their taste. At eight they went to a theatre, at which a play of Shakespeare's was acted; but as they were tired after their long day's walking, and did not understand a word of what the actors were saying, they slumbered in their stalls during the greater part of the performance, and did not awake until its close.

When they were again in the street, M. Pinson took Boisjoli's

arm, and began to question him about what they had just seen and heard. The two friends walked boldly along, turning the corners of the streets here, crossing them there, following a seemingly interminable road, and still eagerly discussing the Shakespearian play. As they walked farther and farther away from the theatre, the streets became emptier and more silent, for London, the workman among cities, does not keep late hours like Paris, the coquette. London shuts its shops early, and takes its rest.

"Are we near the hotel?" Pinson at length asked of his friend.

"I was just going," said Boisjoli, "to put the same question to you."

"You don't know where you are?"

"How should I know? I am in London since last night, and I never put my foot in the place before."

"Where are you taking me to, then?"

"That is the question which I have been about to put to you twenty times; but you walked on with such confidence that I thought you were quite sure of the way."

"And I was letting you lead me."

The two engineers came to a stop in the street.

"Upon my word," said M. Pinson, "the air of England is turning us into a pair of fools."

"The fact is," replied his friend, "our being out of the habit of having to think about whither we are going has misled us."

"Where are we?"

"In London."

"In what quarter?"

"It would not do us much good to know that," said Boisjoli; "the real point is to find our hotel."

"Do you know in what direction it is?"

"I only know one thing, that it is near the *Gare*."

A POLITE QUESTION AT MIDNIGHT AND ITS RECEPTION.

"Yes; and what is the name of the *Gare?*" *

"That is precisely what we must find out," said Boisjoli. "Let us ask our way."

"Of whom?" said Pinson, pointing to the deserted street. "And what are we to ask for? There must be more than one *gare* in London; and then, again, though *rail*, *wagon*, and *express* are English words, *gare* is French."

"That's true," said Boisjoli, dejectedly.

M. Pinson looked at his watch.

"Half-past twelve," said he; "generally speaking, at this hour I am in bed and fast asleep."

A footstep was heard in the distance. The two engineers stood still, waiting for the approach of the belated pedestrian. When he was within a few steps of them, M. Pinson and his friend took off their hats and placed themselves in front of him.

"I beg your pardon, sir," said Boisjoli; "could you direct us—"

The pedestrian quickened his pace.

"Sir—" began M. Pinson in his turn.

The individual thus addressed seemed anything but easy in his mind; having glanced around him with much solicitude, he suddenly plunged his hand into his pocket, drew out a penny, and flung it to the two friends, who were transfixed with amazement, and hurried away.

"He takes us for beggars!" said Boisjoli. "Sir! sir!" he cried, as he ran after the person whom they had accosted. The latter, who was already at some distance, began to run too, calling out vigorously, "Stop thief! stop thief!" and was soon out of sight.

"Astonishing!" exclaimed M. Pinson. "This good Londoner, or Londonian—I don't know which is the correct term—after having taken us for beggars, now takes us for robbers.

* Railway station.

If a policeman had chanced to be in the way, just think what our position might have been! How are we to explain our distress, and to ask our way? The very evening I return to Paris," added M. Pinson, resolutely, "I will engage a teacher of English; and I will never let him go until I have thoroughly learned his language."

"In the meantime," said Boisjoli, "we had better walk on."

"In what direction?"

"Oh, never mind; let us follow our noses until we come to a police-office or some place of the kind."

"And you think it is a good joke, do you, to have dragged me away from my Rue Nollet, and brought me here to lose my way, at past midnight, in a city three times as large as Paris, and of whose language you are entirely ignorant?"

"Three millions of men are sleeping around us, Pinson; they will awaken sooner or later, and surely there will be one among them who can help us out of our difficulty."

"That is to say, you propose that we shall sleep in the street?"

"Not at all. If, however, you are tired, we can sit down here on the edge of the footway."

"Upon my word," said M. Pinson, "your composure is extremely exasperating."

"There is no use," replied Boisjoli, "in getting vexed with either things or events; they do not mind us in the least."

"Let us walk on," said M. Pinson; "I cannot stand about here."

"I warn you," said Boisjoli, "that we shall be most conscientiously turning our backs on our hotel; in such a case that is always what happens. Hah! listen!"

The sound was that of a distant footstep advancing towards the two friends. They went forward to meet the belated wayfarer, asking each other in what form they should accost so as not to alarm him. They soon saw a boy of about twelve years

old, who, on perceiving them, ran across the street to the opposite footway. Having gained it, however, he began to sing:

"C'est la mèr' Michel qu'a perdu son chat,
Ell' cri' par la fenêtre. . . ."

"*Petit!*" cried the two engineers simultaneously, relieved and delighted beyond measure.

The boy checked his song, stood still, and then, with the gesture of a sentry presenting his bayonet, shouted:

"*Qui vive?*"

CHAPTER IV.

QUICKSILVER.

THE shrill "*Qui vive?*" uttered in French was a joyful sound to the two bewildered wayfarers.

"*Ami!*" shouted M. Pinson in reply, as he hurried across the street and approached the boy.

"Don't come any nearer to me," said the latter, "or I will take to my heels. It is past midnight, my fine fellows, and although my purse is not heavy, I don't want to make you a present of it. Who are you, and what do you want with me?"

"Only to ask you to direct us, my boy," said M. Pinson; "we are lost!"

"Lost!" repeated the boy, derisively—"lost in London! You don't catch me swallowing that in a hurry. Good-bye."

"Stop, stop!" cried the engineer, "we are honest folk, and I have told you the truth. Let us talk at a distance, if you like, but do not forsake us."

The boy paused.

"You have tongues," said he; "why did you wait to ask your way until I came by?"

"We only came to London yesterday, and neither I nor my friend can speak English. We have just spoken to a passer-by, who took us first for beggars, and then for thieves, because he did not understand what we said."

"What a joke!" exclaimed the boy, with a roar of laughter—"what a joke!"

And then, to the great amazement of the two engineers, he

executed, with surpassing agility, a series of those extraordinary evolutions known as turning catherine-wheels.

"Let's see," said he, when at length he stood on his feet again, and his sense of the "joke" had subsided; "where do you live?"

"At Batignolles," replied M. Pinson.

"That's rather far off"—here the boy stepped back—"and I have not time to take you there. You want to hoax me; but it is not so easily done, my fine fellow; so good-night to you."

"What a fool I am," said M. Pinson to himself. "Stop, stop, my boy!" he called out loudly, "I am not jesting, and there are five francs for you to earn."

"By taking you back to Batignolles?"

"No; by taking us to the inn which we went to on arriving in London."

"What is it called?"

"The *Red Lion*."

"There are," said the boy, "about two hundred inns called the *Red Lion* in London. What street is *your Red Lion* in?"

"What street?" repeated M. Pinson, looking at Boisjoli.

"Listen to me," said the latter, "and I will explain. For want of knowing how to pronounce English words, we are ignorant of the name of the street in which our hotel is to be found. The only thing we know about it is, that it stands in an open square near the railway station."

"Which railway station? There are a dozen in London."

"The station one arrives at coming from Paris."

"I have it. London Bridge Station. You are not more than a mile and a half from it; it is not on my way, but if you really mean to give the five francs you talked about—"

"Here they are!" cried the two engineers, as each put his hand in his pocket at the same moment, and, taking out a coin, held it towards the urchin.

"H'm!" said the latter, "I really think you are honest folk;

but then you are two, and I don't mean to put myself into your clutches. Throw the singing birds this way, that I may judge of their voice."

M. Pinson flung half-a-crown at the boy's feet.

"That noble coin," said the boy deliberately, after he had examined it, "is worth three francs, not five."

"We will make up the difference when we reach the inn."

"H'm! These Parisians are not such ninnies after all," said the young acrobat, as he again turned an artistic catherine-wheel. "Let us be moving."

He then started off at a quick pace, walking at first in the middle of the roadway, abreast of the two engineers, and watching them closely but covertly. This precocious youth—who was attired in a cloth jacket much too tight, and cloth trousers much too short, for him, and wore a small round cap—had bright, keen black eyes, a finely cut mouth, and dark curly hair. Something elegant in his figure, something determined and spirited in his air, struck the two friends, and pleased them.

"You are French?" asked M. Pinson.

"Yes, sir. I was born in Paris."

"Have you lived long in London?"

"Three years."

"Are you apprenticed to any business?"

"Not exactly; I am working a little at everything, until I grow up to be a man."

"What do your parents do?"

"I have none, sir. I never knew my mother, and my father died six months after we came to London."

"Poor little fellow!" said the engineers simultaneously, in tones so full of pity that the boy, beginning to lose his distrust of them, drew a little nearer.

"What is your name?" asked Boisjoli, after a momentary silence.

"Quicksilver."

"That is not a French name," said M. Pinson.

"No; it is a nickname. The English don't stir about very much; quietness is more in their line, and movement in mine, so they call me Quicksilver."

"But your own name—your baptismal name—your family name?"

"Mother Pitch says my own name is Victor Brigaut."

"Is Mother Pitch one of your relatives?"

"No. The only relations I have are in France; but I do not know their address. Mother Pitch is a sailor's widow, a good woman, who took me to her own room when my father died—it was just above ours—so that I might not be put out into the street."

"And she took entire charge of you?"

"Not altogether, sir, for she is not rich. She took me to her room, and tried to console me, and for a week she gave me food, and a mattress to lie on. At the end of that time I was not quite so miserable for want of my father—that is to say, I was able to think of him without crying. One night, when we were at our supper, Mother Pitch explained her position and my own to me. She was poor, very poor; as for me, I had no resources, and no one to look to. I should have to work for my living. 'You shall always have your night's lodging here,' said she, 'and when times are hard you shall share my dish of potatoes and my pot of beer.' And she has kept her word, sir."

"You give her the money you earn?"

"No, I pay her what I cost her—that's all. When I have a stroke of luck I buy her a petticoat, or a pair of muffatees, or some meat from the cook-shop—that is her prime treat—and I fill her beer-jug up to the top. If I am down on my luck, I am certain when I go home to find my plate laid alongside of hers, and to get an encouraging slap on the back from her."

"And what employment has this good woman?"

"She is a mattress-carder; only she is so old that she cannot earn much at her trade."

"Have you never tried to find out your relations in France?"

"I know that they live at Amiens, but that is all."

"Are they rich or poor?"

"Rich, sir, as my father was; for I remember that at our house in Paris we had servants, both men and women. My father, who was ruined somehow, brought me to England. He used to talk of making his fortune over again, but death carried him off."

"You can read?"

"Yes, and also write and cast up accounts."

"How do you earn your living?"

"I do all sorts of jobs: I help to unload ships, and sometimes—to-night, for instance—I go on as a performer at Astley's."

"Who is Astley?"

"The London Franconi."

"You are an acrobat?" said the two engineers, simultaneously, remembering the catherine-wheels.

"Not yet," answered the boy, "but I am working up to that. I am beginning to be able to stand upright on a horse, and I can beat all the other fellows at tumbling."

"Are you honest?" asked Boisjoli, who did not know that he was quoting Shakespeare.

"Yes, sir," answered the boy, looking his questioner straight in the face. "A fortnight after my father's death I was working at cinder-sifting with some boys of my own age, and one of them became my comrade. He often had money, and that surprised me. He told me that he stole from shop-fronts, and wanted to show me what he called his business; but that did not suit me. I told Mother Pitch about it; she ex-

plained to me that it was better to be hungry than to be a thief, and made me promise her, in the name of my father, that I would resist bad advice, and always remain honest. I did promise her, and Mother Pitch, who has a talk with me every night before I go to bed, has taught me the difference between right and wrong so well that I cannot make any mistake."

The two engineers were so much interested in Quicksilver's story that they forgot their own unpleasant situation and the length of the way, and were quite surprised when their young guide said to them:

"Here we are at London Bridge Station; now try to recognize your inn."

The aspect of the streets of a great city is so different amid the stir and animation of the daylight hours from that which they wear in the deserted stillness of the night that neither M. Pinson nor M. Boisjoli could indicate the desired haven of refuge.

With patient sagacity Quicksilver led them to the gate by which they must have come out of the railway station, and then took them in the direction of the hotel, which at length they recognized. The boy knocked loudly at the door, and the host himself responded to the summons. To him Quicksilver related, in a few words, the adventure of the two engineers, at which he laughed heartily.

"Ask him whether the waiter who speaks French has come in at last?" said M. Pinson.

Quicksilver, after a rather long parley with the landlord, informed the two friends that the French-speaking waiter would be at their service on the following morning. Then, before they had time to pay him the promised sum, the boy bade them "good-night," and ran away.

"Well," said Boisjoli, as he threw himself into an easy-chair when they had climbed up-stairs to their room, "what do you think of this day of adventures, Pinson?"

"I think," replied his friend, "that we are very like two travellers in a farce. Everything that has happened to me since I left the Rue Nollet seems equally incredible and amazing."

"One always gains something by travel," said Boisjoli; "I have often told you so."

"One gains aches in one's bones, I grant you that," replied M. Pinson; "and now I am going to sleep like a dormouse."

Notwithstanding this declaration, M. Pinson did not proceed to undress himself, but looked on in an absent manner while his friend made his preparations for going to bed.

"What are you thinking about, Pinson?" asked the latter.

"About the little fellow to whom we owe it that we can rest in our beds this night, or rather this morning. The boy's frank looks and his quickness interested me. I am sorry he went away so abruptly."

"Why?"

"I should have liked to ask him some more questions. It seems to me, Boisjoli, that there is a duty to be done here. This mere child, lost in big London, is our compatriot, our fellow-townsman, indeed, since he is a Parisian. He has relatives who are well-off, according to his account, and I think it would be well done to help him to find them. Then, again, he is living in great poverty, and in the long run bad example may weaken the effect of the good advice of the worthy mattress-carder. Here is a creature drowning, or who may be drowned; let us fling him a plank."

"Bravo, Pinson! that would be a task worthy of you. On your return from Liverpool, it will be easy for the London police to find young Victor Brigaut for you, if they are so clever as they are said to be; and he seems so intelligent that I have no doubt he will be able to furnish

you with information enough to enable you to trace his relatives."

"I will do it, Boisjoli, and I will do it in your name. That will be a good deed, and it will bring you luck in all your enterprises and labors."

"Thanks," said Boisjoli, as he heartily shook the hand of his attached and simple-hearted friend.

M. Pinson, although he was very tired, found it difficult to get to sleep. Before his eyes was the slight, active figure of Quicksilver, turning his catherine-wheels, and in his ears was the sound of his clear and expressive voice as he told his sad story.

"Poor child," murmured the good man, over and over again. "God grant that I may find him."

The sun was shining when M. Pinson awoke. Boisjoli had already risen, and was noiselessly dressing himself.

"Is that a real ray of sunshine coming through our window?" inquired the engineer, rubbing his eyes.

"It is, indeed," answered Boisjoli; "I have just verified it. Like yourself, and on the faith of former travellers of our nation, I was for a moment incredulous on the point. When I beheld that ray, I believed it to be a product of English industry. But no, the red disk which is shining up yonder is really the sun in person."

"Have you rung the bell?"

"Not yet."

"You are not in earnest, Boisjoli?"

"What do you mean?"

"That one of my most ardent wishes is to make the acquaintance of this famous French waiter for whom we have waited so long."

"You suspect, as I do—"

"Let us conjecture not, but ring."

Boisjoli rang the bell, and presently a light footstep was heard on the landing.

"The little chambermaid," said Pinson; "I would have laid a wager on it."

"And you would have lost," cried Boisjoli, as the door opened, and Quicksilver, turning a catherine-wheel into the middle of the room, picked himself up, and said:

"Here I am, gentlemen!"

QUICKSILVER IN A NEW CHARACTER AND A NEW SUIT.

CHAPTER V.

IN LONDON.

QUICKSILVER was arrayed in a new jacket, a white shirt, and a pair of trousers which were not to be reproached for lack of length. He looked very smart, and in his simple but clean attire he was even more interesting than on the previous occasion.

"Why, that's capital!" exclaimed Pinson, as Quicksilver stood before them. "But how came you here, my boy? Have you got a place in this hotel?"

"Yes, sir, since yesterday. The waiter who usually acts as Barnum to foreigners—"

"Barnum?" said Boisjoli.

"Guide, I should say," explained Quicksilver, correcting himself; "that waiter is—indisposed, and, if you will allow me, I am to take his place for the present."

"I begin to feel convinced," said M. Pinson, "that the waiter in question never existed."

"That's the landlord's affair," replied Quicksilver, with a highly expressive wink. "Tell me, gentlemen, what do you want? You rang your bell, and I was told to come and take your orders."

"In the first place, we should like to pay our debt to you, for you ran off without giving us time to do so."

"It was late, and I thought Mother Pitch would be uneasy. Then I knew where to find you."

"So you are entirely at our service?"

"For the whole day."

"You know London well?"

"That is not difficult."

"I don't agree with you. A city which contains three million four hundred thousand inhabitants, is composed of seven quarters, and in which a language is spoken—but we will let that pass. You know what is most interesting for foreigners to see?"

"Oh, certainly. First, there's the Zoological Gardens—the Jardin des Plantes of London—where there are live animals from every part of the world."

"Very good. And then?"

"There's St. Paul's—that is the Notre Dame of London."

"Good again. And then?"

"There's the Colosseum, the Crystal Palace, the British Museum, Westminster, the House of Commons, the House of Lords, the National Gallery, the Observatory at Greenwich, the Nelson Column, the Tower, the—"

"Stop, stop!" said M. Pinson, laughing, "we have forty-eight hours to pass in London, and no more. You shall take us to St. Paul's first, and then—we shall see."

"The finest sight in London," said Quicksilver, "is the Zoological Gardens."

"You have been there?"

"No; it costs too much to get in."

The two engineers finished dressing themselves and went down to the dining-room, where the host, radiant with smiles, came to pay his respects to them. The good man was so obliging and amiable, and the Irish servant-girl was so good-humored, that neither M. Pinson nor Boisjoli could bring himself to complain of anything.

"Tell them," said the latter to Quicksilver, "to let us have a beefsteak and fried potatoes."

"That is a dish which is unknown to English cookery," re-

plied Quicksilver; "if you want a beefsteak with fried potatoes, I will take you to a French restaurant."

"Are you joking?" asked M. Pinson.

"No, sir; it is just the same with regard to green pease cooked in English fashion. They are eaten here without butter, and flavored with mint. My poor father was taken in by a dish of them the day we arrived, and I remember his surprise well."

"Astonishing!" said M. Pinson. "What do you think of that, Boisjoli?" The beefsteak *aux pommes* is unknown in London, in England!"

"Travel is a school," replied Boisjoli, sententiously; "it educates us, and dispels our prejudices."

"Also our illusions, Boisjoli. Come, my boy, get them to give us something eatable, and then let us go."

After a brief conference the two engineers decided on offering Quicksilver a place at their table, an act of kindness which gave the boy the greatest pleasure. They ordered oysters, and were amazed when the appetizing bivalves appeared, served on their own flat shells. They asked for a salad, and were much amused at the dimensions of cruets which contained about a spoonful of oil and vinegar respectively. Then they were obliged to ask repeatedly for bread, which was supplied to them by small mouthfuls at a time. Quicksilver stuffed himself with potatoes and butter, and drank unsweetened tea with rapture. At length the party started for St. Paul's Cathedral, an edifice which the friends were very anxious to visit.

On the way, Boisjoli wished to purchase a knife and some toilet necessaries, for which England is celebrated. Quicksilver took the gentlemen to a splendid emporium of cutlery and other goods, and as they entered the shop they both bowed and removed their hats.

"Put on your hats," said Quicksilver, "or you will be taken for servants."

"How is that?"

"It is not the custom in England to take off your hat when you salute anybody. I wanted to put you up to that this morning when I saw you take off your hats to the landlord."

"Amazing!" murmured M. Pinson.

"Then," said Boisjoli, with the air of a discovery, "that's why the Londoner whom we accosted so civilly last night took us for beggars!"

The two friends found much to look at and admire in the shop. Boisjoli having selected a noble knife of Sheffield manufacture, and thinking the price asked for it—which was equivalent to twenty-three francs—rather too high, told Quicksilver to offer twenty. The shopman, without making any answer, replaced the knife in the glass case and calmly resated himself.

"What does that mean?" asked M. Pinson.

"He is offended by your offer," said Quicksilver; "he does not want to have anything to do with you because you seem to think he tried to impose on you."

"Really?" said M. Pinson. "Are the London shop-keepers all so honorable, then, that they must be taken at their word?"

"Yes, sir, they are, with a few exceptions."

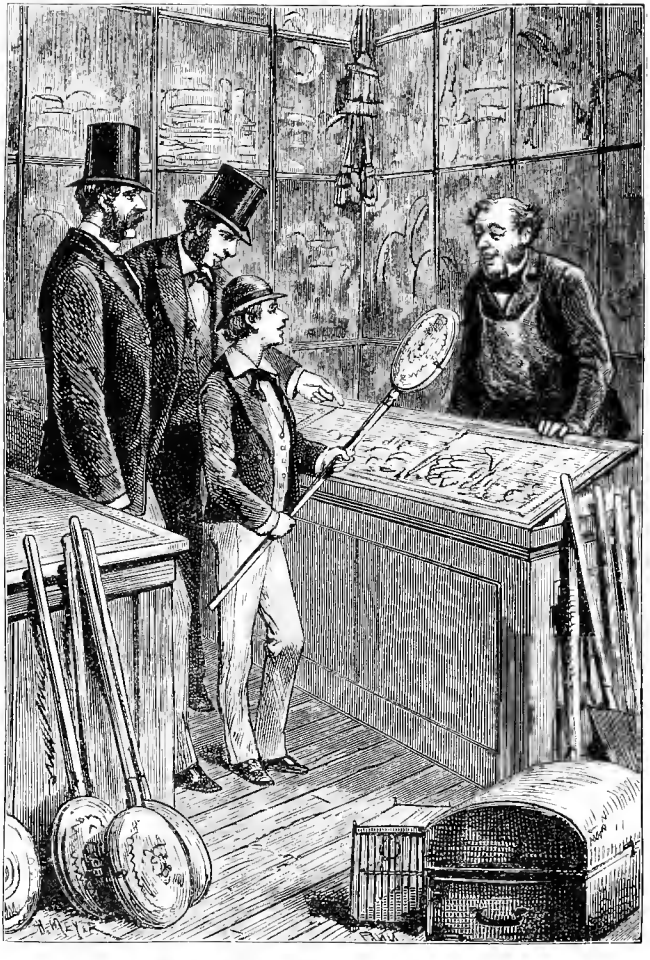
"Well then," said M. Pinson, "if it were only from the point of view of the saving of time which it would effect, I should like to see their system established in France."

While the two friends were inspecting the tempting contents of the shop, Quicksilver was contemplating with evident admiration a long row of warming-pans. At length he asked the price of one of those utensils, and received with an expressive grimace the information that it was ten shillings and sixpence.

"What is there so tempting to you in a warming-pan?" asked M. Pinson.

"Nothing; only an idea that came into my head."

"What idea, my boy?"



A WARMING-PAN FOR MOTHER PITCH.

"Mother Pitch has the rheumatism, sir, and she is always talking about the warming-pan she means to buy when she grows rich. So I thought that by adding the five francs you have given me to the six shillings the landlord promised me—but I won't mind it."

M. Pinson and Boisjoli exchanged looks.

"We will make you a present of the warming-pan," said Boisjoli; "tell them to send it home to Mother Pitch."

They had to repeat this twice over before Quicksilver could believe in such good fortune. When the warming-pan had been wrapped up in brown paper, the address written upon it, and the price paid by M. Pinson, Quicksilver, to the great surprise of the proprietor of the shop, of the shopman, and of one or two other customers who had come in, turned a catherine-wheel with the utmost dexterity. After this performance he shook hands warmly in the English fashion with the two engineers.

"Very good," said they, "only no caperings in public, my boy, or we shall be taken for mountebanks. Let us be off now, and take us first to the quays, for a look at the Thames."

"To the quays?" repeated Quicksilver; "but the Thames has no quays." *

"Is it all walled in between houses as we saw it just now from the bridge?"

"Exactly so, sir."

"Good, the stream is quite right to hide itself behind a crowd of barges and steamboats and ships, for it looks blacker than ever. A river without quays! what do you say to that, Boisjoli?"

"If the Thames had quays, my dear fellow, Paris would have one superiority the less."

"Patriotically spoken. Then take us to St. Paul's."

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* This was prior to the Embankment.

Half an hour later they were standing in front of that celebrated edifice, which, like the Panthéon at Paris, is a reduced copy of the famous St. Peter's at Rome. The architect of St. Paul's was Sir Christopher Wren, and the stone came from Portland, a small island opposite the port of Weymouth. The church was commenced in 1675, and finished in 1710. It stands on the site of an ancient temple dedicated to the goddess Isis; its famous dome is three hundred and forty feet from the ground, and has an interior diameter of one hundred feet. Pinson and his friend, while recognizing and admiring the beautiful proportions of the building, pronounced the two clock-towers over the façade to be unworthy and out of harmony with the majestic work of Sir Christopher Wren.

After exploring the vast nave of the church, and criticising its want of height and the narrowness of the side aisles, the two engineers were ready to ascend to the dome; but before doing so they were obliged again to unloose their purse-strings.

"Practical, too practical, these English," repeated M. Pinson; "I suppose that after making us pay one shilling for admission to their church, and half a shilling for letting us climb up to the dome, they will charge us as much more for the privilege of coming down and going out. Without national conceit, Boisjoli, I think we may say that our liberal way of throwing open the doors of our public monuments freely to strangers is more hospitable than the constant tax Great Britain imposes on travellers."*

Quicksilver, after amusing himself for some time with the echo in the dome of St. Paul's, led the two engineers down and out of the cathedral, and then he once more suggested a visit to the Zoological Gardens.

"We will go to the British Museum," said M. Pinson.

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* Fees have been abolished since the date of the visit of M. Pinson and M. Boisjoli to London.

Quicksilver gave a shrug of disappointment, but marched on, leading the way. After they had gone a few steps he proposed that they should, in the first instance, before turning their backs on the city, glance at the Monument. To this they assented, and their guide conducted them to the lofty column erected in commemoration of the great fire of 1666, which destroyed almost the whole of London. The engineers climbed to the top for a bird's-eye view of the city; but as, when once there, they could see nothing but countless house-tops half lost in a cloud of smoke, this black, dreary panorama only impressed them anew with the fact that the most populous of European capitals is the most melancholy of cities.

A cab, which struck M. Pinson as an admirable vehicle, soon deposited the travellers at the gate of the British Museum. Here again it was necessary to pay; but if the pictures failed to enchant them, especially when compared with the treasures of art in the Louvre, the two engineers were filled with admiration by the bass-reliefs from the Parthenon, brought home by Lord Elgin in 1810. For a long time the noble lord was denounced for that act of vandalism, and yet, but for him, this work of the great Phidias would have perished, like many other art treasures, in the bombardment of Athens by the Turks in 1827. The only thing to be regretted is that some Frenchman did not anticipate Lord Elgin and endow his country with those masterpieces of sculpture.

The engineers were also attracted by the galleries in which the natural-history collections were exhibited. They were forced to admit that the great halls they went through far surpassed in convenience, and in the value of the collections, the meagre galleries of their own museum—which have long been unworthy of such a country as France, of such a capital as Paris. Quicksilver derived much more pleasure from the stuffed animals than from the pictures and statuary. For some time he gazed on the former in silent admiration, then he remarked,

"How beautiful it must be to see those birds with red and green and blue feathers flying in the air or perched in the trees! Here in London, except for the sparrows, which are all gray with soot and coal-smoke, one hardly would believe there were any birds at all. Tell me, sir," the boy went on, addressing M. Pinson, "did Robinson Crusoe bring these creatures here?"

"No," replied the engineer, who could not help smiling; "in the first place, because Robinson Crusoe is an imaginary character; secondly, because what we see here cost the study and labor of hundreds of scientific men."

"Robinson Crusoe never existed?" exclaimed Quicksilver.

"That is to say, Daniel Defoe, his biographer, has simply founded a romance on the adventures of Selkirk, the sailor."

"But Man-Friday? the cannibals?"

M. Pinson tried to explain what was imaginary and what real in the history of Robinson Crusoe; but Quicksilver defended his favorite hero with obstinacy. He hardly knew any book except this; a hundred times he had read it aloud to Mother Pitch, and Mother Pitch had never doubted the existence of Robinson Crusoe any more than he had.

"Bah," said Boisjoli to his friend, "let the little man believe the story; it will do him no harm, and he will find out the truth in good time."

The moment they were out of the British Museum, although it was late, Quicksilver ventured to propose that they should go to the Zoological Gardens; but M. Pinson's views were in favor of the Tower of London, and in that direction they proceeded.

The Tower, which, according to some writers, was founded in the time of Julius Cæsar, was certainly in existence in William the Conqueror's day. It is an immense fortress, was once surrounded by a deep moat, and at the beginning of this century contained the state-prison, the royal mint, a great armory, the

crown-jewels, and a menagerie of wild beasts. Such a mingling of dissimilar objects is no uncommon thing in England, that country of odd contrasts. After visiting the armory, escorted by guides in the ancient costume of the Guard of Henry VIII.—after looking through an iron lattice at the crown-jewels, whose value is said to be two millions sterling—M. Pinson and Boisjoli bethought themselves of dinner. Thanks to their young interpreter, the two friends were able to get what they wanted and to know what they had to pay. That business disposed of, the next question was how to spend the evening? Boisjoli and M. Pinson, not knowing the language, had been sadly bored the previous evening, and now they wanted something amusing to look at.

"If you like," said Quicksilver, "I will take you to Astley's: the performance there is simple enough, and you have only to see it to understand it. I will put you safely into the theatre, and then go and take my small part in the performance, so as not to lose my situation and the tenpence it brings me."

The two friends agreed to this, and after placing them Quicksilver took his leave. He had explained to them that he was to appear as a page, mounted on a pony, in the procession at the close of the performance. The two friends admired the agility of the clown, the skill of the riders, the beauty and perfect training of the horses; and they observed that the English, instead of crying "bis" when they wanted a scene which pleased them to be repeated, always used the French word "encore." Quicksilver appeared first in a little comic scene; his costume was admirably suited to his arch and merry countenance. When the procession came on, he saluted the engineers; afterwards he came and joined them at the entrance door, and an hour later he was leaving them at their hotel and hurrying homewards at a run, to hear what Mother Pitch had to say about her warming-pan.

CHAPTER VI.

LIVERPOOL.

It was ten o'clock next morning when M. Pinson rang the bell. Quicksilver made his appearance just as before.

"Well, my boy, what news?"

"I am to thank you for Mother Pitch, sir, for I have told her that it is to you she is indebted for the beautiful warming-pan, with which she is delighted. Last night she waited up till I returned, in order to learn where the present came from, and she told me to say that she would be glad to speak with you about my father and me."

"When I come back from Liverpool," said M. Pinson, "you shall take me to see her. Now we will have breakfast and hurry off."

"What are we going to do to-day?" asked Boisjoli.

"First, to have a look at the East India Docks?"

"Then?"

"The Zoological Gardens," said Quicksilver, "would be beautiful in this fine weather."

"We will go to the Docks," replied M. Pinson; "after that you may take us where you please."

Quicksilver's eyes sparkled with delight, and at about two o'clock, after making a tour of the vast warehouses belonging to the East India Company, whose immense possessions are now the property of the British government, Quicksilver, who was rather tired of listening to the talk of the engineers on

subjects he could not understand, at last received permission to take them whither he liked. He embarked them first on one of the steamboats, which serve the purpose of omnibuses on the Thames, then he took them on foot across the river through the famous tunnel which for many years was a marvel to sight-seers, but not otherwise useful. This tunnel, which was constructed by the Frenchman Brunel, is now used by the East London Railway, which is one of the curiosities of London. From the tunnel they drove in a cab to the Zoological Gardens. So soon as they had passed the wicket at the entrance, Quicksilver, in spite of his promises of good behavior, could not refrain from turning a catherine-wheel.

The garden of the Zoological Society of London is a private enterprise, and so, to attract visitors, who have to pay for the privilege of walking there, it is necessary to keep the menagerie full by constantly replenishing it with animals brought from the four quarters of the globe. The bears, leopards, panthers, rhinoceroses, and elephants specially attracted the attention of Quicksilver. Once in front of their cages, the boy could not bear to leave them; and his unbounded admiration, his shouts of delight and clapping of hands, amused his companions beyond measure.

"How happy he must have been!" said the small boy, suddenly, heaving a deep sigh.

"Who?" said M. Pinson.

"Robinson Crusoe. It is impossible to believe that he never existed: the countries all these beasts came from exist, do they not? And to see bears, lions, and tigers going by, Robinson had only to sit and smoke his pipe on his door-step."

"I don't know whether Robinson was a smoker, my boy," replied M. Pinson, who could not suppress a smile; "but his island, I am sure, contained neither rhinoceroses nor elephants, for these animals are natives of Africa and Asia only."

"There are none in America?"

"No, no more than in Europe. But America has the buffalo, the alligator, the cougar, the jaguar, the boa-constrictor, and many kinds of wild cats, and also bears and monkeys."

"And you are going to see all those, with your own eyes?" said Quicksilver to Boisjoli, looking at him with envy.

"Not quite, my boy. I am going to the United States, a country which produces almost the same things as Europe."

"In what part of America do those wild beasts live? Where do they find them?"

"In Mexico and Brazil and Guiana, in the deserts of the old Spanish colonies."

"If I ever get money enough to pay my passage on a steamer," said Quicksilver, "I shall go to India and Africa and America—ever so far."

"You like to travel?"

"Oh yes! I want to see the countries where monkeys and paroquets and boa-constrictors live; where cocoa-nuts and pineapples and diamonds are to be picked up. Sometimes I help to unload ships in the Docks which have come from those countries, and I hear the sailors talking about them. They say that there are no fireplaces or chimneys there, that the trees are always in bloom, and the sun never sets. They tell about such delightful things, sir, that if you were to hear them you would want to go too."

"No, never," said M. Pinson, decisively; "I like Europe and France. In spite of its mud, I find Paris a very tolerable place to live in. When the fancy seizes me that I must see a tiger —and that is not often—I go to the Jardin des Plantes; that is quite enough for me."

The monkeys' cage so delighted Quicksilver that not until the gardens were about to be closed was he willing to leave it. The two engineers were more and more pleased with the vivacity and frankness and other good qualities of the young guide whom chance had thrown in their way. They allowed him to

beset them with questions about the native countries of the animals he had seen, and the habits of the beasts brought from so far. At dinner they talked of nothing else, and Quicksilver learned so many curious facts that his longing to visit the tropical countries became more intense than ever. But the later the hour grew, the less communicative and more silent the engineers became.

Boisjoli was to sail the next day. The two friends could not forget this; and, in spite of themselves, they kept thinking of the blank their separation would leave in the life of each.

Quicksilver's company had been so useful to the travellers, in their ignorance of the language, that it occurred to M. Pinson to take him with them to Liverpool. After Boisjoli's departure, M. Pinson would bring the lad back to London, and then go and consult with Mother Pitch about taking him away from his half-vagabond way of living, and restoring him to his family. It was a marvel that, left to his own devices, as he had been for three years, in a city like London, Quicksilver should have continued honest and industrious. Poverty and bad company might, after a while, lead him astray and corrupt his young mind. M. Pinson, with his friend's concurrence, resolved to rescue the poor orphan from the life of misery and vice which seemed to be his lot.

Quicksilver fairly turned pale for joy when he received orders to tell Mother Pitch that he was going to Liverpool. At last, then, he was to leave London and see something besides streets and house-tops!

"Will you take me to France, too?" he asked, in great excitement.

"Perhaps," replied M. Pinson.

"Do take me, sir," urged the boy with much earnestness. "I still remember Paris so well that I should know the streets where I used to walk with my father, the house we lived in, the very room where I slept. The sun shines at Paris, and

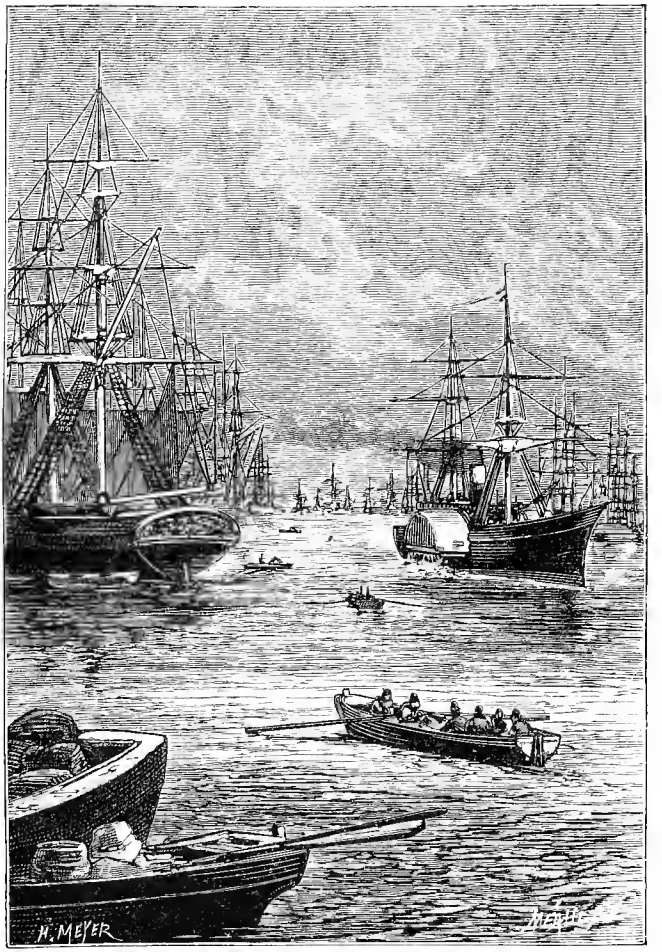
Paris is my own country. I feel that I should be happier there than here."

M. Pinson patted the lad's cheek and said, "On the day after to-morrow we will see."

The next morning the three travellers set out for Liverpool, the commercial capital of Lancashire. It was a journey of two hundred miles, and as they travelled by daylight the two engineers were able to study the railway, its viaducts and stations, and to form a correct opinion of them. It struck them that seventy leagues in seven hours was very good speed. Arriving at ten o'clock, the two friends went first to visit the great tunnel, one mile in length, which underlies a part of the town; then they went to see the Manchester railway, one of the first built in Europe, dating from 1826.

Liverpool, a large and beautiful city of 400,000 souls, was in the thirteenth century only a fishing village, and as late as the year 1700 had only 5000 inhabitants. It now supplies Manchester with raw material for manufacturing, chiefly cotton, and disputes with its neighbor the title of the second city in England. There is much culture there, and its Museum of Egyptian Antiquities, its Botanical Garden, and its Public Library are famous. The great port of Liverpool, with fine, wide streets, is built on the river Mersey, which, after a course of only fifty miles, flows into the Irish Sea, about two miles below the town.

Though our travellers had been constantly on the move, for they wanted to see as many as possible of the sights of the great English town, M. Pinson and his friend sat down to dinner that evening with heavy hearts. They had gone down to the port for a look at the steamer *Canada*, which, lying quietly moored in the stream, was taking in the last of her coals for the voyage. Quicksilver appeared absent and moody. They all retired at an early hour, and, notwithstanding the fatigue of railway journey and their wanderings during the afternoon, neither of the three travellers slept well.



IN THE MERSEY.

The two friends did not rise until about nine next morning. It seemed hardly to be daytime, for a dense fog enveloped the town, and rain was falling. The circumstances were not calculated to raise their spirits, and they breakfasted in silence.

Boisjoli's luggage was placed on a little handcart, and they all proceeded to the port. To go on board the *Canada* they had to hire a small boat. Boisjoli, so soon as he got upon the deck, went in search of the clerk, who, by a fortunate chance, as it seemed then, spoke tolerably good French. The clerk showed Boisjoli to his state-room; he was to have it all to himself, because of the limited number of passengers on board. The two friends now held each other's hands in a long parting clasp: they were unable to exchange a word. Tears started to their eyes as they explained to the clerk that they were about to be separated for the first time in thirty-two years.

"We shall go down the river to the sea at half speed," said the officer to M. Pinson, "and, if you like, you can go so far with us and come back with the pilot; that will give you another hour with your friend."

Boisjoli seconded this suggestion so warmly that M. Pinson yielded, and went in search of Quicksilver, whom he found looking at the engines.

"Go ashore, my boy, and wait for me at the hotel, or on the quay," said M. Pinson.

"Are you going to America, too?" cried the boy.

"By no means," said M. Pinson. "What put that into your head? I am going down to the mouth of the river, and the pilot will bring me ashore. I shall be back in two hours."

Quicksilver went to take leave of Boisjoli, who embraced him; then, slowly and with apparent reluctance, he approached the ladder and disappeared.

M. Pinson wanted to see every part of the ship which for about twelve days was to be the floating prison of his friend.

Suddenly the wheels began to revolve, and the *Canada*, guided by the pilot stationed near the helmsman, began the first stage of her voyage. The rain fell continuously, small, cold, penetrating; a stiff breeze was blowing, and the waves gave the ship a rolling motion, which boded ill.

"I am not going to wait until I feel the inconvenience of sea-sickness," said Boisjoli, with a grimace; "I shall be wise, I think, to arrange the things in my state-room at once."

"I have already put a dozen oranges and two bottles of gooseberry syrup by your bedside," said M. Pinson.

"I observed your kind thoughtfulness, and I thank you for it, my friend."

M. Pinson and Boisjoli, returning to the cabin, proceeded to stow away the latter's luggage in such a way that the articles needed on the voyage should be within easy reach. Once the ship came to a stop; and M. Pinson hurried on deck, thinking the time for parting had come; but it was only a check to let a steam-tug, with a line of coal barges, go by. At last, everything being properly arranged, the two friends became absorbed in parting messages and promises to write regularly; they spoke of the past, and particularly of the future; and they went to the bar to drink together for the last time. Meanwhile, the rolling motion of the ship increased every moment, and Boisjoli, who was already livid, felt cold perspiration starting on his brow. They went upon deck; M. Pinson could see nothing all around him but the sea; Liverpool and the land had vanished. With one look astern, the engineer sprang towards the man at the helm.

"The pilot? Where is the pilot?

"*Pilot?*" returned the sailor, understanding the word because it is just the same in French as English. "*He is gone, sir!*"

And the sailor pointed to the horizon behind them.

"What does he say?" asked M. Pinson, looking about him.

"He says the pilot has gone ashore," replied a Canadian passenger in French.

"Gone!" echoed M. Pinson, in amazement; "what jest is this? I am sure the steamer has never stopped."

"The pilot slid down a rope to his boat, which the *Canada* had in tow; that was half an hour ago."

"Stop!" shouted the engineer, flinging himself upon the man at the helm. "Turn back, man, I am not going to America."

The helmsman thrust M. Pinson back rather roughly, not at all understanding the meaning of his attack.

"Stop! stop!" screamed the engineer; "where is the captain? the mate? Stop!"

The passengers gathered round, puzzled by this strange scene. Boisjoli, in the throes of sea-sickness, simply gazed at his friend in utter bewilderment.

"Speak!" cried the engineer, turning to him, "you know some English words, you can explain."

"*Give me*," stammered the wretched Boisjoli, *some bread, some turtle-soup, some plum-pudding, some—*"

Here he was obliged to rush to the side of the ship.

"The captain! where is the captain?" called M. Pinson. And, regardless of the rolling of the ship, zigzag from right to left, from left to right, and back and forward, he made a rush towards the commander, of whom he caught sight at this moment.

CHAPTER VII.

AT SEA.

"CAPTAIN!" shouted M. Pinson, almost breathless, "make haste and stop the ship!"

"Presently, presently," replied the officer in English, for, being absorbed in his duties on the bridge, he did not catch what was said, and thought it was only some trifling matter.

"Stop!" repeated M. Pinson, intensely excited, "I am not going to America; I am going to Paris, to Batignolles; stop the ship, I say!"

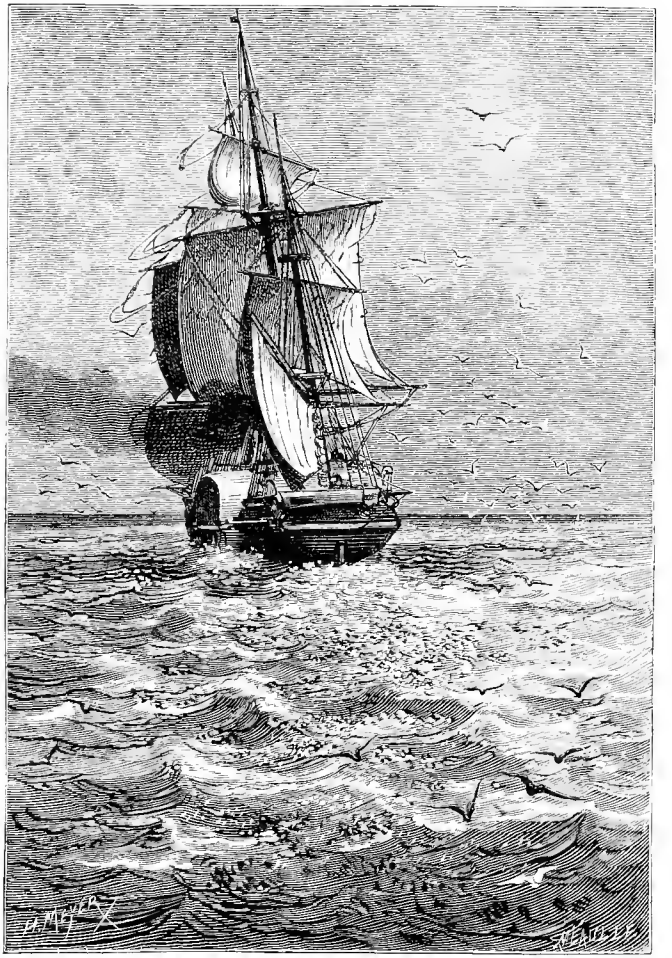
The shouts of the engineer, and especially his wild gesticulations, had brought a crowd of passengers about him; and the Canadian, who had told him of the pilot's departure, now explained to the puzzled captain what had happened.

"How very unlucky," said the officer; "I am extremely sorry for the gentleman, but unfortunately there is nothing I can do."

"What!" cried M. Pinson, to whom this reply was translated, "does this man dare to take me to America against my will? We are some miles from land, and— Will you tell this captain, sir, that I am a Frenchman, an engineer, that—"

The captain had just then too much on his mind to trouble himself further about the unfortunate M. Pinson. He left him surrounded by passengers, not one of whom understood him, but to whom nevertheless he described his strange position, begging them to aid him in getting back to land.

"You are to blame, unhappy man," said the engineer suddenly to his friend; "it was you who brought me here to be a prisoner in this galley."



THE "CANADA."

"You are wrong to complain," replied poor Boisjoli, feebly; "you are not sea-sick, Pinson, and you are a happy man; for myself, I would gladly undertake to go round the whole world if I could be relieved from this frightful anguish."

"Happy man, indeed!" said M. Pinson, bitterly, "happy to be making an ocean voyage, to be going to America, where I have nothing whatever to do, and to be kept from going home, where I am needed. Are you mocking me? You have laid a snare for me, Boisjoli, that is evident; you have laid a snare in which I am caught like a silly bird."

"Oh, my friend!"

"Why did you persist in keeping me here when I wanted to go ashore?" continued M. Pinson; "speak, explain yourself! What will become of my travelling-bag, left as security at the hotel? What will Quicksilver do, forsaken and forlorn on the quay? What will Viollet-le-Duc think of me for not coming at the time promised in my letter? And, Marguerite, how will she pay the landlord when he comes for his quarter's rent? Who will look after my dividends, which are just falling due? I shall go mad!"

The anger of M. Pinson, who was usually so self-possessed, seemed to increase every moment; for he knew that each revolution of the steamer's paddles diminished his prospects of getting to land. Suddenly he started for the quarter-deck, where the clerk had just made his appearance.

"You—you here!" exclaimed that officer, in amazement.

"Yes, monsieur, I, who by your advice— But you understand my case, you know that I am not a passenger; you understand me when I speak to you. I beg you to explain to the captain what has happened, so that he may put me ashore."

"Ah, but unfortunately that would be against the law."

"Against the law!" exclaimed M. Pinson; "am I under police supervision? am I an exile? am I— Against the law; whose law, what law?"

"The marine regulations: a ship once outside of port can-

not put back there, except in case of damage endangering the safety of the passengers."

"Is this a joke?"

"Not at all. If the captain were to take the *Canada* back to Liverpool, besides bringing considerable expense upon the owners of the vessel, he would be tried by a jury and lose his command."

"But no one has the right to take a man on a voyage against his will; it is impossible!"

"Observe, sir, that the captain is not to blame for your being here."

M. Pinson was completely overwhelmed.

"This," said he, "is the most monstrous outrage that ever an honest citizen was subjected to. The laws you speak of ought to be inscribed in staring capitals on board every ship."

"They say in your country," said the clerk, "that no one is supposed to be ignorant of the law. You would find, sir, that things were managed much in the same way on board a French steamer."

M. Pinson sat down on a bench and buried his face in his hands. How he wished he had some gunpowder or explosive cotton that he might damage the *Canada* and make her turn back. The rain continued to fall, the passengers withdrew to the saloon; but Boisjoli, although his illness was increasing, came and seated himself beside his friend.

"Pinson," said he, sadly.

"What!" said the engineer, turning from him, "do you dare to speak to me, to come near me?"

"What have I done, Pinson?"

"The question seems to me sublime in its impertinence. I was willing to accompany you to Calais, that was a journey my circumstances permitted me to undertake. From one thing to another, you enticed me to London to lose myself, to Liverpool, to— No, this is too much!"

"You will see America, Pinson, and in one month you will be back in Paris."

"And why should I see America? I command you to explain that to me. Thanks to you, here I am without socks, without handkerchiefs, without a change of linen, tossed on the open sea between sky and water, and I don't know how many miles from home."

Boisjoli made no reply. Livid, his eyes closed, for the sight of the waves and the swaying deck increased his sickness, he endured the rain with stoical silence, though he was shivering with cold. M. Pinson perceived this.

"Why do you not go to the saloon, or into your state-room?" he said suddenly, and with some gentleness.

"I understand your vexation, Pinson, and I don't want to leave you here alone."

M. Pinson got up, took his friend by the arm, and by slow stages conducted him to his state-room and put him to bed. Then he busied himself in preparing a glass of lemonade for the sufferer, and sat down by his bedside; but he made no reply to the consolatory words which Boisjoli ventured to address to him from time to time.

There came a knock at the door, and at the same time the voice of the clerk called out:

"Monsieur!"

M. Pinson sprang to his feet and was out of the room at one bound.

"Has the captain changed his mind?" he instantly asked.

"Once more believe me, it is much against his will to take you away," said the clerk; "but calm yourself, within twenty-four hours you will be on shore."

"Have they found that the ship is unseaworthy?"

"Not at all; only we are to touch at Queenstown for the mails and latest despatches. If the weather permits, you can go on board the despatch-boat,"

M. Pinson, overjoyed at this news, embraced the clerk, much to his astonishment, for embracing is not the custom in England.

"Queenstown is in Ireland," said the engineer, "but that is much better than going to America. How little I thought a week ago that I should be visiting the native land of the great O'Connell!"

"I suppose it is unnecessary," said the clerk, "to advise your being all ready when the time comes."

"Rest assured of that," said M. Pinson; "I am not the man to be caught twice in the same trap. I only ask you to show me at which side of the ship the despatches are taken aboard; I shall not move from that spot."

M. Pinson, relieved of the great fear which had oppressed him, rapidly recovered his habitual good-humor. He cheered up Boisjoli, and, when the dinner-hour came, he gayly took his place at the table where the captain presided, and from which more than one unhappy passenger was missing. Thanks to the Canadian, who acted as interpreter, they had much amusement over the adventure of the engineer, who, now that his mind was at rest, was ready enough to laugh at it himself. Immediately after dinner, regardless of the promises of the clerk and the captain that they would summon him when it was time to go ashore, M. Pinson established himself on the quarter-deck, near the helmsman.

The wind blew a gale, the night was dark, and snow was falling. Nothing can be more melancholy than the whistling of the wind through the rigging of a ship, the sound of the paddles struggling with the waves, and the perpetual grinding and creaking of the rudder. The sea was disposed to be "ugly," as some sailors, who in thin rubber coats and tarpaulin hats were walking up and down to keep warm, remarked. Sometimes a wave took the ship broadside and deluged the deck with spray. M. Pinson, ignoring these incidents, kept on watching for the

light-house they had told him of, and obstinately refused to stir from his place on deck.

"We are in a heavy snow-storm," said the captain, who came to look about; "I fear we shall not be able to run in at Queenstown."

Happily, M. Pinson did not understand what was said, and soon a light came in view. Then came a moment of general running about on deck, and various manœuvres were rapidly executed. The light he saw proved not to be on shore, but on an approaching ship, which passed close to the *Canada* and quickly disappeared into the darkness.

About one o'clock in the morning the sailor on watch called out, "Queenstown!"

A brilliant light gleamed in the distance, evidently from a light-house.

M. Pinson ran to the state-room and embraced Boisjoli. The sick man wanted to get up and witness the departure of his friend; but his brain reeled, and he was forced to give up the attempt. M. Pinson came back twice to grasp his hand, then he hurried up on deck. At the stern four sailors stood by the boat known as the captain's gig. The second officer, on the bridge, was giving orders which a ship's boy repeated down to the engine-room. One could hardly hear one's own voice, so violent were the waves. The light on shore passed from right to left, then from left to right, and this happened three different times in less than an hour. The ship was tacking, as sailors say. M. Pinson, all ready to jump into the boat, on which he kept a watchful eye, did not at all understand this manœuvre. He saw the captain coming and going, looking at the compass, at his watch, at the barometer, muttering to himself, walking up and down, and occasionally consulting his lieutenant. Suddenly he gave some rapid orders; the sailors stationed by the gig began to lash it securely in its place again; and the lantern of the light-house, which had

been shining on the port side of the ship, now appeared right astern.

"What has happened?" asked M. Pinson of each sailor, but in vain. They answered him, but he understood not a word of the reply. He went back to the saloon; the clerk was there talking with the captain.

"Well, sir," said the officer, shaking his head, "you are truly unfortunate."

"Why?"

"The sea is so rough that it is impossible to get into port, and, after losing nearly three hours, the captain has given orders to put to sea; we are now on our way to New York."

M. Pinson turned pale, and remained for a long time rooted to the spot where the clerk had left him. Finally, worn out with fatigue and agitation, he went to the state-room of his friend, who was sleeping peacefully. M. Pinson was about to wake him up.

"Bah!" said he, "my reproaches will not improve matters; let him sleep; but, good heavens, what a state of affairs!"

He got into the berth below Boisjoli's, and, after a while, gently rocked by the motion of the ship, he closed his eyes and dropped asleep.

It was broad daylight when Boisjoli awoke; he was much better, and could look about him without inconvenience. "Twenty-four hours more," thought he, "and I shall be completely well. What a horrible thing this sea-sickness is! it crushes one's spirit and changes one into a miserable machine. Nine o'clock: by this time Pinson is on his way to Dublin. Dear old Pinson, I never saw him so angry! After all, the little voyage was good for him; but he had a narrow escape."

At this moment Boisjoli thought he heard the sound of some one breathing in the lower berth; knowing that he had no state-room companion, he leaned over the edge of his own berth and looked down.

BOISJOLI RECOGNIZES M. PINSON.

"You!" he exclaimed, recognizing his friend. "You!"

"I," replied the engineer.

"But you bade me good-by last night; you were going ashore at Queenstown."

"Man proposes and God disposes!" replied M. Pinson.

"Has the *Canada* changed her course?"

"The *Canada*, thanks to bad weather, was unable to stop for the mails; she is taking me instead."

"Good! so much the better," said Boisjoli.

"I don't consider it so, myself," replied M. Pinson. "See what friendship brings one to," continued he, bitterly: "here am I in the most annoying position that can be imagined, and my best friend, who has been the cause of it all, laughs at my misfortune and says, 'so much the better.'"

"Believe me, my dear Pinson, to get you back to land I would gladly swim there with you on my back, if I could; that being impossible, my affection for you brought out the selfish exclamation which seems to have wounded you."

The two friends put on their clothes in silence. Boisjoli was almost well. In his heart he only half regretted the mishap of his companion, a mishap which, after all, could have no ill result beyond a useless voyage. Nevertheless, the engineer concealed, as well as he could, the real satisfaction he felt. As for M. Pinson, his spirits were not yet restored, and his mood was gloomy. The two engineers left the state-room together, and went up on deck.

"Here you are," said the clerk to M. Pinson, who came up first, "I was just going to call you."

"Is Queenstown in sight?" asked the engineer eagerly.

"Queenstown is out of the question. Your son is on board."

"My son!" cried M. Pinson; "what new joke is this?"

He had hardly spoken, when, with an exclamation of surprise, he beheld Quicksilver in the grasp of two sailors. The boy was crying, while the captain was asking him questions.

CHAPTER VIII.

A RAY OF HOPE.

If M. Pinson looked with speechless astonishment at Quicksilver, the latter, for his part, opened a pair of eyes proportionately large when he saw the engineer.

"You, sir," he exclaimed, just as the clerk had done, "you here!"

"And you, unhappy boy," replied M. Pinson, "what brings you here? Where have you come from? Where are you going?"

"It is all his fault, sir," said Quicksilver, who now took a plaintive tone; "but for him I should still be on shore."

"Whose fault? Speak!"

"Robinson Crusoe's; if I could begin over again, I should obey you and go and wait for you on the quay; but I beg you not to let them beat me."

"Who wants to beat you?"

"The captain; he threatens to give me a flogging with the cat."

"Let the boy go, and get to your work," said the captain at this moment to the sailors who had found Quicksilver; "after all, this gentleman is reponsible for him. Upon my word," he muttered, "in the twenty years I have been at sea I never dreamed of such goings-on."

"And now," said M. Pinson to Quicksilver, "will you kindly explain your presence here?"

"Ever since we went to the Zoological Gardens, sir, I have longed so to see the countries where monkeys and tigers live, that

I made up my mind as soon as I should get back to London, to ship as cabin-boy on some vessel going to India. But America tempted me more, because M. Boisjoli kept telling how much money could be got there. It seemed to be such a good chance of going to America that, when I came on board the *Canada*, I made up my mind at once."

"Once more, where did you come from just now?"

"From the hold, the place where the fresh water is kept. When you told me to go and wait for you on shore, it seemed to me rather hard, for I thought the pilot-boat might bring me back as well as you, and that at least I should have a look at the sea. I went away quietly, meaning to obey you; but on my way I passed a door leading to the hold; it was open, and, instead of going up, I went down and hid myself behind a cask, thinking that when the vessel was out at sea they would be obliged to take me to New York. I relied on M. Boisjoli to obtain forgiveness for me; I meant to beg pardon in your name, for I know how much he loves you."

"And ever since then you have remained in your hiding-place?"

"I did not dare to come out. Somebody just now opened the door and discovered me; but I want to go back to Liverpool with you, sir; I don't want to go to sea."

"Go back with me to Liverpool!" exclaimed M. Pinson; "would to heaven it were possible. Don't you see, you unlucky boy, that we are right out at sea, and that the *Canada* is steaming at full speed? Don't you know into the bargain that marine regulations forbid our disembarking, and that, willy nilly, we are being carried off to America."

"Why," cried Quicksilver, "were you, too, hiding like me?"

"Hiding like you!" exclaimed M. Pinson, with indignation; "no, indeed; Robinson Crusoe has nothing to do with my being on board this steamer. Robinson—"

"It occurs to me," said M. Boisjoli, interrupting his friend,

"that Quicksilver must be dying of hunger. He is pale and shivering; let us see after him, my dear fellow."

"Would you pity him?" cried M. Pinson.

"I do pity him," said the engineer. "The poor boy said just now that, when discovered, he meant to appeal to me in your name; I am rather touched by this, and I shall take him henceforth under my protection."

M. Pinson looked at his friend, then at Quicksilver, whose eyes were full of tears.

"Come, don't cry," said the engineer, in a softened voice.

"I am thinking of Mother Pitch," answered the boy. "She will be expecting me, and perhaps I shall never see her again. And she wants me, for she is rheumatic and can't work. I did wrong to hide myself; I feel it now, and I want to go back to London."

He hid his face in his hands and sobbed. The two friends, moved to pity, could not scold him.

"He must be hungry," repeated Boisjoli; "if the smell of tar in the saloon did not sicken me, I would go and get him some food. Now you, Pinson, are a regular old sailor; let me beg of you to feed this poor child."

M. Pinson took the boy down to the saloon, and obtained from the steward bread, ham, and wine. Quicksilver ate and drank like the starving creature he was. The little fellow had not only suffered from hunger, but from cold and want of sleep besides, fear of the consequences of his conduct having kept him awake.

When M. Pinson saw that he was satisfied, he led him to his cabin, put him in his own bed, and covered him with a couple of blankets.

On reaching the deck, the engineer scanned the horizon; on every side the sea and sky appeared to meet. Thinking over his own singular position and that of Quicksilver, M. Pinson could not help muttering:

QUICKSILVER IN PURSUIT OF USEFUL INFORMATION.

"Prodigious!"

Thanks to the Canadian who was on board, all the passengers were soon acquainted with Quicksilver's story. A subscription for the orphan was proposed, and M. Pinson and his friend announced their intention of taking charge of the young traveller. On this every one came up and shook hands with them.

When evening was come, and all were about to sit down to table, the Canadian handed to Quicksilver, who had been up for the last hour, a sum of eight pounds in gold. The boy looked inquiringly in his face.

"The passengers make you this present," said the Canadian. "You have two good friends—but we wish to help them a little."

On the following day, the sky which, since the beginning of the voyage, had been dark and clouded, was radiant. The air was clear and fresh; and the sea, smooth as glass, was glittering in the sunshine. The fine weather somewhat cheered the passengers on board the *Canada*, including M. Pinson. From time to time the engineer felt a certain grudge against his friend; but by degrees he was beginning to make the best of his misfortunes. He could not yet laugh at them, the mortification was still too recent; but when any allusion was made to his enforced voyage he answered with good-humor.

Quicksilver, with the happy heedlessness of boyhood, already seemed quite contented. He wandered from one end of the steamer to the other, anxious to see and to understand everything. Thanks to his knowledge of English, he could enter into conversation with sailors, officers, and passengers. He was of great use to the two friends, who, but for him, would have found themselves quite isolated. He gave them English lessons, and he beset them with questions.

"Why is our steamer called the *Canada?*" he said to M. Pinson. "It is neither an English nor a French word."

"Canada," replied M. Pinson, "is the name of a vast country

which was discovered in 1497, by a Venetian named Jean Cabot. It was visited for the first time by a Frenchman, Denis, in 1523. The Spaniards, in search of gold-mines, came next. But not finding what they sought, they left, saying, '*acà, nada*' ('here, nothing'). This phrase was caught up by the aborigines, and afterwards became the name of the country."

"Another explanation is," said Boisjoli, "that Canada is an Iroquois word, meaning a cluster of huts."

"True," said M. Pinson, "but the Spanish etymology is more generally accepted."

"Is Canada near America, then?" asked Quicksilver.

"It is part of it, my boy, just as France and England are part of Europe. North America, for which we are bound, is an immense continent divided into six principal regions: Russian America, lately ceded to the United States, and which is called Alaska; English America, which comprises Labrador, Canada, and Nova Scotia; Danish America, or Greenland; and the United States, which the French call America, thus taking a part for the whole, to the great indignation of the other peoples of this new continent."

"And where is Mexico?"

"Mexico and Guatemala complete the six great divisions of North America."

"Thank you, sir," said Quicksilver, "I shall remember all you have told me."

Four days after leaving Liverpool there was great commotion on board the *Canada*. The life of enforced idleness led by the passengers of a steamer makes quite a serious event of the smallest incident. In the afternoon the surface of the sea became suddenly silvered. The *Canada*, steaming on, was soon pressing through a shoal of herrings, crushing them with her paddle-wheels. Quicksilver, perfectly delighted, immediately performed his customary acrobatic feat, to the great admiration of the sailors.

"Where do all those fishes come from? Where are they going?" he inquired of M. Pinson.

"They come from the Northern Ocean, my boy, for, like swallows, herrings are migratory. They come from the frozen regions of the Polar seas, in hundreds of thousands, as you see. The fishermen of France and England will soon divide the valuable prey which is passing under our eyes, for, besides the enormous consumption of herrings, fresh, salted, or smoked, by different European nations, herrings are used as manure for the land in many countries."

The shoal of herrings, which stretched out farther than eye could see, was soon left behind, for it was in movement towards the shores which the steamer was leaving. A multitude of sea-birds hovered over the unlucky fishes, and had only to skim the surface of the sea in order to seize them.

Among these winged fishers, the sea-gull, a bird of so rapid and powerful a flight that it can traverse enormous spaces without resting, was the most voracious.

In the evening, after dinner, while M. Pinson was quietly conversing with his friend, the purser approached him.

"Excuse me if I interrupt," said the officer, "but the duties of my post require it. Is it quite understood that you retain your cabin and the one you selected for your young companion?"

"Since we are here," said M. Pinson, with a frown, "I suppose we must sleep somewhere?"

"Very good; then I have to ask you to hand me the sum of eighty pounds."

"Eighty pounds!" cried M. Pinson, rising from his seat, "I have to hand you eighty pounds! May I ask for what?"

"As passage money."

"This is a pretty business; you drag me away against my will, in spite of my protestations, and then you want me to pay you, into the bargain— Prodigious! really prodigious!"

"Did you expect to cross the Atlantic gratis?"

"I didn't expect to cross it at all, sir, as you know very well. As for my paying eighty pounds for being dragged from my country— I think that rather a cool request."

"If you go second-cabin," answered the officer, "the cost will be sixty-four pounds; but only forty if you consent to live and mess with the sailors."

"Where do you expect," said M. Pinson, dejectedly, "that I am to find the fabulous sum you ask of me on the high seas? I left my home to visit London, not to go to America. If I have ten pounds in my pocket-book, it is as much as I have."

"You will please to observe, sir, that the Company has nothing to do with the—accident that kept you on board. You are boarded and lodged, and in every country one has to pay for that."

"And if I refuse to pay? If it is impossible for me to pay?"

"Then, to my great regret, I must consign you to the forecastle, in order to diminish the cost of your support on board, and when we reach New York, the law—"

"I will pay," said Boisjoli; "I care little for the cost, Pinson, since it procures me the pleasure of your society."

M. Pinson heeded not, he was restlessly pacing the deck. What! was he not only to lose a month of his time, to run the chance of shipwreck, to be taken against his will to America, but to have to pay eighty pounds, instead of receiving the indemnity to which he had believed himself entitled! The exasperated engineer would not even listen to the observations of his friend; he took a seat in the bows of the steamer, and for a long time unconsciously watched the prow of the *Canada* as it cut its way through the foaming waters.

The sun was sinking to the horizon; light white clouds were floating in the air; some sea-mews circling about the mainmast were preparing to fly to the rocks on which they build their nests.

"A sail!" cried the lookout man.

M. Pinson roused himself from his revery. Just opposite he could see the top of a mast.

"Quick," said he to Quicksilver, "ask if we shall pass near that ship."

"Yes," was the answer, "unless she changes her course."

M. Pinson, holding Quicksilver by the hand, approached the quarter-deck, where the captain, glass in hand, was examining the horizon.

"Now, boy," said the engineer, anxiously, "ask the captain, in the civilest terms you can find, whether, supposing we pass near to that ship yonder, the regulations of the service would forbid him to put us aboard of her."

Quicksilver obeyed, the captain shook his head, rubbed his glass, and at length replied:

"The vessel seems to be coming towards us. If she passes within reasonable distance of the *Canada*, and if her commander consents to take you, I am quite willing to stop long enough to put you on board. There is no rule against that."

No sooner had Quicksilver translated this reply to M. Pinson, than the latter, having bowed respectfully to the captain, returned to the bow of the *Canada* in order to keep a better lookout upon the welcome vessel, which seemed to his fancy to be already carrying him towards the Rue Nollet.

CHAPTER IX.

THE "FULTON."

After an hour passed in contemplation, M. Pinson slowly returned to his place on the poop, more dejected and crest-fallen than he had yet been. The ship on board which he had fondly hoped to find himself in a short time was no doubt following the same course as the *Canada*, for, instead of drawing near, she had at first maintained her distance, and then by degrees disappeared.

"We shall have to go to America, my boy," said the disconsolate engineer to Quicksilver. "The thing is written on our foreheads, as Eastern people say."

Quicksilver, who, owing to the indulgence with which the two friends had treated it, felt a very moderate degree of repentance for his escapade, hung his head, and answered not a word; but hardly had M. Pinson passed beyond him than he placed himself in a favorable position for turning a catherine-wheel, unseen by that gentleman. This was a demonstration from which he was incapable of refraining in moments of great elation.

Boisjoli, observing his friend return with a slow step, absorbed in silent melancholy, and seat himself on a bench at a distance from him, endeavored to distract him from his painful thoughts by proposing that they should play at bézique.

"Thanks," said the engineer, dryly; "but I could not give my mind to the game."

From that moment until turning-in time, at ten o'clock, he persisted in talking about his involuntary voyage as the most

painful experience of his life. The next day no sooner was he awake than he began to sweep the horizon with eager glances; then, having well rubbed his eyes, he called Quicksilver, who ran to him.

"What do you see there?" he asked.

"The same thing as I saw last night, sir—the top of a mast."

"Ask the lookout what it means, at once."

"The lookout man," replied the boy, after having obeyed the injunction of M. Pinson, "says that mast belongs to the steamer we saw yesterday, and that it is coming towards us."

If M. Pinson had been capable of turning a catherine-wheel or throwing a somersault, no doubt he would have performed either of those feats on hearing this joyful intelligence.

"Bravo! bravo!" shouted he, as he pulled off his hat and waved it above his head in triumph. "Run and call Boisjoli. Most likely we shall now have only a short time with him."

Quicksilver did as he was told, but with a lagging step, as though by his own lingering he could have retarded the advance of the vessel.

"It is a pity," he repeated; "yes, it is a great pity."

Immediately on his friend's joining him, M. Pinson hastened to inform him of his revived hopes.

"I am very glad on your account, Pinson," answered Boisjoli. "Nevertheless, I cannot prevent myself from regretting the arrival of this steamer, for, after all, you know you had made up your mind to seeing America."

"You mean, Boisjoli, that, as I could not do otherwise, I had resigned myself to my fate."

"We should have been another whole week together."

"Very true; but we should have had to part at the end; and I prefer this half-made voyage to the finished experience, I assure you."

"We are nearly half-way, Pinson! Six days more and you might be in America, and see New York, and Niagara—"

"According to your line of argument, my good friend, I might go on to the end of the world. In six days I might be at New York, where I don't want to be, that is true; but in five I might be in the Rue Nollet! I vote for the Rue Nollet."

The sea was calm; the two steamers, steadily advancing towards each other, could not but meet within two hours. All the passengers on board the *Canada* were on the poop, and M. Pinson, brisk, joyous, and pleased, was shaking hands in one direction, and bowing in another, bidding everybody good-by in advance, for the captain had just renewed his promise to put him on board this vessel, which the engineer regarded as specially sent by Providence.

"You will be my guest until we get to New York, sir," said the captain, suddenly addressing M. Pinson, after he had steadily examined the horizon through his glass for some time. "What I conjectured proves to be the case—the vessel in sight is a man-of-war."

"A man-of-war!" repeated M. Pinson; "are you afraid there will not be room for us on board?"

"War-ships," explained Quicksilver, interpreting for the captain, "never take passengers; they are forbidden to do so by the naval rules."

M. Pinson started up.

"What, again!" he cried. "What have I, or you, boy, to do with naval rules and regulations? We are not sailors, that I know of; we are simple civilians. What! It is just because of these absurd rules that we are here, against our own will, and now because of them we are to be kept here! This is really too bad!"

"Calm yourself, Pinson," said Boisjoli.

"Oh, yes; it is all very fine for you to tell me to calm myself, when—but there, you are right, after all; the case is serious, and we must take our measures quietly. Speak to the captain," here M. Pinson addressed Quicksilver; "beg of him to

make the attempt for us; that cannot cost him much. The captain of this man-of-war may be a kind-hearted fellow. I will speak to him; he will be touched by my hard fate and yours; you will join with me in explaining— By-the-by, does any one know to what nationality that vessel belongs?"

"The captain," replied Quicksilver, "has just stated that she is an American war frigate."

"Exactly what I wanted!" exclaimed M. Pinson, joyfully. "The Americans are a great people, a generous people; they love liberty; we shall only have to speak to them. What does the captain say, my boy?"

"He says, sir, that he should waste some precious time by stopping, and he advises you to be patient."

Once more M. Pinson bitterly regretted his inability to speak English. He was convinced that if he could only have pleaded for himself, his arguments would infallibly have touched the captain's heart, and induced him to speak the frigate.

"If the steamer passes us at all near," said the engineer to himself, resolutely, "I will throw myself into the sea, and swim towards it; then they will have to let down a boat to pick me up."

The two ships were already near enough to each other to admit of mutual observation, and it soon became evident that the American frigate was steering so as to approach the *Canada*. According to rule, the latter was bound to salute the former, and the English flag was speedily hoisted. Then the frigate displayed the star-spangled flag of the Northern States; and, placing herself across the bows of the *Canada*, she fired a gun, charged with powder only, as a salute to the steamer. This was an imperative order to stop.

The captain of the *Canada* grumbled, for no seaman obeys cheerfully when the command comes from a foreign superior; nevertheless, he gave the necessary orders to "stop her," and the two steamers, now advancing only by their own impetus,

were soon within four hundred yards of each other. A boat, manned by six sailors and a young officer, put off from the American steamer, and pulled to the side of the *Canada*. The officer, who was the lieutenant of the frigate, sprang lightly on board, and, having courteously saluted the captain of the *Canada*, proceeded to explain his visit.

"Commodore Warren," said he, "presents his compliments, and begs you to excuse his having caused you a delay. I am the bearer of despatches which he begs you to deliver to the authorities at New York immediately on your arrival in port."

"Assure the commodore," returned the captain of the *Canada*, "that his commission shall be punctually executed. May I ask you whether there is any news from your country?"

"No good news, captain; the rebels are winning, for the moment, at least."

The two officers, of whom M. Pinson did not lose sight for an instant, talked together for several minutes on the poop, the lieutenant having declined to go down to the saloon.

"What are they saying?" the engineer asked Quicksilver.

"That the war is more determined than ever; that it is in contemplation to set the slaves free; that the weather is fine—"

"And what more?"

"That the pirates of the South are doing great injury to American commerce, and that the frigate yonder is going to Europe to chase them."

"Another question, my boy. Why does the lieutenant laugh so heartily while he looks at me?"

"Because—"

"Well! Go on!"

"Because the captain is telling him about your adventure."

At this moment the two officers shook hands and parted, the lieutenant advancing to the side in order to regain his gig.

"One word, sir," said the engineer, planting himself in the officer's way; "do you speak French?"

THE GIG.

"A little."

M. Pinson heaved a great sigh of relief; at length he might plead his own cause.

"You are aware of the misfortune which has befallen me, sir," continued M. Pinson; "I know the captain of the *Canada* has told you of it. The adventure is very amusing to everybody except myself, as you may suppose. But you are in a hurry, so I will come to the point. You are going to Europe, perhaps to France; the mere idea makes my heart beat. Your great nation is at peace with mine; we are even allies. Between us there is a bond of union, formed by our respective compatriots, Franklin and Lafayette. My fathers fought the battle of yours for their liberty and for the flag of free America. Once more, pardon me, I am coming to the point: take me on board your ship; bring me back to my native land; it will be a noble action on your part."

The eagerness and the oddity of M. Pinson's speech called up a smile on the lips of the young lieutenant.

"I am not in command of the *Fulton*," he replied; "I am only lieutenant to Commodore Warren."

"Take me on board, nevertheless. When I am there I will explain matters to the commodore: one can always come to an understanding with a sailor."

"And if he should refuse to let you go on board," said the lieutenant, "what shall I do with you? I don't suppose the captain of the *Canada* is the sort of man to wait for you."

"If the commodore refuses to take me," replied M. Pinson, in a tone of quiet despair, "you can just throw me into the sea, and there will be an end of the matter."

The lieutenant was gradually approaching the ladder by which he was to get down to the gig that had brought him to the side of the *Canada*. The two steamers, swayed about by the swell of the waves, were then three hundred yards apart, and the crew of the *Fulton* were congregated on the port side.

"Will you lend me your speaking-trumpet for a moment?" asked the lieutenant of the captain. "I should like, if possible, to restore this gentleman to his native land."

The captain handed him the instrument in question.

"Commodore!" shouted the lieutenant.

"Ay, ay," shouted the commodore, who, posted on the foot-bridge of his ship, was examining the *Canada* through his glass.

"A French gentleman is on board the *Canada* by mistake, and finds himself on his way to America against his will."

A roar of laughter from the crew of the frigate greeted this communication. The commodore, in a voice of thunder, bade them be silent.

"What have I to do," he demanded, "with the misadventure of this gentleman?"

"He entreats you to take him on board and bring him back to his country."

M. Pinson, who had not shrunk before the burst of laughter from the frigate's crew, leaned upon Quicksilver's shoulder, gazing steadfastly at the commodore. That officer paced the bridge twice, backwards and forwards, then shouted:

"Bring him on board!"

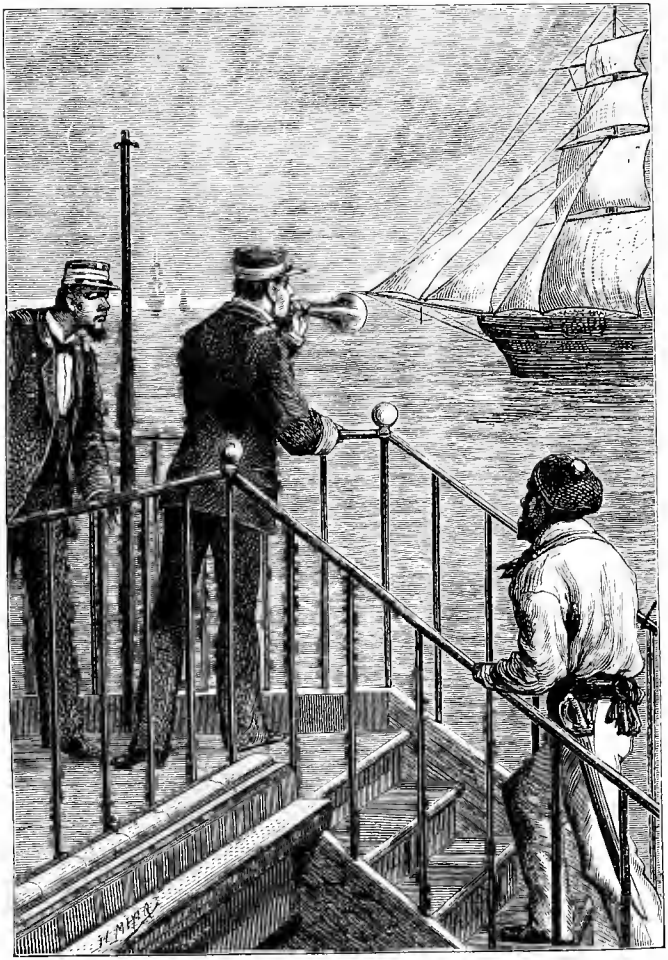
"Our meeting with the *Canada*, which will take home the news of the destruction of one of the pirates we are charged to chase, has put the commodore in a good-humor," said the lieutenant. "Make haste, sir; let us get on board at once; don't give him time to reflect and change his mind."

Quicksilver had instantly translated the commodore's answer, for the benefit of M. Pinson, and the engineeer would have rushed forward at once, but his joyful emotion paralyzed him.

"On, boy, on!" he cried, at length, to Quicksilver; "quick, quick!"

"What! there are two of you! wait!" said the lieutenant.

But M. Pinson made no answer; he lifted Quicksilver by



"SPEAKING" AT SEA.

the collar of his jacket, passed him on to the sailors in the gig, and then followed him rapidly.

"Is this your son?" asked the lieutenant, who did not know what to do.

"Yes—almost," answered M. Pinson.

At that moment the purser made his appearance.

"Stop! stop!" cried he.

"I will pay you, sir," said Boisjoli.

This assurance silenced the purser, and two minutes later the gig, vigorously impelled by the oarsmen, was far away from the *Canada*, which steamed ahead. So great was the joy of M. Pinson at finding himself on board the *Fulton* that he would fain have embraced the commodore. That officer was, however, fully engaged in directing the movements of his ship, and did not lend himself to any such demonstration. M. Pinson then turned towards the *Canada*, which raised and lowered its flag three times in salute. Boisjoli, standing well forward, waved his handkerchief as a last farewell to his friend. The screw of the *Fulton* turned on its pivot, and the two ships moved away from each other.

At last M. Pinson got an opportunity of talking with the commodore, and expressing his gratitude to him. He related, with earnestness and vivacity which greatly amused the American officer, all the incidents of his lamentable adventure. M. Pinson talked all the more readily that the commodore and his officers understood French. During this time Quicksilver, leaning over the side, looked regretfully after the *Canada*.

"It is a pity!" he murmured to himself. "Yes, it is a pity! A little more and I should have seen America, and known whether Robinson told truth or not. However, I am going back to see poor old Mother Pitch, and M. Pinson talks of taking me to Paris. All the same, it's a great pity!"

CHAPTER X.

THE "DAVIS."

THOUGH of a plain and somewhat peculiar exterior, M. Pinson was a very learned and most amiable man. No sooner was he freed from the terrible nightmare of a voyage to America than he recovered his temper and his good spirits and became an agreeable companion. Consequently, four-and-twenty hours after embarking on board the *Fulton* he was looked upon as a friend by the commodore and his officers, who all, without exception, spoke fairly good French. The gray-haired commodore, an old tar, had learned seamanship more by practice than by theory, and was apt to despise everything unconnected with the sea. Kind and humane, he was inexorable only when the prompt execution of his orders was in question. He had the highest opinion of his native land, to which he would not admit there could be a rival, and could barely endure it to be compared with the nations of Europe. If opportunity offered, he would have contended that England was an ancient American colony, and that Christopher Columbus, by birth a New-Yorker, and not a Genoese, had one fine day discovered the old continent. This paradoxical fanaticism, which is common to all Americans, is, without appearing to be so, one of the sources of the strength of that vigorous people. In the United States, as of old in Athens and in Sparta, every citizen is ready to lay down his life and his fortune in attestation of that supremacy which he claims for his country.

The story of Quicksilver, related in detail by M. Pinson, drew general attention to the orphan boy, who, by his good

looks, his intelligence, his quickness, and his civility, soon obtained the good-will of both officers and crew. Owing to their kindness, the boy was allowed, to his great delight, to exercise his squirrel-like activity. He was constantly running about, from the hold to the poop, from larboard to starboard, from the prow to the rudder of the *Fulton*, always ready to help those who were at work, no matter what their task.

The American commodore did things handsomely; M. Pinson and his ward were assigned places at the officers' table. Quicksilver gave a proof of his former good training by behaving with propriety in such goodly company. The boy possessed natural refinement which his half-vagabond life had not destroyed, and education would make of him a man worthy of the name.

M. Pinson decided that he could not better employ the time which fate obliged him to pass on board the *Fulton* than in studying English, and he employed Quicksilver to teach him. At the same time he contrived, by skilful questioning, to ascertain the amount of knowledge possessed by the boy. As soon as he was informed on this point, he could rightly adapt his answers to the ceaseless questions of his young companion, and make them clear to his comprehension. The post of tutor to Quicksilver was no sinecure—a fact of which Pinson speedily became aware. The boy had a restless spirit of inquiry, and the explanations of his kind teacher excited his curiosity, without completely satisfying it.

The weather turned again to cold and rain, and M. Pinson and his pupil preferred remaining in the saloon, where the officers supplied them with books.

"Do you know, my boy," the engineer said one evening, "that it was a piece of good luck for you to come across Boisjoli? Thanks to him, you will be restored to your family, for he exacted a promise from me not to forsake you, and what I promise Boisjoli I hold sacred. Boisjoli could teach some of

the cleverest in his own profession; you will know this later on, for you will certainly hear him spoken of. And, besides, he has one of those noble hearts which the commodore was arguing yesterday—very unjustly—can exist only in the United States."

"You too, sir, have a noble heart," Quicksilver answered directly; "I wanted to tell the commodore so, and to tell him, as proof of it, that you bought a warming-pan for Mother Pitch."

"It was Boisjoli's idea, my boy; I have told you so often; you must not forget that again."

After every lesson, Quicksilver would shake M. Pinson's hand by way of thanks, and then he would run off to see the engines at work, or to help execute some manœuvre, by way of recreation.

"I have just been told, sir," he said on one occasion on returning to his friend, "that the name our ship bears is that of an American engineer, who was the inventor of steamers. Is this another of our commodore's fancies?"

"Not so, my boy; Robert Fulton was really an American, for he was born in Pennsylvania in 1785. He began by being a painter, rather an indifferent one, I believe; then, having a natural taste for mechanical science, he set himself to study it, and invented, first, a machine for sawing marble, and next a boat to explode ships from under the water. This invention, modified and brought to perfection by his countrymen, has become, under the name of *torpedo*, one of the most formidable instruments of modern warfare. But Fulton's real title to fame is his having applied steam to navigation. He made his first attempt in France in 1802 or 1803. No one foresaw the future which successive improvements had in store for the cumbrous and imperfect machine which he exhibited. On his return to America he constructed a new boat, which, to the great admiration of the New-Yorkers, soon ran regularly on the Hudson River between New York and Albany."

"I was in hopes," said Quicksilver, with a disappointed air, "that the engineer was mistaken when he told me a part of this story."

"And why so, my boy?"

"I should like this splendid invention to have been that of a Frenchman, sir."

"Make your mind easy," answered M. Pinson; "whatever the commodore, with whom I was yesterday discussing the question, may say, the French have had something to do with the invention of steam and steamers. So far back as the year 1695, Papin, a Frenchman, made a design for a boat of which the oars were to be worked by steam. In 1699, another countryman of ours, Duquet, endeavored to substitute paddles worked by wheels for the oars of our galleys. In 1753, the Abbé Gautier, of Lunéville, read a paper on the subject before the Academy of Nancy. And besides, in 1775, Périer constructed a steamboat which he ran on the Seine, an experiment which was repeated on the Doubs, in 1780, by the Marquis de Jouffroy. It has frequently been stated that Fulton witnessed these experiments. This is not the case, for the American engineer was not born until later. The truth is that he was acquainted with the work of the Marquis de Jouffroy. Therefore, without denying Fulton's merits, we may be allowed to do justice to our own countryman, whose priority has, in fact, been recently declared by the Academy of Sciences."

"I will go and tell the engineer this," said Quicksilver, "to show him that the French are not so stupid. But one word more, sir: the *Canada* is worked by paddle-wheels, and the *Fulton* by a screw."

"As for the screw," said M. Pinson, "that is a thoroughly French invention; Duquet or Du Quet, of whom I was speaking just now, first conceived the idea of it. In 1803, Charles Dallery published a paper in which the screw propeller is clearly described. Nevertheless, the first screw that worked suc-

cessfully was constructed by Captain Ericsson, a Swede, in 1836."

"The screw is then preferable to paddle-wheels?" asked Quicksilver.

"The screw, my boy, is especially valuable to ships of war, whose paddle-wheels, as you can easily understand, might be easily destroyed by cannon-balls, and the ships thus disabled. Besides, a screw steamer can, in case of need, be put under canvas, for she is both lighter and narrower. The screw of a ship —it is well that you should know these details—rotates on its axis two hundred times in a minute; its paddles, striking the water obliquely in the same way that the sails of a windmill strike the air, drive a ship along at the rate of eight or ten miles an hour."

Five days after he had been taken on board the *Fulton*, at about three in the afternoon, M. Pinson was standing on the fore-deck of the steamer. Every minute the coast of England was expected to come in sight, and the engineer's heart was beating quickly. The *Fulton* was to cruise in the Channel, to enter every harbor, and to search for the daring privateer which, for some months past, had caused serious losses to the trade of America by burning several of her ships.

"Land ahead!" was suddenly sung out.

M. Pinson, quite overcome, had at first some difficulty in recognizing land in the whitish mist which was pointed out to him above the waters. The immobility of this mist, of which the outlines became rapidly distinct, brought tears to his eyes, and he pressed the shoulder of Quicksilver, on which he was leaning.

Quicksilver, thinking of Robinson, of America, of tigers, and of Friday, murmured:

"It's a pity though! I am glad to think of seeing Mother Pitch again; but, for all that, it's a pity not to have seen an island!"

The coast they had sighted was Cape Lizard; after reconnoitring it, the steamer returned to the open sea at the mouth of the Channel. Many ships were soon in sight. The commodore and his officers examined these ships with their glasses, and interchanged opinions.

The *Fulton*, abruptly changing her course, steamed towards a large brig, which she neared in less than an hour. On the approach of the man-of-war the brig ran up Swedish colors. The *Fulton* steamed around her, saluted, and then made towards another vessel on her left. M. Pinson's sensations were indescribable when he perceived the tricolor flag of France floating from the after-deck of this vessel, and when, by being three times raised and lowered, it saluted the stars and stripes of the United States.

During the rest of the evening the *Fulton* passed in review eight ships, for the entrance of the Channel is always crowded with vessels either outward or homeward bound. Twice or thrice the commodore questioned their captains, asking whence they came or whither they were bound. The last one he interrogated was an American ship, and the conversation in this instance lasted a quarter of an hour. The vessel was from Havre, and the commodore learned that the privateer which he was seeking was at Cherbourg, having been forced by various disasters to put into harbor. This was important news, and the commodore immediately turned his ship's head to the great French seaport.

"You will see a nice dance, Mr. Engineer," he said to M. Pinson, "if, as I little doubt, I succeed in laying hold of this *Davis*. He hunts rabbits bravely enough; but the coward flies from before a shark. I have heard that they know how to fight in your country; but you shall see that Americans don't do things by halves."

"They can't do more than get themselves killed, I suppose," said M. Pinson.

"That's true, sir, but there are different ways of getting one's self killed, and I hope to show you that ours is a good way."

M. Pinson was an ardent lover of his country, and could scarcely bear to hear her attacked, even indirectly, without taking her part. But just then he was so delighted at the prospect that before forty-eight hours were over he should be on land, free to go whither he would, that he freely conceded to the commodore that the American way of despatching a ball or of receiving one was greatly superior to all other known fashions.

"Is Cherbourg like Liverpool, sir?" asked Quicksilver.

"No, my boy. Liverpool is a commercial port, and Cherbourg is, above all, a port of war. It is the only one that France possesses in the Channel, and it is the handiwork of man. You will see a dike three thousand eight hundred yards in extent, behind which a whole fleet can take shelter. Before we come back to London, we will inspect the docks hollowed out in the rock, a whole series of works, of which the smallest, notwithstanding contrary assertions, has not been surpassed in the United States."

Night came on; the *Fulton* steamed along the great highway for ships from Hamburg, Flushing, Antwerp, Portsmouth, Plymouth, Dunkirk, Havre, etc., whence they disperse over the ocean, and carry the products of European industry to the ends of the earth. Two sailors were placed on the lookout, to watch the horizon and prevent collisions. Towards nine in the evening two schooners were spoken, then an hour later an American brig. The privateer which the *Fulton* was seeking was a vessel of the same tonnage as the one now before the wind, and for a moment the commodore hoped he had found his enemy. On being hailed through the speaking-trumpet, the brig reported herself to have come from Havre, and confirmed the statement made by the frigate in the morning, namely, that the *Davis*, twenty guns, and a crew of three hundred men, was quietly at anchor in the roadstead at Cherbourg.

The *Fulton's* decks had been cleared for action—that is, the batteries were in readiness to fire, and the hammocks and everything else that could hinder the manœuvres had been removed to the lower decks. Officers, gunners, helmsmen, all were at their post; the commodore stationed himself on his bridge.

"Are we really going to fight, sir?" asked Quicksilver of M. Pinson.

"I hope not, my boy," answered the engineer. "The *Davis*, as she is called, has nothing to gain by an encounter with the *Fulton*. In all probability her captain will as carefully avoid, as our commodore eagerly seeks, a meeting."

"But a privateer is a man-of-war, and carries guns."

"True, but though a privateer does not always avoid fighting, she prefers attacking trading-vessels, in order to destroy, when she cannot take them. Much might be said about this irregular warfare on sea; the French, however, should not too loudly condemn it, for our navy owes our greatest conquests to it."

"Why is the North against the South in America? Do they not belong to the same nation?"

"They do; but men are not always wise. The result of this war will be to restore five millions of black men to liberty; therefore blood will not have been shed in vain."

It was near midnight, but still M. Pinson and Quicksilver remained on the poop. The waves were becoming shorter, a sign that they were beginning to be confined between the coasts. A light flashed at intervals, and the *Fulton* was making towards it. Suddenly the report of a gun was heard in the distance.

"Is that a signal from a ship in distress?" said M. Pinson. "Quick, my boy, ask that sailor."

"I think so," answered the man, "for the commodore has just ordered us to bear down straight on the light yonder."

The *Fulton* seemed to be going at double speed. Officers

and crew were silent and listening, their eyes turned towards the distant light, which visibly increased, and presently multiplied itself. All at once a vivid flame rose against the sky; it proceeded from the sides of the ship.

"Get the boats ready," the commodore called out through his trumpet; "there may be lives to save out yonder."

There was soon but a short distance between the *Fulton* and the burning ship. Nothing could be more imposing, more terrible, more awful, than the sight of this whirl of flames in mid-ocean. Thick clouds of smoke surrounded the ship; and long tongues of fire escaped from her port-holes, running from stern to stem, and reddening the sea with their light.

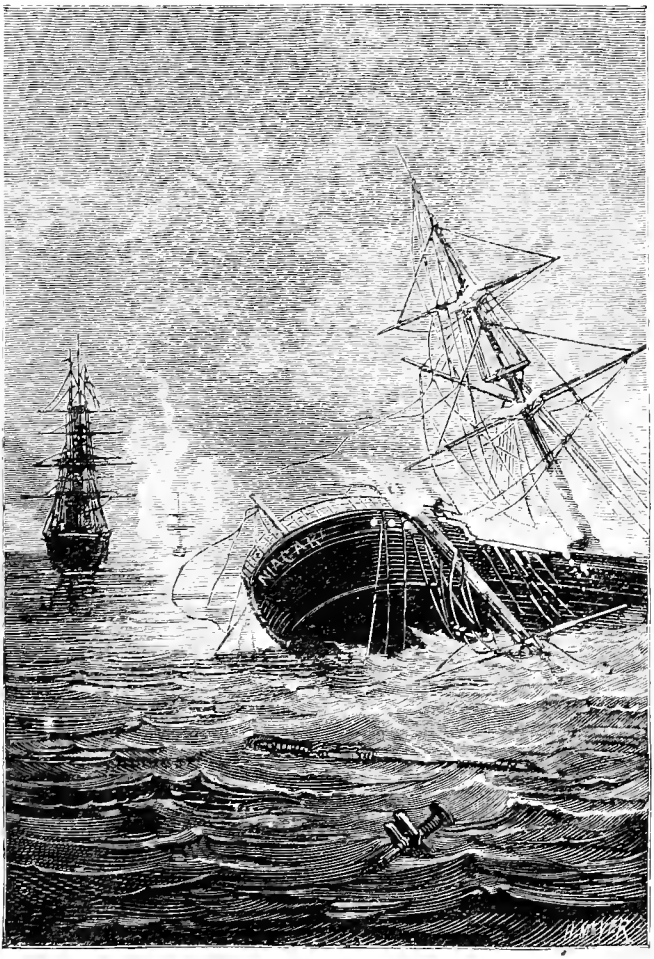
"There is no one on deck," cried the commodore; "fire a gun, lieutenant; the sailors who have abandoned her cannot be far off; and it is well, if they see us, to let them know they can come on board."

So profound a silence reigned aboard the *Fulton* that the brief imperious orders of the commodore could be distinctly heard. Every eye scanned the horizon, seeking for the boats in which the crew of the burning vessel might have taken refuge.

"She's one of our vessels," suddenly exclaimed the commodore. "I can read on her poop, 'The *Niagara* of New York.' Write down her name, lieutenant."

The gun fired by the *Fulton* had scarcely been discharged, when a great clamor arose. The *Fulton* had just passed by the *Niagara*, and a couple of miles ahead another conflagration was lighting up the horizon. So soon as it was ascertained that no human being remained on board the *Niagara*, the *Fulton* bore down on the second ship. A boat was seen rowing away from her, and close alongside, at a very short distance from the burning ship, was a small steamer.

Towards this latter, her graceful slender outline showing distinctly in the light of the flames, the *Fulton's* course was directed. To M. Pinson's great surprise the commodore hoisted the Eng-



THE "DAVIS" AND HER DEEDS.

lish flag. The little steamer answered by running up Russian colors; but, instead of waiting for the approach of the *Fulton*, she began to move away.

"Give her some powder," cried the commodore, "and order her to stop!"

The little steamer paid no attention to the signal, but continued on her way.

"A ball, quick!" cried the commodore; "we are at peace with Russia, and this vessel seems afraid of us."

The shot, rebounding against the waves, spent itself a few yards from the little steamer.

"Hoist our own colors, lieutenant," said the commodore, "let this skulker know who we really are."

Hardly did the American flag float from the bows of the *Fulton* than the steamer hoisted French colors. She slackened speed, and no sooner was the *Fulton* within range than a shot passed over her decks. At the same moment the little steamer hoisted the flag of the Southern States.

"The *Davis!*" cried the commodore. "At her! Death to incendiaries!"

"Death!" shouted the crew with one voice.

A loud hurrah rose from the decks of the *Davis*. M. Pinson and Quicksilver shuddered at the sound.

"Are we to be present at a naval engagement now?" exclaimed the engineer. "This is a pretty business! It was not enough to drag me from the Rue Nollet, to bewilder me in the streets of London, to—"

M. Pinson could say no more, a shot from the *Davis* struck off before his eyes the arm of one of the sailors who was standing at the wheel. Nearly at the same moment the *Fulton* shook as if her sides were coming to pieces, and an overpowering noise deafened M. Pinson, who thought the steamer was sinking. At the commodore's command the gunners had simply replied to the shot from the *Davis* by saluting her with a broadside.

CHAPTER XI.

THE CANARY ISLANDS.

"Go between decks, sir," said the lieutenant of the *Fulton* to M. Pinson, as he passed; "there is danger here."

Quicksilver, though rather pale, was eagerly watching the proceedings. After a momentary hesitation, the engineer took him by the hand and led him to the saloon; they had scarcely reached it when a fresh discharge shook the steamer.

"Stay here, my boy," said M. Pinson, who was in a state of feverish agitation, and could not remain still; "don't stir."

"Where are you going, sir?"

"On deck; I prefer seeing to hearing."

"I will go, too," said the boy; "I will not leave you."

The engineer drew nearer to Quicksilver.

"Are you frightened?" he asked.

"Down here I am; up on deck, in the open air, I feel more confidence."

M. Pinson, dreading a bullet or the splinters of a shell for his young companion, sacrificed his own wish to return to the deck and sat down beside him.

"This is war," he said sadly, "war and its dismal horrors. Every report which we now hear has for its terrible result a mother deprived of the son to whom she has devoted her own youth, of the child whom for twenty years she has sheltered from the slightest scratch. It is frightful to think that human beings endowed with reason— But let me not moralize illogically; so long as ambitious and wicked men exist on the earth there will be warfare."

M. PINSON AND QUICKSILVER AS SPECTATORS OF THE FIGHT.

"The commodore and his officers are good men, sir," said Quicksilver, "you have often told me so."

"Certainly, my boy! and I am not speaking of them, but of those who have ordered them to fight. The war which rends the United States is fated, and perhaps necessary. But there is only one kind of war, mark you, which is just and righteous—war that is waged against an enemy who, invading our fatherland, seeks to dismember or to enslave it. Against such an enemy we must be ready to fight; and we should be content to die, that we might bequeath to the millions who come after us independence and liberty, if nothing else."

The cannonade went on; M. Pinson by degrees drew nearer to the stairs, ascended them, and again showed himself on deck. The sea, lighted up by the two burning ships, looked like an immense red plain. A light breeze scarcely ruffled the water, and the white smoke from the guns floated in the air. On board the *Fulton* men's faces were grave, but their eyes were flashing. The commodore's orders were rapidly passed on from his place on the bridge. The *Davis*, though much smaller than her adversary, nevertheless held her own and manœuvred so as not to expose her sides.

There were pools of blood on the *Fulton's* decks, and torn rigging hung along her masts.

"Steer so as to hit the enemy amidships," was a message brought by a sub-officer to the men at the wheel; "the commodore wants to make an end of it."

At the same time the gunners were told to reserve their fire.

M. Pinson had stationed himself near the funnel, underneath the bridge. He felt some one pressing against him: it was Quicksilver.

"Let me stay, sir," entreated the boy.

Without answering, M. Pinson placed his arms round his young companion. A solemn silence reigned on board the

Fulton, which, without replying, bore the enemy's fire. A ball crashed over M. Pinson's head.

"Ha!" muttered the engineer, "I owe this to that rascal Boisjoli. But for him and his perfidious advice I should be at this moment quietly resting in my bed. Instead of that, here I am, on the open sea, between two fires, in danger every second of serving as a sheath to a bombshell, which, by taking off my leg or my arm, will make me fit for the Hôtel des Invalides without giving me any right of entry."

M. Pinson cut his soliloquy short. The *Fulton* under full steam was rapidly nearing the *Davis*.

In a few minutes more the two ships, like furious bulls, would come into violent collision. M. Pinson held tightly to the ropes of a boat lashed to the deck, so as to be in readiness to resist the coming shock.

"Port!" cried the commodore.

The *Fulton* answered to her helm and turned to the left. But the *Davis* had guessed her enemy's intention; as the *Fulton* came upon her she swung rapidly round. The two steamers as they passed exchanged broadsides. Cries of pain, of agony, followed on the terrific discharge, but they were immediately drowned in hurrahs.

Carried away by the mighty impetus with the help of which she had hoped to have cut her adversary in twain, the *Fulton* swept on for five hundred yards, and had to make a long tack in order to return. The *Davis*, steaming straight ahead, passed by the second burning ship, and saluted it with a triumphant huzza.

"The incendiary won't fight!" shouted the enraged commodore; "steer straight!" he called out to the helmsmen, "we are bound not to let this pirate escape."

A considerable distance already separated the two steamers, and the *Fulton* under full steam followed in the wake of the *Davis*. In less than a quarter of an hour the two burning ships

dropped out of sight; but for a long while the sky was reddened on their side. Without losing a minute the sailors began to repair the damage done by the guns, and to wash the decks. Their disappointment was great, and while at their work they shook their fists at the corsair flying before them, addressing him with threats and daring him to wait for them. Their voices were lost in the noise of the waves, and the *Davis*, being probably much damaged, did not seem inclined to renew the fight.

"Now, Sir Frenchman, a glass of grog in honor of America," said the commodore, approaching M. Pinson. "I watched your face under fire," he added; "on my word, you are a brave man!"

"Pretty well," answered the engineer; "when I can't help myself."

"Don't be unfair to yourself; the hold was open, and you could have taken refuge there."

"I don't like the dark," said M. Pinson; "and, to be quite open with you, commodore, I confess that I would hasten to take leave of you, were it possible to do so. But, tell me, do you think the *Davis* will renew the fight?"

"She must, whether she will or not. The *Fulton*, sir, is remarkable for speed, as you will see by to-morrow morning. For the present, I drink to your good health, and wish you good-night."

M. Pinson and Quicksilver followed the commodore's example and retired to their berths. The boy was still excited by the fight he had witnessed, and he overwhelmed M. Pinson with questions.

"Do you too, sir, wish to see the *Davis* destroyed and sunk to the bottom of the sea?"

"Certainly not, my boy; I wish for the death of no man."

"The crew of the *Fulton* talk of nothing but of hanging the crew of the *Davis*."

"I can understand their anger. If, under our very eyes, an English or German ship had set fire to two poor French traders, I think I should have asked for a weapon in order to join in the fight. But in this instance we have only ardently to desire the end of a fratricidal struggle."

Although M. Pinson had risen almost with the sun, he found Quicksilver already on deck. Three of the *Fulton's* crew had been killed, and their mates were busied in wrapping the bodies in sailcloth. The sea was calm, and the *Davis* was still flying before them far ahead.

"The pirate is a swift goer," said the lieutenant to M. Pinson; "although we are keeping a straight course, she is gaining on us a little. Luckily the glass is falling; in a rough sea I know what the *Fulton* can do; she will get the advantage then."

For a long time M. Pinson watched the *Davis;* her black hull, her flag streaming behind her, seemed to defy her powerful adversary. Light and swift, the little steamer glided over the waves, leaving in her wake a long track of foam.

At ten o'clock the commodore came on deck in full uniform, and was saluted by a roll of muffled drums. The crew, bearing arms, fell into line on either side of the vessel, while the officers surrounded their captain. The bodies of the three sailors were brought and placed near an open port-hole, from whence protruded an inclined plank.

The commodore then solemnly read several passages from the Psalms; he paused at intervals, when the plaintive strains of the fife fell on the ear.

Nothing could be more impressive than this sad and simple ceremony. Above was the illimitable sky; beneath, the deep abyss of the sea, ready to open and receive the mortal remains of those who yesterday were full of life, and who had died bravely at their post for their country.

A gun was fired; the three bodies, a cannon-ball lashed to

their feet, slid one after the other down the inclined plank, and disappeared in the sea which closed over them.

M. Pinson and Quicksilver, bareheaded and grave, had borne their part in this sad ceremony; they slowly regained the poop. Quicksilver was crying.

"What is the matter, my boy?" asked the engineer.

"My father, sir; I am thinking of my father. I saw him, one morning, pale and still, wrapped in white linen, like those sailors I have just seen. He was placed on a black carriage and was taken to the cemetery. A grave had been dug, and—I was never to see him again."

Quicksilver was sobbing so violently that M. Pinson could hardly soothe him. By degrees his sorrow was calmed, and a smile returned to his lips.

Two hours later every one on board the *Fulton* had resumed his ordinary occupation.

When twelve bells announced the hour of breakfast there appeared no diminution of the distance separating the *Davis* from the *Fulton*. The commodore, being quite convinced that if the sea became rougher his ship would steam at a pace that would enable him to come up with the enemy, studied the barometer without intermission.

Breakfast was quickly despatched; the prospect of an approaching engagement somewhat excited every one on board the *Fulton*. On reaching the deck the commodore glanced at the sea and gave an impatient stamp.

"That cursed vessel is American-built," he said, with vexation.

"How do you know that, commodore?" asked M. Pinson.

"By her speed, sir. Had she come from an English or French builder's yard we should have come up with her long ago."

"Both the French and the English know how to build a ship, commodore."

"I don't deny it, sir; by dint of copying the Americans the French and English have reached to a certain point—but only to a certain point—no farther."

The commodore was not just then in a sufficiently good-humor for M. Pinson to venture on a discussion with him; he held his peace, therefore, although he could easily have proved by unanswerable facts that French naval engineers yield the palm to none in the construction of ships. By way of compensation he allowed himself the satisfaction of explaining the commodore's mistake to Quicksilver, and found willing conviction in his hearer.

The day was spent in watching the *Davis*, which, with her flag streaming behind her, continued to defy her enemy. Hardly repressed rage pervaded the crew of the *Fulton*. They longed to engage again with the pirate who had almost under their eyes set fire to two of the ships which it was their duty to protect. The commodore frequently consulted with the chief-engineer, urging him to put the highest possible pressure compatible with the safety of the vessel on the screw.

The *Fulton* sped along at tremendous speed, cleaving the waters at the rate of twelve miles an hour.

"Towards which coast is the *Davis* steaming?" asked M. Pinson of the lieutenant; "it seems to me that we ought to have sighted land several hours ago."

"Land!" repeated the lieutenant, "what land?"

"Either France or England. Is the Channel so wide that it takes more than forty-eight hours to cross it?"

"The Channel is behind us," answered the lieutenant. "At this moment we are heading for the Canaries."

"The Channel behind us! The Canaries!" repeated M. Pinson. "This completes the business! Have I given up my visit to the United States in order to land in the country of canary-birds? This last trick of Boisjoli's really puts the finishing touch to his incredible conduct!"

The lieutenant, called away for some manœuvre, was already far off, while M. Pinson was repeating: "The fatherland of canary-birds! No, that would be rather too much!"

Quicksilver, stationed not far from M. Pinson, was furtively observing him; when he perceived him to be somewhat calmer he drew near.

"Is it true, sir, what you have just been saying?"

"What have I been saying, my boy? That Boisjoli—"

"No, sir, not that. You were saying that the Canary Isles are the native home of canary-birds."

"Nothing can be more true."

"And where are these islands situated?"

"On the coast of Africa."

"They belong to France?"

"No, although the French, about 1330, found them again."

"Found them again!" exclaimed Quicksilver with surprise; "were the Canary Islands ever lost, then?"

"The Canary Islands," continued M. Pinson, "were known to the people of antiquity, and the Carthaginians established a trading port there. They called them the Fortunate Islands, on account of their fertility and the beauty of the climate. After the fall of Carthage the way to these islands was forgotten; their name lived only in the memory of sailors."

"I understand," said Quicksilver; "and now to whom do they belong?"

"To the Spaniards, who, although they came after the French, had the wisdom to take possession of them. It was, in fact, a French gentleman, named Béthencourt, who conquered them, for they were inhabited by a warlike people, the Guanches, said to be the ancestors of the Berbers."

"And how many islands are there?"

"Seven principal ones, my boy, in one of which, called Tenériffe, there is a volcano 3710 yards in height, which enables vessels to sight it from an immense distance. Another, called

Iron Island, is celebrated for having been chosen by an order of King Louis XII., in 1634, for the passage of the first meridian."

"Are these islands inhabited?"

"Certainly they are; Teneriffe alone contains eight thousand inhabitants."

"What a pity!" murmured Quicksilver; "but tell me, sir, from which of these islands do canaries come?"

"From all of them."

"How amusing it must be to see pretty little yellow birds flying from tree to tree!"

"The canary-bird in its wild state," said M. Pinson, "is not, like the tame canary, of a beautiful golden color. It is brown, gray, white, yellow—many-colored, therefore. It belongs, in fact, to the numerous family of the sparrow; and, although those of the Canary Islands are particularly valued, France can also boast of some."

M. Pinson's discourse was cut short by a commotion on board; several sailors came running forward. The sun was setting, and against the golden sky three masts stood out distinctly.

CHAPTER XII.

TO THE END OF THE WORLD.

THE three masts belonged to a sailing vessel, which seemed to be steering a little to the east of the *Davis;* but the privateer was also gradually taking an oblique direction.

"Come here," said M. Pinson to Quicksilver; "no doubt you know that the earth is round?"

"Yes, sir; only I never could understand how the people on the other side can walk upside down."

"They do not do so, my boy; our globe, flying through space with a double rotatory motion, has in reality neither top nor bottom. On the one hand, gravitation attracts our bodies towards its centre; on the other, the weight of our atmosphere fixes us firmly to our vast prison. But I called you in order to point out one of those phenomena which prove the rotundity of the earth. Look before you, and tell me what you see on the horizon."

"I see what we all see, sir, the masts of a ship."

"And what part of these masts do you see?"

"The tops."

"And the hull of the ship, can you see it?"

"No," replied Quicksilver, after looking attentively.

"And why cannot you see the hull?"

"Because it is too far off."

"The hull of a ship is at least a hundred times bigger than her masts; if distance prevents you seeing the hull, by what miracle can you distinguish the masts? It is because the earth is really round that we first discern the tops of this vessel's

masts, while her hull is as yet hidden by the curve described by the sea. If we continue our advance towards those infernal Canary Isles you will see the summit of the Peak of Teneriffe first, for just the same reason, and only in proportion as we approach nearer shall we distinguish the sides of the mountain, and last of all its base. Do you understand?"

Angry exclamations from the sailors on the bow of the *Fulton* interrupted M. Pinson. The *Davis* had hauled in her flag, and hoisted in its place the star-spangled banner of the North.

"What is the meaning of this?" asked the puzzled engineer; "is it a piece of bravado?"

"The meaning is," answered the lieutenant, "that the privateer has recognized an American ship in the sailing vessel that is approaching us. He hoists our flag in order not to scare the prey coming towards him. That's a dirty trick, sir, and I hope we shall unmask it presently by firing guns to put the three-master on her guard."

Night was coming on; the commodore from his bridge gave a sudden order to fire, and a sharp report vibrated through the air. Telescopes were immediately turned on the three-master; she was a sailing vessel of large size, probably laden with cotton. The report of the *Fulton's* gun made her change her course for a moment; but then the *Davis* in her turn fired a gun.

The three-master probably understood the double report to convey a hint to her to draw near to the two steamers which seemed to be acting in concert, for she changed her course and steered towards them.

The commodore, both anxious and indignant, ordered some shots to be fired in the direction of the *Davis;* he hoped by this hostile demonstration to attract the attention of the three-master. But the trader, two leagues away from the *Fulton,* could no longer make out his signals.

The commodore remained at his post. From time to time he called the ship's engineer and urged him to increase the speed of the steamer. But the engineer shook his head; the *Fulton* was already steaming at high pressure. The night became more and more dark, and little by little the *Davis* was hidden in the gloom.

The commodore went forward to the bow, listening to the sounds that came from the sea.

Suddenly a bright light appeared, gliding over the waves and lighting up the horizon. It soon rested on the *Davis*, and the crew of the *Fulton* burst into shouts; the ship was as distinctly visible as in full daylight.

Then the ray of light, again traversing the horizon, rested on the three-master; she was coming on in a straight line towards the *Davis*.

"What is it?" asked Quicksilver; "there is neither moon nor sun, and—"

"It is the electric light," said M. Pinson, pointing to the top of the main-mast, where there were two sub-officers. "Decidedly, these Americans are ingenious, and the *Davis* must feel rather annoyed."

It was certainly a fantastic sight to watch the white ray start from the summit of the *Fulton*, follow the *Davis* in all her movements, keep her in full light, and make all her manœuvres as visible as if the sun had been shining on her.

Several times the privateer tried to escape this inconvenient light, but always in vain. Then she turned straight on the three-master, and began to cannonade her.

Surprised by this unexpected attack, the trading-vessel immediately changed her course. The luminous ray, when turned upon her, showed her strewed with torn sails and rigging. Then fiery rockets, thrown from the *Davis*, described long curves in the air, and fell on the unfortunate three-master.

Cries of anger rose from the *Fulton*.

"Blow us up, if need be," cried the commodore to the chief engineer, "but, by Heaven, sir, bring us within range of the enemy!"

The cannonading went on. A flame suddenly appeared on the bow of the three-master, and the sea was reddened around. The vessel, encircled with flames, no longer obeyed her helm, and floated hap-hazard. On her deck were a dozen sailors hurriedly lowering a boat into the sea.

"That ship will go down; steer towards her!" shouted the commodore.

The *Fulton* obediently answered her helm. Silence reigned among the sailors; each one held his breath in terrible suspense. Little by little the three-master was settling down, her hull sinking gradually to the surface of the water. The *Davis*, without suspending her fire, passed behind and became invisible to the *Fulton*.

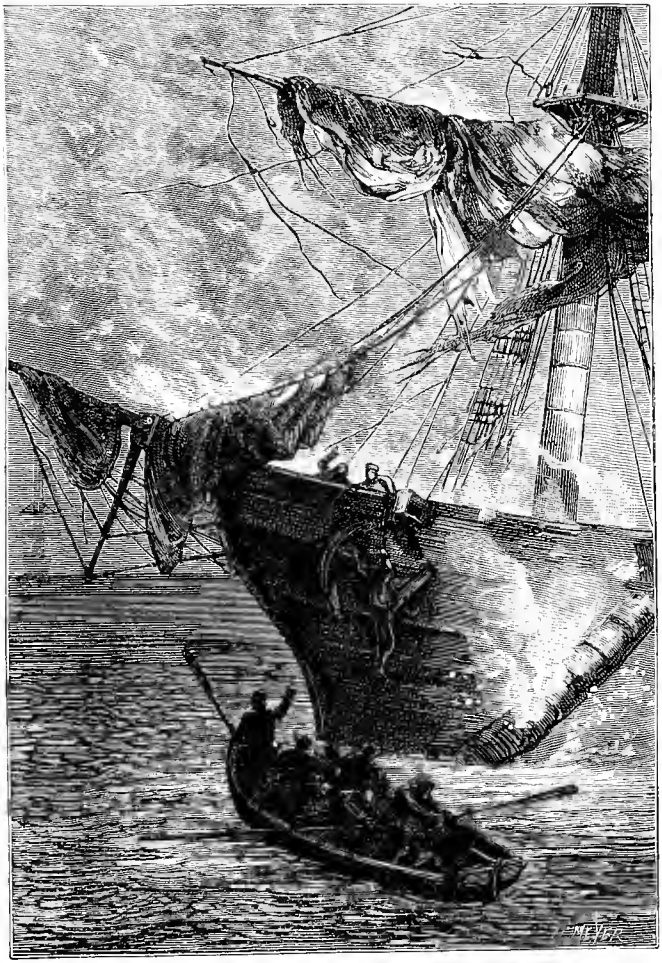
The three-master, still swinging wildly round on herself, once more presented her bow to the *Fulton*. One by one her crew disappeared. All at once a cry came from every observer, the three-master was heeling over. The fragments of her masts beat the air from right to left and from left to right; then they slowly sank, and the burned ship vanished beneath the waves.

"This, then, is war!" murmured M. Pinson, covering his eyes with his hands; "it is horrible!"

Profound darkness again covered the sea. A triumphant shout from the *Davis* reached the ears of the crew of the *Fulton*. The electric light was immediately turned on the privateer; she had just hoisted the Southern flag.

The commodore, standing on the quarter-deck, squeezed his spy-glass with such force that it broke.

"Is it not terrible, sir," he said to M. Pinson, "to see such atrocities committed, and not be able to prevent them?"



THE BURNING SHIP.

"It is, indeed," replied the engineer. "But what has become of the crew of the three-master?"

"I fear there was not time to lower the boat, and that they have been sucked in with their vessel as she sank."

The electric light, directed over the sea at this moment, showed the little boat in question; it was being vigorously rowed towards the *Davis*, which had stopped to wait for it.

"Ah!" exclaimed M. Pinson, with a sigh of relief, "these pirates still retain some human feeling."

"That is to say, they recruit sailors," answered the commodore, dryly. "Can one understand those fools," he continued, pointing to the boat, "going to seek refuge on board the enemy who has just sunk their ship?"

The commodore ran to his bridge; the *Fulton* was rapidly nearing the *Davis*. A shot from this latter fell spent into the sea at scarcely twenty yards from the steamer. A few minutes more and the range would be easy. The little boat got alongside; the men were taken on board in a moment, and the *Davis* resumed her course, with a fresh shout of triumph and defiance to the *Fulton*.

Towards midnight the two vessels, whose course was clearly the same, continued to sail as it were in concert—rather nearer together than in the morning, but still too far apart to exchange shots. M. Pinson took Quicksilver down to bed. The boy, still excited by the scenes he had witnessed, plied his companion with innumerable questions before he could fall asleep.

As for the engineer, he, too, for a long time sought sleep in vain.

"There is in life," he thought, "so much which is unexpected that nothing is more adapted to humble our reason. That fine three-master, only this morning sailing so majestically along, rushed blindly, notwithstanding the signals of the *Ful-*

ton, on the guns of the *Davis*, which no doubt she took for a friend! Talking of friends, I think I have something to say. My dearest friend drags me from my home, takes me to Liverpool, puts me on board a ship, and, thanks to him, here I am on the high-road to the 'land of canary-birds' as Quicksilver calls it; without counting that a shot from the *Davis* has already nearly put an end to my voyage, and that the same pirate has, doubtless, others in store for us. Meanwhile M. Boisjoli, gay, smart, and jolly, lands at New York and walks about on *terra firma*. Oh, *terra firma!* the day that I feel you once more beneath my feet— But I must not think of this or I shall begin to execrate Boisjoli."

Notwithstanding this good resolution, all M. Pinson's adventures since his departure passed before his closed eyes, and it was only by degrees that they became confused, and he at last fell asleep.

At daybreak he was up again. The *Davis* had not recovered the advantage she had lost by stopping, and the *Fulton* chased her with more determined eagerness than ever. M. Pinson approached the ship's compass, and found they had changed their course.

"Is the *Davis* returning towards Europe?" he inquired of the commodore, who was coming on deck.

"She would have to pass over our body for that," answered the officer. "No, sir, the *Davis* is not on her way to Europe just at present; she is leading us to the Cape Verd Islands." M. Pinson made a face.

"Did you hear?" he said to Quicksilver.

"Yes," replied the boy, in a disappointed tone, "we shall not see the country of canary-birds. Where are these islands, sir, of which the commodore was speaking?"

"A long way off the cape whose name they bear," answered the engineer. "This cape is at the westernmost point of Africa, at the extreme end of Senegambia. The

islands of Cape Verd were discovered by Codomorto, a Portuguese."

"And we are going to land there?"

"In order to answer that question," answered M. Pinson, "I must have some conversation with the captain of the *Davis*, for he has become the arbiter of our fate."

"But if we touch at those islands, shall we disembark?"

"Yes, on my honor," answered M. Pinson, with vehemence. "Whatever the land we may approach we will set foot on it, in order to return to Europe as best we may—quit of maritime routes and regulations, if the thing is possible."

"I wish, sir, we could disembark in a monkey-country, so as not to have travelled so far and seen only sky and water."

Just then the commodore drew near his passengers.

"I should have let well alone, M. Pinson," he said; "I thought I was rendering you a service by taking you on board, rather against the rules, and now I am carrying you Heaven knows where."

"Everything comes to an end in this world, commodore, and your chase after the *Davis* will be no exception. This is my consolation. Would it be indiscreet to ask what are your plans?"

"I have none, just now, except to come up with the *Davis* and sink her."

"But how long and how far do you mean to follow her?"

"To the end of the world, sir, if necessary."

"This is pleasant!" said M. Pinson to himself. "Modern science having demonstrated that the world has no end, here I am at sea for all eternity. I sometimes think I must be on board that phantom ship which troubles the dreams of sailors, and which they all declare they have caught sight of in their voyages, flying before them in mist or in storm. And now,

thanks to Boisjoli, I am on my way to the end of the world; is it not really absurd?"

"Whale astern!" cried the lookout.

M. Pinson, lost in thought, paid no attention to this announcement, which was repeated to him by Quicksilver, who instantly darted away to catch sight of the monster.

CHAPTER XIII.

CROSSING THE LINE.

On the almost perfectly calm surface of the sea there had just appeared astern of the *Fulton* a dark mass, which, seen from a distance, resembled the hull of a ship, bottom upwards. Quicksilver, who had climbed the rigging to obtain a better view, saw this mass suddenly move, describe a kind of curve, and then an enormous tail appeared above the water. At the same moment an intolerable stench pervaded the atmosphere.

For two or three minutes the sea remained undisturbed; then it bubbled up, the end of a gigantic snout was seen, and two columns of salt water, thrown up to a height of about two yards, fell back in a shower of vapor. At the same time a bluish object rose half out of the sea and instantly sank down again.

"Is that a real whale, sir?" asked Quicksilver of M. Pinson, who had joined him.

"It is a relation only, my boy, the large cachalot, or sperm-whale, called by the scientific *Physeter macrocephalus*."

"It must be the biggest of fish; it seemed to me as long as our boat."

"Yes, the cachalot and the whale are giants among the inhabitants of the sea. Only the cachalot is no more a fish than the whale, the narwhal, the dolphin, or the porpoise are fishes. All these are mammiferous animals."

"What! those creatures living in the sea are not fishes?" cried the boy, much surprised.

"They live in the sea," said M. Pinson, "but are obliged to come to the surface every few minutes in order to breathe, as you will see presently. Besides this, these creatures are warm-blooded, while fish are cold-blooded animals."

"And what does this cachalot feed on?"

"It is carnivorous, and almost as voracious as the shark; it feeds on fish, and on shell-fish, and would willingly take a bite at you if you gave it the chance."

Quicksilver held on tighter to the rigging.

"I have been told," he said, "that the whale could not even defend itself."

"Quite true; it has no teeth, to begin with, but a sort of fringe of whalebone; then it is so timid that a bird hovering over the water puts it to flight. Maternal love alone gives it courage; it will defend the young it suckles. As to the cachalot, that's a different matter."

The idea of a whale suckling her young made Quicksilver laugh: he at first thought M. Pinson was jesting.

"I am not jesting at all," said the engineer; "and whalers know so well the affection of the whale for her offspring that they often attack these little creatures, although of no value to them, knowing that the mother will sooner let herself be killed than forsake them."

"Poor whales!" said Quicksilver, "if they only had the sense to go away from their young ones."

The cachalot showed himself again. As at first, he half rose from the water, then plunged in once more, leaving the air poisonous after him.

"The sailors say, sir," said Quicksilver, "that the head of this f—, this animal, I mean, is as big as his body, and that it contains spermaceti, with which candles are made. Is that true?"

"Quite true, my boy."

"They say also that his body contains ambergris; what is ambergris?"

"A fatty matter, which is thought to be secreted from the stomach of the cachalot. Ambergris is found sometimes floating on the surface of the sea; it has an odor of musk, which makes it of use to perfumers."

Five or six other cachalots now showed themselves at some distance, tumbling about in the water, chasing each other as if at play.

Quicksilver learned with some surprise that these gigantic creatures sometimes travel in companies of two or three hundred.

"One curious fact," M. Pinson also told him, "is that whales, against whom man has waged so relentless a war for ages that they have been destroyed by millions, are very little known to naturalists, who for a long time failed to distinguish between different species. Now, thanks to the progress of science, we have classified no less than eighty different species of the whale, many of which are not yet thoroughly investigated. Nearly all these mammiferous creatures dwell in the Arctic seas; continually hunted about, they seek more and more for refuge in the inaccessible regions surrounding the North Pole, which it is the dream of mariners to navigate."

The cachalots were soon left behind by the *Fulton*, to the great disappointment of Quicksilver, who was always hoping that one of them would spring from the water and display its whole body. Towards evening the ship passed through shoals of porpoises, which came fearlessly about the sides and bow of the steamer, as if they would race with her. Quicksilver, who could with ease examine these smaller creatures, plied M. Pinson with questions.

"Porpoises," said the engineer, "are piscivorous—that is to say, they feed on fish. These formless animals, breathing air as it were in the midst of water, and yet not amphibious, were for a long time a puzzle to naturalists, who knew not what place to assign to them. The family of porpoises or dolphins

is still more numerous than that of whales; they are met with in every sea and in all latitudes."

Meanwhile, the sailors on the bow of the *Fulton* were whistling old English tunes as they leaned over the water.

M. Pinson began to laugh.

"In the old times," said the engineer to his young companion, who was surprised at his gayety, "dolphins were supposed to be great lovers of music; and I perceive that the belief still exists. I often heard that sailors delight in seeing porpoises accompany their ship, and try to induce them to remain by whistling; I see now that these stories were quite true."

"Do dolphins really like music?" inquired Quicksilver.

"Not a bit of it; it is their merry nature, their activity, which attracts them to ships, and not harmony, for which their hearing organs are not adapted."

"Oh, sir! look at those two little ones that keep quite close to the two big ones!"

"They are pressing against their mothers, and are going to suck. The milk is blue in color."

Quicksilver opened such astonished eyes that M. Pinson had to repeat to him twice that dolphin's milk is really blue before he could believe it.

The sun set radiantly in a golden haze, and the *Davis*, still flying before them, seemed on fire. This sight reminded the crew of the *Fulton* of the two ships which had been burned before their eyes by the privateer, and with threatening gestures they all called down upon her the same cruel fate that she had inflicted on her inoffensive adversaries.

Night came on, warm and soft, for the *Fulton* was speeding towards the equator, and, though it was only the beginning of March, the temperature was like that of May. M. Pinson knew that the *Davis* had again altered her course and was now steaming for the Virgin Islands, and he wondered more than once where his involuntary travels would end.

For three days more, while nothing occurred to vary the monotony of the chase undertaken by the *Fulton*, she continued to make for the Virgin Islands. Instead of the rough weather longed for by the commodore, who hoped that then his vessel would prove her superiority to the *Davis*, the sun, brilliant and blazing, travelled through a blue and cloudless sky. Quicksilver was amazed at the sudden changes of temperature, and could scarcely realize what M. Pinson told him, that they were in the region of those countries where dwells an eternal spring, and that if they could disembark they would find land covered with palm-trees, banana-trees, and latanias, instead of oaks and birches.

Many weary hours were passed by the engineer seated on the quarter-deck, while he gazed far out to sea, or watched the long black trail left by the smoke of the *Davis* across the shining heavens. He could not help counting again and again the hours and the days that had passed since he had left the *Canada*. Had he followed Boisjoli's advice, not only would he have seen New York, but he would now be on his way to Europe. Instead of this he was dragged against his will to unknown lands, and his destination was in the hands of a pirate, who, as the commodore said, seemed to have every disposition to be a general executioner.

Quicksilver, happily for himself, did not share the painful anxieties of M. Pinson. Although he found life on board ship monotonous, the boy made the best of it. He liked to sit on the bow and look into the depths of the transparent waters. He persuaded the sailors to tell him their histories, and, boy-like, he admired these men, who, according to their own accounts, had seen tigers, lions, and monkeys roaming free in the forests.

In the evening, when a breeze arose, Quicksilver, still in his favorite place, would watch the prow of the *Fulton* as it divided the waves and made them sparkle with phosphorescent light.

He had learned from M. Pinson that these sparks are pro-

duced by millions of infusoria, infinitely minute insects whose existence was only revealed to man after his discovery of the microscope.

The heat increased to such a degree that, in spite of the ventilators set up to cool the interior of the *Fulton*, it became painful to remain below. As soon as they were dressed M. Pinson and Quicksilver would hasten to the quarter-deck. One morning the boy began to rub his eyes, thinking he must be dreaming, for the *Fulton* seemed to be sailing on pale green fields, enamelled with red and blue flowers.

"Are we on land?" he cried.

"No, unfortunately," said M. Pinson, "we are simply crossing a bank of tropical grasses, a plant which botanists call *fucus natans*. These sea-weeds alarmed the companions of Columbus several times. They thought in their ignorance that they were sailing on liquid land.

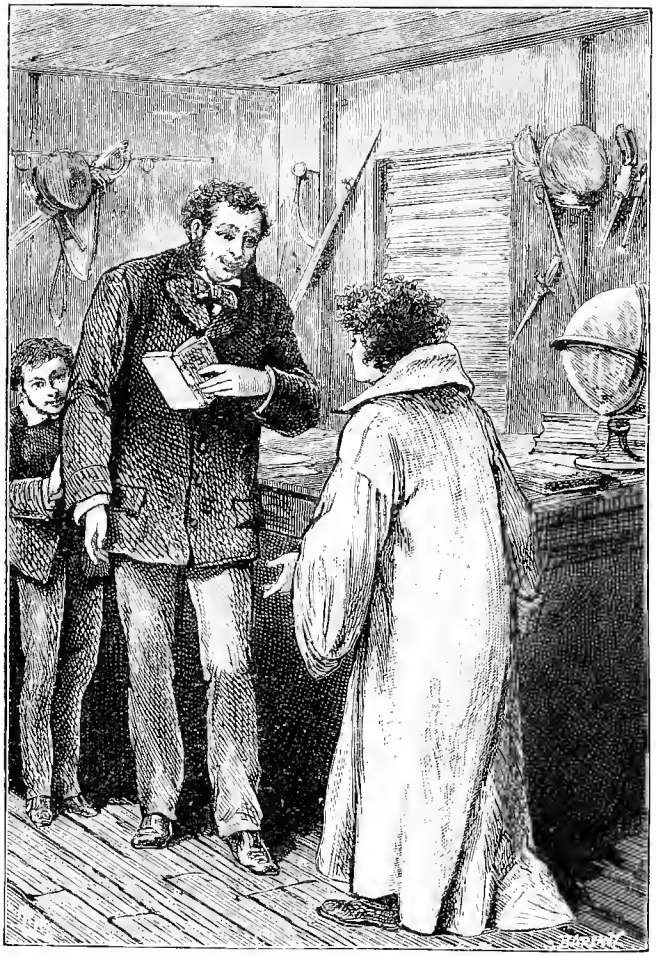
"But the red and blue flowers, what are they in reality?"

"Medusas, animals of the zoophyte family. Their bodies are simply gelatinous matter. They are called by sailors sea-nettles, because a corrosive liquid which burns the hands is secreted by their bodies."

All this day and the next they passed at intervals over banks of sea-grasses, and Quicksilver hardly once suspended his watch from the decks. It was the 14th of March, and M. Pinson reflected sadly upon the fact that it was now a month since he had left his home in the Rue Nollet, and sixteen days since he had come on board the *Fulton*. These were melancholy reflections, and often did the engineer feel inclined to curse Boisjoli, as the involuntary cause of his incredible adventures.

One morning, as M. Pinson and Quicksilver were about to go on deck, as usual, they were stopped by the lieutenant.

"They are putting the *Fulton* into full dress," said the officer, "and even the quarter-deck is unbearable. Stay down here half an hour longer, if you don't want to be splashed."



AN APPEAL.

M. Pinson took up a book, and Quicksilver, instead of studying in his favorite place near the ship's compass, established himself on the officers' table.

At nine o'clock a cabin-boy, with his hair curled, and dressed in a long white gown made of sail-cloth, came to inform M. Pinson that not only might he go on deck, but that a numerous company awaited his compliance with their invitation. The engineer's heart beat — were they nearing land? Was it to contrive this agreeable surprise for him that the lieutenant had restricted him to the saloon? He sprang on deck, stopped short, and exclaimed:

"Prodigious!"

Opposite him, on a high platform representing a throne, and covered with sail-cloth, sat a man with a long tow beard, dressed in a garment adorned with wreaths of sea-weed. His brow was encircled with a gilt crown, and he leaned majestically on a trident. Around him stood a group of sailors, each holding a shell, in which he pretended to blow as in a trumpet. Soon the strains of a violin were heard, and a lady, adorned with a black mustache, her head also encircled by a gilt crown, advanced to the platform, while the cabin-boys, naked to the waist, and enwreathed from head to foot with sea-weed, followed her, roughly jostling each other. Having reached the platform, the lady courtesied, and shouts of "Long live Neptune and Amphitrite!" rose from the deck, while the fiddle scraped the national air of "Yankee Doodle."

M. Pinson, astonished at the spectacle, stared open-mouthed at the officers, who were imperturbably grave. As for Quicksilver, he clung instinctively to the engineer.

Then a sailor approached the two passengers and summoned them in the name of Father Neptune to appear before his throne, in order to answer his questions and explain their presence on board.

At this request, which Quicksilver interpreted to him, a light

dawned on M. Pinson. The *Fulton* was about to "cross the line," and the sailors were about to christen the travellers, who would now cross it for the first time.

The engineer was questioned as to his age, his habits, and the reason of his presence on board the *Fulton*.

"God is my witness, my lord," he gayly answered Father Neptune, "that it is quite against my will I am now trespassing on the frontiers of your states. Did it depend on me, every turn of the *Fulton's* screw would take me nearer to that old Europe which your commodore considers much younger than America."

Quicksilver, who was deputed to translate these questions and answers, accomplished his task with the utmost gravity; it did not occur to him that this masquerade was only a game. The poor boy believed himself to be before a tribunal competent to punish his misdemeanors. M. Pinson's replies, however, somewhat reassured him. Nevertheless, when he had to speak on his own behalf, he entreated his judges not to punish him, promising never again to embark without their permission.

Madame Amphitrite comforted him with kind words, and declared that the gentleness of her sex bound her to plead the cause of the young traveller.

This fine mustached lady puzzled Quicksilver very much; he thought he recognized in her one of the sailors with whom he was fond of talking.

M. Pinson having placed a small piece of silver in the money-box, which was handed to him by a Triton, was invited to ascend the platform with his companion, in order to receive from Father Neptune himself a permission, signed and countersigned, to travel within his empire. The two sovereigns politely made room for the engineer and Quicksilver; they even obliged them to sit on the throne. Then the fiddle struck up, accompanied by fife and drum. Father Neptune gallantly presented his

hand to his lovely companion, who was going through a thousand mincing tricks with her fan. The bridal pair majestically descended the steps, and had scarcely reached the bottom when the whole platform suddenly turned over, upsetting M. Pinson and Quicksilver into a tank of water.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE VIRGIN ISLANDS.

JUST as the platform gave way and let him fall into the tank, treacherously concealed beneath a sail, M. Pinson was explaining to Quicksilver the meaning of this performance, which had greatly puzzled the boy. He informed him that it was a customary recreation for sailors, who, during the long voyages to which their hard and dangerous calling condemns them, have very few opportunities of amusement; that an involuntary bath was a frequent consequence of the entertainment, and he had proceeded thus far in his explanation when his sudden upset gave practical proof of the correctness of his assertions.

When they had recovered the shock of their tumble, which they took in good part, M. Pinson and Quicksilver emerged streaming from the tank, and were instantly assailed by jets of water from three pumps and by the contents of about twenty buckets. The engineer was strong and active, and soon passed from the defensive to the offensive. He speedily captured one of the buckets, and returned shower for shower. The fray, interspersed with shouts of laughter, became general. Quicksilver was not behindhand; seizing a pump-hose, he climbed on the little bridge, and liberally showered on those who had besprinkled him. An imperative whistle from the boatswain put an end to this hydraulic engagement. The fun came to an end, and discipline resumed its sway. But M. Pinson, wet to the skin, had to purchase clothes for himself and Quicksilver, for they possessed only those they stood upright in. Luckily, they found all their requirements in the kits of a cabin-boy and a

sailor, and M. Pinson was soon pacing the decks arrayed in a jersey and a sou'wester.

A similar scene to that which had enlivened the *Fulton* was taking place on board the *Davis*, and the sounds of a drum and the scraping of a fiddle could be heard over the sea. Thus the very men who, by a slight change of wind, might be brought together in bloody affray, were giving themselves up to the same wild pastime. As M. Pinson had remarked, life is full of these strange contrasts, and human nature requires such alternations of joy and sadness, of gravity and folly, in order to preserve its equilibrium.

Towards half-past eleven the *Fulton* was in her accustomed order. The commodore and his officers were taking the sun's altitude with their sextants. This operation was always puzzling to Quicksilver, who now questioned M. Pinson concerning the meaning of the words meridians, latitude, and longitude, which he heard frequently repeated at the hour when the ship's bearings were taken.

"Well, my boy," said the engineer, "you know that the earth is round?"

"Yes," answered Quicksilver, "and you proved it to me the other day, by pointing out to me that we could perceive the masts of a ship before we could see her hull."

"You know also that the earth, revolving on her axis, of which the ends are called the poles, besides her journey of three hundred and sixty-five days round the sun, turns on herself once in twenty-four hours."

"Yes, sir, you told me this, and you explained to me that the earth's axis may be compared to the axle-tree of a carriage, which remains motionless while the wheels turn round."

"Very good; well, a great circle has been traced by man in a perpendicular direction from the earth's axis, which he has placed at an equal distance from the poles, and it divides our globe into two equal portions. One of these is called the boreal,

or northern, hemisphere, and the other the austral, or southern, hemisphere. The great circle is the equator, called by seamen the line."

"I understand."

"A meridian, on the other hand, is a circle which, passing through the axis of the earth and the two poles, is perpendicular to the equator. Each meridian divides the earth into two new hemispheres, one called eastern, the other western. There are one hundred and eighty meridians in each hemisphere, three hundred and sixty in all."

"I understand this too," said Quicksilver.

"Now the tropics are two parallel circles, situated one to the north and one to the south of the equator, circles beyond which the sun does not travel in his apparent yearly course round the earth. The north tropic is called the tropic of Cancer—it is the one we have just crossed; the southern tropic is called the tropic of Capricorn. Tropic means return, because the sun when it has reached the tropic of Cancer appears to ascend no farther, but to begin to descend."

Quicksilver, with wide-opened eyes, was looking in his teacher's face, and listening to him with earnest attention. M. Pinson remarked some uncertainty in his expression, and to make his lesson clearer he traced out the lines of which he was speaking. He then continued:

"Now the longitude of any spot is the arc or segment of the equator, or of any one of its parallels, which is comprised between the meridian that runs through this spot and another meridian arbitrarily fixed. The longitude of the different spots on the globe is measured by the difference in their hours, which are multiplied by fifteen degrees, because the sun in his apparent course of each day travels three hundred and sixty degrees in twenty-four hours, and consequently fifteen degrees in one hour. In order to make an exact calculation, seamen are provided with a chronometer which indicates the hour of their

national meridian. Thus, where we now are it is noon, but their chronometer declares it to be three o'clock in Paris; now three times fifteen degrees make forty-five degrees, from which it results that the *Fulton* is forty-five degrees longitude west of Paris."

"I understand," said the boy, after looking once more at the geometric figure traced by his friend.

"The latitude of a place," continued M. Pinson, "is the arc of the meridian comprised between the parallel which passes there and the equator; it is measured by the elevation of the celestial pole above this spot. The knowledge of latitude and longitude is of the greatest importance in geography, and no one nowadays ought to be ignorant of the manner in which they are taken. And it is owing to this knowledge, my boy, that every day at noon the commodore can tell us on what precise spot of the globe we then are."

"I always thought," said Quicksilver, "that sailors directed their course by the compass."

"The compass helps them to keep straight on the wide surface of the waters; it is but a sign-post, nothing more—for it points to the north without marking the distance. It is only by an exact knowledge of latitude and longitude that a ship can be steered to any given point."

The next day but one, the 20th of April, the commodore, having taken the altitude, made his calculations, and consulted the barometer, came back on deck rubbing his hands.

"What is your good news, sir?" asked M. Pinson.

"The glass is falling at last," answered the officer, "and between this and night there will be a squall, which will bring us nearer the *Davis*."

"God grant it!" cried the engineer; "I am by nature a peaceful man, but I would willingly help in a struggle which would sufficiently damage the *Davis* to make her stop her course."

"That's just what the villainous pirate wants to do; but I hope to spoil his game."

"What do you mean?"

"That in a few hours we shall sight the Virgin Isles; that the pirate, whose coals are beginning to run short, will, in all probability, try to reach the harbor of St. Thomas, in order to replenish and refit in safety."

The commodore had scarcely ceased speaking when the look-out signalled land.

M. Pinson perceived the same bluish cloud above the water that he had seen when he was hoping to approach the English coast. Quicksilver, hearing that the land just in sight was part of America, could scarcely conceal his joy. At last he was going to see one of the wonderful countries visited by the great Robinson!

"What are the Virgin Isles, sir?" he inquired of M. Pinson. "Are they large?"

"The Virgin Isles," answered the engineer, "were discovered in 1493 by Christopher Columbus. They are forty in number, without counting a multitude of little islets scattered among them. The principal island, St. Thomas, which is simply a vast rock, belongs to Denmark. The Danes have made it a free port."

"And are these Virgin Isles inhabited?"

"A few only; for some of them are without water, and they are exposed to frequent hurricanes."

Quicksilver was soon absorbed in watching the manœuvres of the *Davis* and the *Fulton*. Great black clouds gathered on the horizon; the wind blew fiercely, and the sea, so calm for the last fortnight, began to be disturbed. The waves were working, as the sailors expressed it, and the commodore continued rubbing his hands as he saw the foam dash against the sides of his ship and the spray fall on her deck.

As her captain had predicted, the *Fulton* behaved bravely

amid the tossing waves. It soon became evident that she was gaining on the enemy whom she had been chasing for more than a fortnight. Every instant the wind became higher, and the sea consequently more rough.

The *Davis* could be seen rising, sinking, bending, as if she were about to be swallowed by the waves. This astonished Quicksilver, who could not believe that the *Fulton* was executing pretty much the same movements. As for M. Pinson, when he saw, as it were, a mere little wooden shell thus dancing before him, he could but admire the daring of those men who brave the elements on so slender a support.

They were fast nearing land, and the palm-trees which crown the summit of St. Thomas came in sight. These trees, standing out against the sky, astonished Quicksilver, who asked a multitude of questions.

But M. Pinson scarcely replied. The engineer was engrossed with the manœuvres of the *Fulton*, which suddenly ceased to follow in the track of the *Davis* and ran for land.

What could be the meaning of this? At the very moment when his ship appeared on the point of coming up with the enemy, did the commodore intend to give up the pursuit? The engineer was lost in wonder.

The strongholds surmounting the heights of St. Thomas soon became visible to the naked eye. Quicksilver, using a spy-glass, could distinguish the guns and the sentries, and was jumping for joy.

"But where is the harbor?" he asked of a sailor. "I cannot see a single house."

"The harbor lies at the end of the roadstead, which is sheltered by the two headlands you see before you," answered the sailor. "You don't see it until you follow the canal between these headlands."

"And is there a town?"

"Yes; a town of ten thousand inhabitants. It is built on

the side of a nearly perpendicular mountain. The streets, except the principal one, which runs alongside the sea, are only accessible by flights of steps."

"Well, my boy," said M. Pinson just then, "so we have come to an end of our voyage."

"Are we going to land?"

"I hope so. St. Thomas is the port to which the steamers which run between Europe and South America come for coal; therefore there will be little delay before we embark for France or England."

"Would not one think, sir, that the *Davis* had stopped?"

"Yes, the commodore has been explaining her manœuvres to me. By means of the *Fulton's* superior speed she has got ahead, so as to bar the way to the *Davis*, who intended taking shelter in the harbor, and oblige her to fight. Only the *Davis* seems nowise inclined to engage with the *Fulton*, and is endeavoring to get near enough to the island to be in Danish waters."

"In Danish waters?" echoed Quicksilver.

"Yes. International law has decreed that in time of war two foreign ships may not attack each other within a certain distance from the coasts of a neutral country, that space being held to form part of the territory which it surrounds."

"So the *Fulton* could not attack the *Davis* if she came in as near as we are?"

"No, not without violation of Danish territory."

The *Davis* had resumed her way, and directed her course towards the southern point of the island. Instantly the *Fulton* steamed in the same direction, and outstripped her adversary. The *Davis* turned back, and when she had reached a point opposite the canal leading to the roadstead she put her head towards the narrow passage.

But the stormy sea seemed to have given wings to the *Fulton*, and she was again in time to stop the corsair's way. The

two steamers then exchanged several shots; the *Davis*, knowing she would be disabled if she kept within range of her formidable enemy, disappointed her several times by unexpectedly putting about: a series of skilful manœuvres were thus executed which extorted praise from the commodore.

"The captain of that ship knows his business," he grumbled. "He must be a Northerner."

M. Pinson smiled. He hoped that the captain of the *Davis*, by reason of the skill which even his enemy acknowledged, would succeed at last in running the blockade and reaching the harbor.

Suddenly the privateer returned to the open sea, and appeared to direct her course towards Europe.

The *Fulton* contented herself with tacking along the island.

"She's going off and will escape you," said the engineer involuntarily.

"Not at all," answered the commodore; "the rascal is trying a trick which might succeed with a Frenchman or an Englishman, but not with me. The *Davis*, sir, like ourselves, is short of coal, and could only return to Europe under canvas. At all risks she must get into St. Thomas or St. Domingo. Now, if rough weather continues to help us along, she will only accomplish this after having tasted the quality of our shot."

M. Pinson made no reply; the joy this information caused him was overpowering. His singular voyage was thus drawing to a close. Both steamers must of necessity give in after a few more hours for lack of fuel; the commodore had just admitted this, and the engineer felt inclined to embrace him for the good news.

Night came on; despite the bad weather the *Fulton* contrived to keep the *Davis* under the rays of the electric apparatus. Twenty times the corsair tried to draw near the canal, twenty times she was driven back. She returned shot for shot, and several sailors were wounded; but through all her evolu-

tions she avoided getting too near her adversary, who at close quarters would have smashed her in a few minutes.

Towards ten in the evening the wind fell, the heavens were starlight, and by degrees the sea grew calm. Not before midnight did M. Pinson retire to rest, in full confidence of landing on the following day. At five in the morning, surprised at feeling the *Fulton* in movement, the engineer dressed hastily and repaired to the quarter-deck. St. Thomas was no longer in sight, but in its stead he beheld a multitude of little islets, against which the sea was raging furiously. The *Davis*, still within view, seemed to be steaming among reefs, and a boat, still carrying a sail, was drifting about at less than two hundred yards from the *Fulton*.

CHAPTER XV.

"MAN OVERBOARD."

M. PINSON could not believe his eyes.

"Prodigious!" he exclaimed.

Then, looking about, he sought for some one to question, being quite at a loss to understand what he saw.

The commodore, his first officer, and the chief-engineer were standing on the bridge; two sub-officers transmitted their orders to the men in charge of the helm. There was a heavy swell on from yesterday's storm, and the *Fulton* rose up, bent over, and sank again, the sport of the liquid mountains on her bow.

"What has happened? What is happening?" asked the engineer of Quicksilver, who, after a visit to the prow, was slowly returning to the quarter-deck.

"The sailors," answered the boy, "have just told me that the *Davis*, finding she cannot get into the roadstead at St. Thomas, has resolved on regaining the open sea. The commodore at first thought it was a trick, and he let her gain a little advantage, but when he saw the *Davis* was really going off for good, he began to chase her again."

"Where are we?"

"Opposite the reefs which divide the Virgin Isles."

"And the deserted boat yonder, floating hap-hazard, does she belong to the *Davis?*"

"That is the boat belonging to the pilot whom the *Davis* has just taken on board."

M. Pinson asked his young companion no more questions. The commodore was giving orders.

The command of a man-of-war is a heavy responsibility, and he who undertakes it must have a profound knowledge of the sea and the winds, and their caprices; coolness that nothing can disturb, a keen eye, and the power of prompt decision. The lives of many hundreds of men often depend on the manœuvres he may dictate, and he is responsible to his country for the ship confided to him. He is bound to know her speed, her qualities, her defects, her behavior in all weathers, just as a rider should know the horse he has to break or to drive. A ship which lags in calm weather becomes light and swift when battling with a raging sea. Another obeys the helm but reluctantly, or rears, as it were, at the touch of the curb, and dashes eagerly at the desired course. For five years Commodore Warren had commanded the *Fulton;* he knew her thoroughly, and had the same perfect confidence in his crew that they placed in him.

Hardly had the *Davis* entered the reefs than out of bravado she hoisted her flag, and a mocking cheer reached the *Fulton* across the water.

"Run up our colors, sir," said the commodore to the boatswain; "and you, boy," he added, turning to a gunner, "give her a salute."

The stars and stripes were soon flying, and the report of a gun rang sharp and clear, while the spent ball fell at ten yards from the *Davis.*

"Steer her more to the north," cried the commodore to the helmsmen.

The *Fulton* turned towards the reefs. The commodore's orders became numerous, and ten minutes later the big steamer in her turn entered the passage taken by her enemy, amid the prolonged cheering of the crew.

"This is well done!" said M. Pinson to Quicksilver, "now it only remains to be seen to what these dashing measures will lead."

"Are we making for a harbor?" asked the boy.

"Not exactly; all these little islets are desert and uninhabitable."

"Desert!" said Quicksilver; "yet we can see grass and trees; and the one we are now nearing looks like a regular island."

"You are right, and I would not answer for it that that 'regular island' will not shortly become our dwelling-place; because, besides the little islets against which we see the waves breaking, there must be many others under the surface. It would hardly improve our prospects to have Boisjoli here, but I should not grudge him a share in the sensations of which he is the cause."

Quicksilver, with sparkling eyes, was watching the little islets, which the *Fulton*, as she exactly followed the track of the *Davis*, sometimes passed within a very short distance. He did not altogether dread a shipwreck; for, being able to swim, he felt sure, should the worst happen, that he should be able to gain one of the shores among which they were threading their way. Whenever he caught sight of one on which was a clump of trees, he gazed at it longingly; it seemed to him the very place where he might realize his most ardent wish, that of living a wild life, like the departed Robinson.

For nearly four hours they rounded islands, islets, and rocks, then all at once the broad deep sea appeared between the two ships. A great sigh of relief was breathed by all; even the commodore took time to wipe his glass, and came down from his observatory.

"Well, sir, and what do you think of our chase?" he asked M. Pinson.

"I think that you are a bold sailor, commodore."

"I am an American, sir, and I know my country's motto, 'Go ahead!'"

"Have you already sailed in these parts?"

"Yes, once, by good luck."

"Shall I be too inquisitive if I ask where we are going?"

"To Charleston, to Baltimore, perhaps to New York."

"Are we then in the open sea?"

"Not precisely; we are in a gulf, bounded by reefs similar to those we have just left. In about two hours' time we shall be navigating a channel."

"It's going to be a queer business," said the engineer with a grimace.

"Yes," answered the commodore, "especially after sunset, when I hope the *Davis* will be driven into a corner."

"This gulf in which we are has no outlet, then?"

"It has, sir, but I don't think the *Davis*, even with a pilot on board, will venture to try it."

The commodore returned to his post. As he had predicted, the man on the watch soon sang out, "Breakers ahead!"

"Notice the shores carefully as we pass by," said the engineer to Quicksilver. "I have a presentiment that our commodore's daring will end by leaving us on the coast somewhere."

The prospect of such an occurrence did not seem to disturb the boy in the slightest degree.

"Just now, sir," he said, drawing nearer the engineer and speaking in a low tone, "they were feeding the poultry on board; and I took care quietly to fill my pockets with barley and wheat."

"Why, my boy?"

"In order to sow it on the island where we are going to be shipwrecked," answered Quicksilver with great seriousness. "And I have," added he, "a great hunch of bread besides."

"This bread is to keep us until the corn grows?"

"Yes, sir."

Notwithstanding the real gravity of their position the engineer could not help laughing. Quicksilver was not in the least disconcerted.

"I have also," he said, "a knife and a big nail, and I know

where the carpenter keeps his tools; they are in a chest, and we can take it on the raft we are going to make when the *Fulton* is wrecked."

"The deuce we can!" said M. Pinson; "your imagination travels fast, my boy."

"You see we must be ready for everything, sir, and I advise you to keep an eye on the safety-buoys that are hanging along the deck. So soon as the *Fulton* strikes on a rock, cut the rope of one of the buoys and throw it down into the sea. I will do the same, and we shall thus be able to reach the island that seems the biggest. We ought to have a gun, but I am afraid of taking any of the officers'!"

"Well, well!" said M. Pinson, stroking Quicksilver's hair, "you will soon be making me believe that the series of adventures I owe to Boisjoli will really end tragically. Certainly we are in danger; the serious looks of all the sailors prove that; but the commodore values his own life, by Jove! and he will think twice before smashing his vessel on a rock."

"He is an American, sir, and to serve out the *Davis* would not mind throwing us all overboard; he told me so just now."

"That was a joke, Quicksilver; for his giving us all a cold bath could do no harm to the *Davis*."

The engineer stopped short; they were then coasting round a flat, barren island, where there grew only a few stunted trees. Having passed it, they found themselves opposite another, standing about a hundred yards above the level of the sea. On the summit a man and woman were visible. They were looking at the two ships with evident astonishment, and were making signs, and pointing to the horizon.

"Are they savages?" inquired Quicksilver of M. Pinson.

"No, my boy, their garments are of European manufacture; to all appearance they are fishermen staying for a short time in this place, for I see a boat anchored at the foot of the rock."

For a long time Quicksilver watched the fisherman and his

wife, envying the happiness of those who dwell on desert islands, a lot which seemed to the boy to be the height of felicity. He was calling to mind all the feats of Robinson, when his attention was caught by a flock of birds rising from the rocks, and hovering over the *Fulton*. Among them were two frigate birds, which derive this name, on account of their power of flight, from the ships that are reckoned the best sailers. The frigate (*hirunda marina*), or sea swallow, is of great width between the wings, and usually soars high into the sky. Its sight, which is as piercing as that of the eagle, enables it to perceive fishes swimming on the surface of the water, on which it falls with the swiftness of lightning. The sea-swallow inhabits tropical climes, and seldom leaves the coast for more than a distance of one degree.

Quicksilver soon noticed other birds, whose tails seemed to be ornamented with two long straws.

"You are not mistaken," said M. Pinson; "and it is on account of these tail-feathers that this bird is vulgarly called 'straw-tail.' It is also called the bird of the tropics, for it is rarely met with beyond the zone of the equator. On this account the great Linnæus, with his poetical imagination, gives it the name of Phaeton, or bird of the sun."

The attention of both pupil and teacher was now recalled to the commodore, who, standing on the bridge, was rapidly giving orders. The *Fulton* had entered a narrow creek, and was carefully following the track of the *Davis*. The latter was at times hidden behind the islets, and the distance between her and the *Fulton* seemed to increase. The sun was sinking towards the horizon, and M. Pinson could not think without alarm of the dangers that both steamers must incur if surprised by night in this narrow passage. They had now emerged from the creek, and the sea was comparatively open, although on all sides land was in sight at a distance of about nine miles. The commodore came down from his bridge for a moment's rest.

"If the charts are correct," he said to M. Pinson, "we are in a 'no thoroughfare,' from which there will be no escape for the *Davis*, so I am rather of a mind to wait for her here. After she has made the round of the gulf, she must come back, to a dead certainty."

"Night is coming on, commodore, and prudence—"

"Prudence is not the point, sir; the point is to destroy the *Davis*. If my charts were only American, I could rely absolutely on them, but they are drawn up by officers of your country, and I fear that the pilot— By heaven! the *Davis* seems uncertain—"

The commodore sprang to his bridge; the *Davis* was hesitating—she was slowly coasting round a rock on her left. The *Fulton* was gaining fast on her enemy. M. Pinson, in order to obtain a better view, hoisted himself up on the after part of the ship, and leaned against the staff from the top of which floated the flag of the United States.

The *Davis*, probably on account of the narrowness of the passage, continued to steam slowly; suddenly she veered round and fired a broadside into her enemy. A shot, striking the flagstaff against which M. Pinson was leaning, shivered it, and, unable to keep his foothold, M. Pinson was precipitated into the sea.

At this sight Quicksilver, with wonderful presence of mind, cut a safety buoy loose and threw it overboard; then the poor boy leaned over to watch his friend, from whom the *Fulton* was rapidly steaming away. M. Pinson reappeared on the surface, and then sank.

"He can't swim," cried Quicksilver in an agony; and, without further reflection, the brave little fellow threw himself into the water and struck out towards the engineer.

The cry, "A man overboard!" echoed dismally from one end of the *Fulton* to the other; soon the ship was five hundred yards away from the drowning man.

Quicksilver swam like a fish: in a very short time he had caught hold of the buoy he had cast overboard; helped by this, he pushed it towards the engineer, who, although surprised and bewildered by his unexpected fall, had speedily recovered his presence of mind, and was swimming vigorously.

"Courage, sir!" cried Quicksilver; "I am coming."

"Husband your strength," answered the engineer, calmly.

Ten minutes later, M. Pinson also had hold of the ropes attached to the buoy.

"How was it?" he said, as he shook himself; "were you, too, knocked overboard?"

"No," answered Quicksilver; "but after I had thrown you the buoy, I saw you turning round and sinking; I thought you could not swim, and I came to help you."

The simplicity with which the boy spoke of his heroic action made M. Pinson first turn pale, then red.

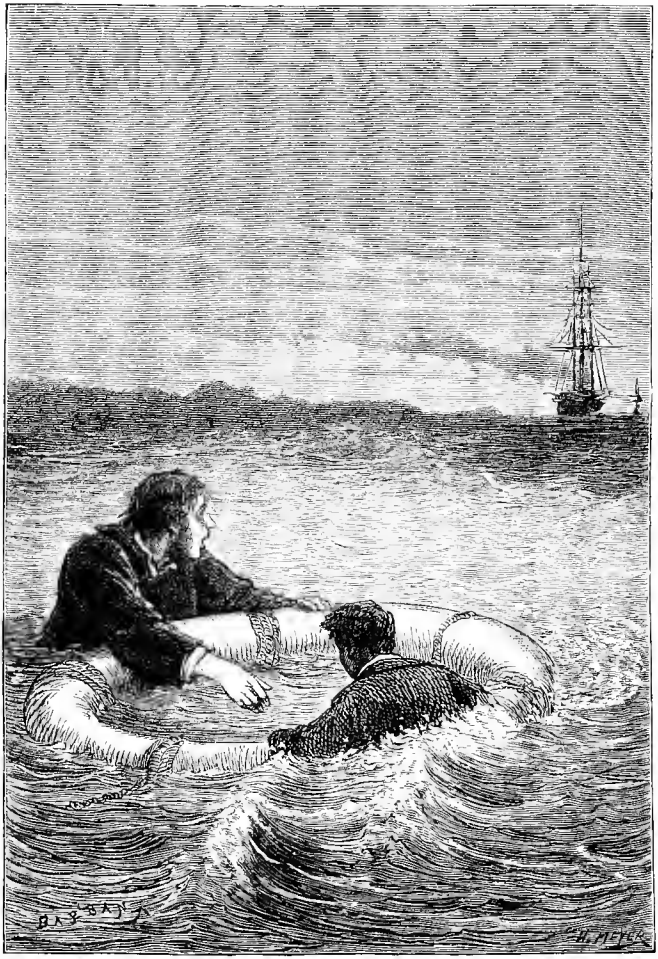
"My boy, my boy!" he said, seizing him by the arms; "what have you done!—good heavens!—but we will speak of it afterwards."

The two swimmers, pushing the buoy before them, turned towards the *Fulton*. They saw, with horror, that she was steaming away from them.

"It is impossible!" exclaimed M. Pinson; "they can't be leaving us to perish."

"Did not the commodore say, this morning, sir, that to reach the *Davis* he would throw us all overboard?"

M. Pinson once more scanned the horizon; doubt was no longer possible, the sun was sinking, his disk already was half hidden, and the *Fulton* continued her way, without appearing to trouble herself about the unfortunate swimmers.



THE LIFE-BUOY.

CHAPTER XVI.

A TERRIBLE NIGHT.

With that mechanical instinct which urges men to struggle against dangers which threaten their lives, M. Pinson and Quicksilver continued to swim without exchanging a word for nearly a quarter of an hour. Thought was succeeding thought, rapidly, unceasingly, in the engineer's brain. By a curious phenomenon his imagination, instead of being fixed on present danger, carried him away to the past. He seemed to be again with his mother, and then in the great school-room at Sainte-Barbe's sitting by the side of Boisjoli. The griefs, the joys, the smallest incidents of his simple, calm, laborious existence, passed before his eyes like things of yesterday. He recalled the evil night on which he had allowed his friend to over-persuade him, and muttered as he shook his head:

"Prodigious! Yes, prodigious."

Bitter, painful reality recalled M. Pinson to the present. He turned his eyes anxiously around. On every side there was land—that is, small islets or rocks against which the waves were breaking. The nearest of these rocks was on the left at a distance of at least six miles. They must reach this rock or they must die.

A somewhat heavy swell gently moved the sea; large smooth waves slowly rose and fell, like noiseless breathing. Sea-gulls were regaining the crevices which served them for shelter, and would hover for an instant above the swimmers; then, circling in the air, would resume their flight, uttering the hoarse cry which sailors compare to the groans of a drowning man.

M. Pinson turned towards his companion; Quicksilver was holding by one hand to the buoy, and swimming easily.

"But for this dear boy," thought the engineer, "I should now be dead, and but for his passion for Robinson Crusoe he would never have thought of throwing over the buoy, which is so great a help to us. The childish preparations which made me smile this morning have been the very means of my safety! Well, our business now is to get out of the present difficulty, were it only in order to relate to Boisjoli all the disasters of which he has been the cause."

M. Pinson energetically nodded his head.

"Swim more slowly," he said to Quicksilver; "thanks to the help which your presence of mind has procured for us, we can get on without exerting ourselves overmuch, and it is important to husband our strength. Come now, let me hoist you on to the buoy, and I will push it towards land. When I feel tired we will change places."

The buoy was a circle of cork, at least two yards in diameter; it was covered with strong canvas, and fitted on every side with loose ropes. Quicksilver was soon seated on it, and M. Pinson, swimming with calmness and self-possession, pushed the improvised skiff before him.

"The largest island is on this side, sir," said Quicksilver, pointing to the east.

"The point is to reach one, whichever it may be," answered the engineer, "and the nearest will be the best for us."

A last glimmer of light tinted the western sky; it soon vanished, and darkness fell over the sea. Twice or thrice Quicksilver begged his companion to take his place on the buoy; but M. Pinson continued swimming. At the end of an hour he consented to take some rest, and with many precautions succeeded in placing himself on the buoy.

With delicious feelings of rest, he stretched his arms, his legs, his whole body, on a comparatively solid surface. He

hastened to take off his jersey, which impeded his movements. Quicksilver had already taken the same precaution.

A breeze was driving clouds over the sky, and the pale light of the stars soon ceased to shine on the shipwrecked pair. Whither were they going? From time to time M. Pinson listened attentively for any sounds. It seemed to him then that he could hear the sea breaking over rocks on his right. At first this appeared to be inexplicable. After much reflection he began to fear that his exertions and those of his young companion were of no avail, and that one of the numerous ocean-currents was drawing them away from the point they were trying to reach and carrying them towards other rocks.

Three hours passed; they seemed an eternity to the poor waifs. They no longer swam, but the buoy drifted on. Although the night was warm, their long immersion in the water had chilled them, and they shivered. Every quarter of an hour they changed places; but M. Pinson only ceased swimming when he felt his arms stiffening or his hands becoming cramped.

The engineer's mind was full of presentiments of evil, which he carefully kept from Quicksilver. Fortunately the boy was of high courage and spirit; besides, thanks to the liveliness of his imagination and the carelessness natural to his youth, he always believed himself on the point of landing. One thing only troubled him—the bread in his pocket was soaked, and the matches with which he had taken the precaution to provide himself were going to be "spoilt," as he expressed it, and would be useless.

"How can we light a fire," he said, "if the matches won't strike?"

"We will dry them in the sun, if we have the luck to see it again," answered the engineer, who fell in with the boy's fancies, so as not to discourage him.

"It is settled, sir, that you are to be Robinson," continued Quicksilver. "I should have *liked* being Robinson myself; but,

of course, you must be the head. I sha'n't make a bad Friday, you'll see."

"I am sure of it, my boy."

"We shall find animals in our island. I shall take charge of them and tame them. The salt water won't spoil my corn, will it?"

"No, dear boy; we will dry it, like the matches."

"You'll see," Quicksilver went on, "we sha'n't be so very wretched. What made Robinson so sad was having no one to talk to. Now, we can talk together. We will have a summer house and a winter house; instead of hens we will have sea-birds; and then we'll hunt!"

"Certainly."

"We'll stick up a mast, and in ten or twenty years, when a ship discovers us, you will have a long beard. Then we shall go back to Europe, and we shall sell our island. Oh!" added Quicksilver, whose turn had now come to climb upon the buoy, "but how I wish we had arrived!"

"Patience, dear boy."

"We shall have," said the little fellow, after he had stretched himself on the buoy, "one great advantage over Robinson, sir."

"What?" asked M. Pinson.

"You are an engineer. If we get tired of our island we will go to St. Thomas, and they'll be greatly astonished when we arrive there."

Quicksilver talked on for a long time; then an interval occurred between his sentences, he muttered, and was silent. Overcome by fatigue, he had fallen asleep.

The engineer called up all his strength and, for an hour, he held on to the buoy. Twenty times, feeling himself failing, he was on the point of awakening Quicksilver, and twenty times by vigorously striking out he succeeded in driving away the stupor that was creeping over him. Once he started, thinking

he heard the engines of the *Fulton*. He rose as far as possible above the water, listening attentively, but could only hear the sad and monotonous wail of the sea as it broke, without intermission, on far-distant rocks.

"Man proposes, God disposes," he thought. "We are but weak playthings in the hands of the Eternal God. I had arranged to spend my life at Batignolles. I had taken a long lease from my landlord, so that I might alter my house as I pleased. I went to the expense of carpeting my floors and covering my walls so as to make my nest warmer and nicer; and here am I, drifting along on the ocean, sustained by a wretched piece of cork that is taking me Heaven knows where!"

"Thank you, sir, you are very kind," Quicksilver murmured in his sleep.

M. Pinson gazed tenderly on him.

"God relieves him from my anxieties," he thought; "and he will protect this young life."

"Good-morning, *Mother Pitch*," murmured the boy in English.

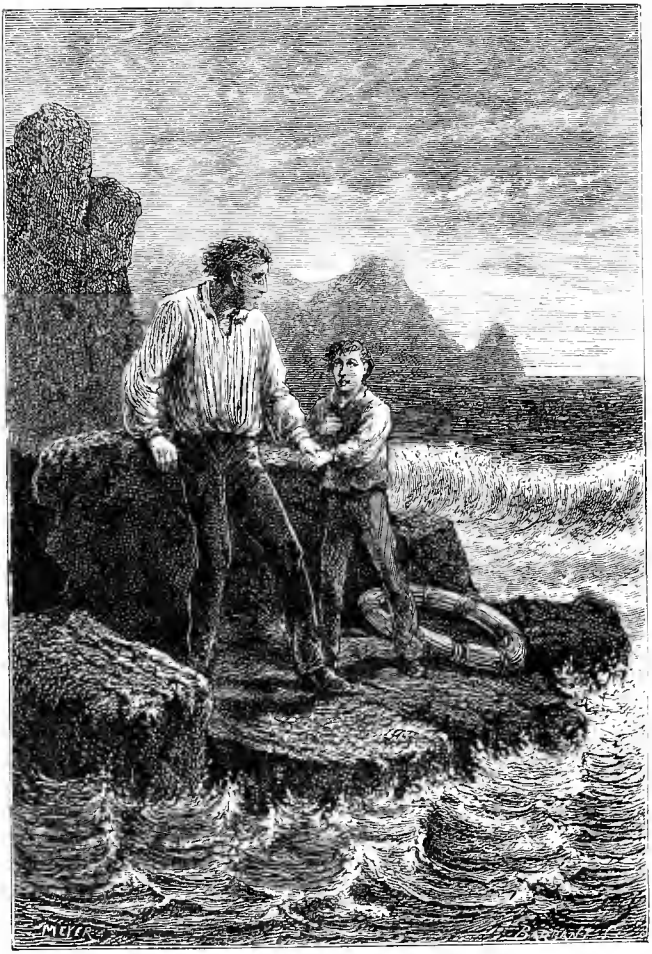
M. Pinson's face was near Quicksilver's; he softly kissed him.

"It is my turn now to save him," said the engineer, reflecting that it was through devotion to himself that the boy was in his present danger. "Yes, I will save him."

A distant report was heard, followed by several others.

"The *Fulton* and the *Davis* are at loggerheads at last," thought the engineer. "Truly, war is a fine business! The commodore didn't even look back to help us; and yet he is a good man."

The firing ceased. M. Pinson, quite exhausted, was at last about to awake his companion when he felt himself rapidly drawn on. He made an attempt to swim, and found that he was in shallow water. His surprise and joy were so great that he stood up and let go the buoy, which stranded a few yards farther on.



"ROBINSON" REALIZED.

"Ah!" exclaimed Quicksilver, "did I not tell you that we should reach land somewhere or other? Do you believe now, sir, that the adventures of Robinson are only an invention?"

"No, my boy; but the reality is none the more consoling, for all that."

"There's an island opposite, a real island!" exclaimed the boy, "with trees on it and grass, and we shall be there immediately."

"I think it must be quite two miles from us."

"Well, we are able to swim, and we have the buoy. Had not I better, sir, load it with these pretty shells we are standing on, and—"

The report of a gun interrupted Quicksilver. In the long creek which separated them from the shore they wished to reach the shipwrecked pair suddenly perceived the *Davis*, which slowly appeared from behind a mass of rock. M. Pinson threw up his arms to attract attention, and soon the whole crew crowded to the ship's side. In less than half an hour the *Davis* reached a spot opposite them, but she proceeded on her way. Scarcely had she passed the little islet than M. Pinson, turning towards his companion, gazed anxiously at him.

"We are condemned to perish," said he in a low voice.

"To perish! and an island with plenty of trees on it just in front of us? You can't really mean it, sir," cried the boy. "What would have happened to Robinson if he had given up instead of trying his best? Besides, if the *Davis* would not pick us up, the *Fulton*, which is sure to follow soon, will certain stop for us."

M. Pinson shook his head.

As if to prove the boy in the right the *Fulton* now came in sight at the end of the creek.

"Ah!" thought Quicksilver, "if only the commodore does not take it into his head to get us on board and prevent us from becoming Robinsons! That would be, indeed, unlucky."

Not daring to breathe these fears aloud, Quicksilver stood close beside M. Pinson, who began at once to throw up his arms and shout, so as to attract the notice of the commodore and his officers.

Making every kind of signal, M. Pinson drew the buoy after him, and waded through the shallows towards the creek, at the end of which the *Fulton* had just come in sight. The water soon became too deep for wading. The sailors on board had, however, perceived the pair, for they crowded to the side, and the voice of the commodore rang out.

"Climb on the buoy," said M. Pinson; "we will get as near as possible to the *Fulton's* course; if they basely abandon us we shall still not have labored in vain, for we shall be nearer the island, where we will try to land."

Quicksilver slowly obeyed; he complained of giddiness, and that his head was aching; but he tried to swim, nevertheless. And the two, pushing the buoy before them, ventured once more into the sea.

But their weary limbs rendered them poor service; their exertions on the previous day, their prolonged stay in the water, and, in addition, the want of food, had greatly weakened them. Quicksilver, pale and shivering, could soon swim no longer. M. Pinson helped him to climb on the buoy; but this was no easy task, for the boy had suddenly become indifferent to what was passing around him, and was muttering incoherently.

"Fever!" thought M. Pinson; "if it attacks me, too, we are lost."

The engines of the *Fulton* ceased working, and with lessening speed the great steamer moved over the waters. A boat manned by six rowers appeared at her stern, and directed its course towards the buoy. A quarter of an hour later M. Pinson and Quicksilver were on the deck of the *Fulton*, which immediately proceeded on her way.

"I am glad to see you—yes, glad to see you!" cried the com-

modore, as he heartily shook hands with the engineer. "Since yesterday, sir, we have constantly talked about you; we were afraid we should never see you again."

"It is no fault of yours that we are still alive," answered M. Pinson.

"In war," replied the commodore, gravely, "the service exacts behavior which is cruel, even inhuman, if you choose to call it so. A man's life counts for nothing under certain circumstances; those about me here know that well. Had I stopped my ship yesterday to save you I should perhaps have endangered the lives of thousands; for once let the *Davis* get away from me and she would immediately re-commence her career of destruction. But here you are, and I am glad of it!"

M. Pinson could have said much in reply to this, but two or three incoherent words from Quicksilver made him start. He took up the boy, carried him to his cabin, and seated himself by his bedside.

For eight-and-forty hours the sick boy was delirious; he spoke of Robinson, of Friday, and recited whole pages of the story that had been the cause of his coming to sea. The ship's surgeon feared he would have brain fever; but this danger was happily escaped. M. Pinson, though himself worn out, would not leave his young companion for one minute. In spite of the entreaties of the commodore and his lieutenant, the engineer refused even to join them at meals, and took his food by the boy's bedside.

"This dear little fellow saved my life," he would say, "and I should be neglecting a sacred duty did I not now try to save him from death."

Then, seated beside Quicksilver's bed, he would meditate on the strange links which unite human destinies.

"Only for the little fellow's admiration for Robinson," he thought, "he would never have hidden himself on board, and I should have made my extraordinary voyage alone. And only

for Robinson, the boy would never have dreamed of the possibility of a shipwreck, nor have thought of throwing me the buoy that saved us. One should not despise anything in this world, and I begin to think Robinson was a great man."

The devotion of the two passengers to each other won for them the sympathy of all on board the *Fulton*. When, five days after their rescue, M. Pinson came on deck, carrying Quicksilver in his arms, and placed him under shelter of a sail, loud cheers were raised in their honor, and all the ship's company wanted to shake hands with them.

While heartily acknowledging the welcome they received, M. Pinson and Quicksilver looked around them with surprise. A long line of coast was on their port side, and sufficiently near for them to be able to discern the trees and buildings upon it with the naked eye. Less than a mile ahead the *Davis* seemed to be sailing in concert with her enemy. Between them was a large steamer, from whose mast a red-and-white flag floated. A little to their stern was another man-of-war bearing Spanish colors.

"What is the meaning of this?" M. Pinson at last inquired of the lieutenant. "What land is that? Have the North and South made peace that the *Fulton* lets the *Davis* come within half a gun's range?"

"The coast," answered the lieutenant, "is that of St. Domingo — we have been since yesterday in the waters of the Haytian Empire. This in itself might not perhaps have prevented the commodore from attacking the *Davis*, only that the Spanish frigate yonder seemed inclined to support the authority of Soulouque's flag."

"And where are we going? to Port-au-Prince?"

"We are going in all probability to Havana; the *Davis*, like ourselves, is short of coal and under canvas."

The commodore joined them; he took the engineer's hand, which lay nearly passive in his own.

"You still owe me a grudge," said the brave sailor, "and I can understand it; but however sincere my regard for you, sir, my duty is the first consideration. Had my lieutenant, instead of you, fallen overboard, my conduct would have been the same. In time of war, let me say it once more, the life of one man counts for little compared with the result we want to gain, and it is a rule that we must sacrifice a hundred men, if need be, in order to save a thousand."

"I admit that I was wrong to be in the way of the ball that shattered your flagstaff, commodore," said M. Pinson; "and I am under too much obligation to you to bear malice longer. You took your time about it, but still you did fish us up, and I thank you in my own name and that of my dear boy."

"The little fellow is getting better, I see."

"He is talking of getting up," said M. Pinson, "but low diet has so weakened him that he can hardly stand. The surgeon, however, says that in less than three days more he will be able to run about as he used—and so I wish I were already older by three days."

Having made peace with the commodore, M. Pinson returned to his companion.

"This coast must be America, sir," said the boy. "I fancy I can see palm-trees."

"You are not mistaken: we are opposite St. Domingo, an island discovered in 1492 by Christopher Columbus, who gave it the name of Hispaniola. St. Domingo was called by the Caribbees, who inhabited it at that time, the Isle of Hayti, which in their language signifies *mountainous country.*"

"Is that island large?" asked Quicksilver, looking first east and then west.

"It is of considerable size. It is divided into two parts; the Republic of St. Domingo on one side, the Empire of Hayti on the other. This island, the most prosperous of French colonies, rebelled against the mother country in 1791. The ne-

groes, in consequence of a misapprehension, massacred the whites who had just given them their liberty. From that time, notwithstanding an attempt to reconquer it in 1802, St. Domingo has always been independent."

When he had begun with his questions, Quicksilver knew not where to stop. The whole history of St. Domingo had to be related to him, with that of its liberator, Toussaint L'Ouverture, and of his lieutenant, Dessalines. When he learned that the land he was looking at produced sugar, cocoanuts, and coffee, and that its woods contained monkeys and parrots, Quicksilver conceived an ardent desire to explore it, and longed that the *Davis* might anchor at Port-au-Prince, its capital.

An explanation also had to be given him as to the reason why the *Davis* and the *Fulton* were sailing in company, escorted by a Spanish frigate and a Haytian brig. The next day, when with M. Pinson he reached the quarter-deck, he was able to walk unassisted. Everything seemed exactly like the day before: a long coast stretched from east to west, and the four ships pursued their way at a distance of five hundred yards the one from the other. The decks of the *Davis* were crowded with men who, instead of being in uniform like the sailors on the other vessels, wore woollen shirts of every color.

"On board that ship," said the commodore to M. Pinson, "there are scum from every nation, whom I should like to hang from my yard-arm. I am a humane man, sir, and, notwithstanding their error in fighting us, I recognize brave enemies in the Southerners; but what business have these strangers in our quarrel?"

M. Pinson might have replied that the army of the North contained both Irish and German recruits; but he had made up his mind never to commence a discussion of this kind with the commodore, and once again he repressed the words which, to use the vulgar expression, were on the tip of his tongue.

"Will the island of St. Domingo, sir," suddenly asked Quicksilver, "never belong to France again?"

"No, my boy; our country has relinquished her former rights; but the land you are looking at is no longer Hayti, we are opposite the neighboring island of Cuba or Havana."

"Havana," said Quicksilver; "isn't it thence such good cigars come?"

"Yes, and they deserve their reputation. The island of Cuba, which won from St. Domingo its title of *Pearl of the Antilles*, is the largest of the group of islands divided by geographers into the Great and the Little Antilles. The Great Antilles comprise Cuba, Hayti, Jamaica, and Porto Rico; to the Little Antilles belong St. Thomas, St. John, Anguilla, St. Bartholomew, St. Eustache, Desirade, St. Domingo, Martinique, Tobago, Trinity, Curaçoa, and others. But to return to Cuba: it was discovered by Christopher Columbus; like St. Domingo, it produces coffee, cocoa, and rice, and contains gold and copper mines."

Quicksilver was overjoyed to hear that in all probability the *Fulton* would cast anchor at Havana. He was continually watching the coast through a spy-glass, and exclaimed with delight when he distinguished the houses and the inhabitants.

A poor bird, blown from the land, settled on the main-yard, and a sailor brought it to Quicksilver. It was a pretty sky-blue sparrow, and the admiration of the child for countries where such birds fly about was redoubled.

For three days longer the four vessels sailed onward; at last they sighted Morro, behind which lies Havana.

The Haytian brig suddenly saluted her sailing companions and put about to return to harbor. The *Fulton* and the *Davis* were often driven near each other by the breeze. On such occasions the commodore could hardly restrain his anger, and spoke of fighting the pirate, even should the Spanish ship join in the battle. But the want of coals, which had previously im-

peded his action, was too great a disadvantage; he was obliged to give up the idea. Besides, the North had enough on her hands, in her contest with the South, without engaging herself with other enemies.

It was three o'clock in the afternoon when the *Davis* entered the narrow canal which runs to Havana, the fine roadstead of which is not visible from the sea.

M. Pinson, having gathered together the few shirts which comprised his whole luggage as well as Quicksilver's, stood near the gangway, so as to be the first to land. He was chatting with a sub-officer who was acquainted with the harbor of the great Spanish island, and was making inquiries as to how to return to Europe. With great satisfaction he learned that a monthly packet ran between the Island and Cadiz, and that another ran to England. In his anxiety to return to France, M. Pinson resolved to embark on that steamer which should start first.

Meanwhile the commodore and his officers were in the midst of a warm argument. He was scanning the horizon with his glass; the masts of about twenty vessels could be discerned, some leaving the harbor, others tacking so as to enter it.

They were already near enough to the stronghold of the Morro for Quicksilver to be able to see the sentries on the ramparts without the help of a glass, when a thick cloud of smoke rose from the funnel of the *Fulton*, the sails were hauled down, the engines began to work, the ship was put about, and steamed rapidly away from the point where M. Pinson had believed himself already at anchor.

"We are going away!" cried Quicksilver.

The engineer was incapable of a reply; he sank down on a bench.

CHAPTER XVII.

A STRATAGEM OF WAR.

For at least ten minutes M. Pinson remained motionless, with his bundle of shirts at his feet. He was in a state of absolute collapse.

"Well," he muttered, "here I am, thanks to M. Boisjoli, the very rival of the Wandering Jew."

He suddenly rose to his feet, and, glaring at Quicksilver who was near him—

"Where are we going?" he asked; "to Europe? to the United States? to China? Where?"

"I don't know, sir," answered the boy, who was also terribly disappointed.

"What a sour face, M. Pinson!" said the commodore, rubbing his hands as he came up.

"Did not you tell me," said the engineer, "that you were short of coal; that we should be at Havana this evening; that the *Fulton*—"

"Come, come," interrupted the officer; "have a little patience, sir, and my promises will prove realities."

"May I inquire where we are going?"

"To speak with those five ships you see yonder."

"For what purpose? Are they pirates?"

"They are coaling-vessels from Newcastle."

"Are you going to put me on board one of them?"

"That shall be just as you please," answered the commodore, "but in eight-and-forty hours I hope the *Fulton* will be at anchor at Havana."

"She is scarcely going the way thither," said M. Pinson, pointing to the sea; "the *Fulton*, which was supposed to be short of coal, is steaming at this moment faster than ever."

"We are burning our last," answered the commodore, "and, to make your mind easier, I will explain to you my plan. You are not perhaps aware, sir, that Havana is a port from which it is not always easy to get out. The Spanish Government is suspicious; it is constantly in fear of losing Cuba, and it scrupulously observes the old regulations."

"Naval regulations!" cried M. Pinson. "Do naval regulations again prevent me from landing?"

"Let me finish," said the commodore. "I was explaining to you that a ship, having cast anchor in the port of Havana, can only leave it between the hours of six A.M. and six P.M. On the other hand, the *Davis*, according to the same regulations, has only the right to stay in port the strictly necessary time for revictualling. Now, while I should be getting my coals in, the pirate might suddenly weigh anchor, and away with her, before the *Fulton* had time to move. She would slip through our fingers like an eel! I won't be made a fool of in that way. So I'll not enter the port until I am provisioned with coals, and consequently able to follow each movement of the enemy."

This explanation somewhat comforted M. Pinson, especially when the commodore added that even if he succeeded in taking in coal he should still follow the *Davis* into port, so as to watch her more closely. During this conversation the steamer had drawn near the coaling-vessels, which ran up English colors. The commodore, using his speaking-trumpet, ordered the nearest one to "lower her sails and heave to."

"What do you want?" asked the English captain, with vexation.

"Your cargo of coal," answered the commodore.

"That's impossible. I have not the right to sell my cargo."

"Reef up!" shouted the commodore, imperiously, "or in ten minutes I'll cut down your masts."

"England is at peace with the States," said the captain.

"The transaction shall be friendly," answered the commodore; "and I will pay for the coal on the spot."

The captain of the coaling-vessel cast his eyes over the sea in hopes of discovering one of his country's men-of-war, from whom he could ask help.

Although a near kinship unites the English and the Americans, the two cousins, John Bull and Jonathan, heartily hate each other.

No English ship was to be seen on the horizon, therefore compliance was inevitable. The two ships lay side by side, and the whole crew of the *Fulton* were engaged in shifting the coal, which operation lasted not less than twenty-four hours.

Struck by a sudden thought, M. Pinson took Quicksilver with him on board the coaling-vessel, and approached the captain, who, in a very bad temper, was superintending the transfer of his cargo. The engineer, thinking that the empty vessel would no doubt immediately return to England, wished to take a passage in her. Once more he was out of luck; the vessel was bound for Sisal, a port of Yucatan, and was obliged to proceed thither to take in her return cargo. M. Pinson returned very moodily to the *Fulton*, and looked towards land; he hoped that some skiff from the harbor might pass within hail of the steamer, and would agree to put him on shore.

Towards evening the *Fulton*, with the coaling-vessel in tow, drew near the coast for the purpose of better observing it. The sailors worked all night, but without ceasing to keep watch for one moment. At daybreak, after a sleepless night, caused by the noise made by the emptying of the coal-baskets, M. Pinson and Quicksilver came on deck. The sun was rising, surrounded by a dull golden haze; and, by reason of the dense

atmosphere through which his rays had to penetrate, he might be looked at with impunity. The land was green, with small white habitations scattered here and there. On the heights of the hills the curious outlines of great palm-trees and cedars stood out dark against the blue sky.

"Here are pilot-fish," said a sailor. "The sharks are not far off."

At the word "shark," Quicksilver drew near the sailor, who, leaning over the water, which was so transparent that one could see to the depth of several yards, showed him five fish marked with black stripes. Each was about the size of a pike. These fish were swimming slowly by the side of the *Fulton;* they were pilots, who, according to the sailors, serve as guides to the sharks.

This seemed strange to Quicksilver, and he ran to M. Pinson.

"Is it true, sir," he asked, "that sharks are nearly all blind, and that the fishes called pilots guide them like blind men's poodles?"

"It is altogether an invention of sailors' imaginations. The pilot-fish is the *remora* of the naturalists, and it is in order to get a share of the shark's prey that it keeps near him."

"Is the shark a cetaceous animal?" asked the boy.

"No, the shark is a fish—that is to say, it breathes through gills. It belongs to the terrible family of *squalus*, the most voracious beings in existence."

Shortly after, five or six of these monsters appeared alongside, and there was great commotion among the sailors, who feel a natural hatred against the terrible fish always ready to devour them.

The sharks, followed by a band of "pilots," were swimming round the two vessels, keeping an inexorable watch upon them. The commodore gave the crew leave to harpoon them, and a boat was immediately lowered. An old boatswain, with a sort

of dart fixed into a handle, to which was fastened a long rope, stood at the end of the boat.

Shark-spearing is a dangerous and exciting game; all the crew, except those who were on coaling duty, came to the sides of the ship to watch it.

M. Pinson and Quicksilver stood on the quarter-deck, whence they had a better view.

The boat was scarcely at four yards' distance when a large piece of pork was thrown into the sea.

The sharks lost no time in proving the keenness of their sight, for they at once darted at the bait. The first to arrive turned on his side, and swallowed the prize whole.

Although this was very rapidly effected, Quicksilver caught sight of the terrible open mouth of the monster, filled with sharp teeth, and equal in size to nearly one half of the whole animal.

Allured by the first bait, the sharks continued to swim about near the boat. The boatswain, his harpoon ready poised, waited for the moment of casting it. A second lump of pork was flung into the sea at not more than a yard's distance, and as one of the sharks turned on its side to seize this bait (a movement to which the formation of their terrible jaw obliges them), the harpoon, thrown by a strong and skilful hand, pierced the creature's side, and then it opened by the action of a spring, forming a crossed hook which caught in the ribs of the wounded fish and held him prisoner. The shark immediately plunged down into the water, leaving behind him a track of blood. The rope fastened to the harpoon was slackened; and very soon the boat was violently jerked and shaken, and the sailors cautiously drew in the rope. Half an hour later they came alongside the *Fulton*, dragging the monster, whose death convulsions were still formidable, as if in a leash behind them.

The other sharks, instead of being alarmed, still continued to

prowl round the boat. The captured shark measured about nine yards in length.

The sailors wished to cut it up for the sake of its skin, which is useful in various ways; but the commodore ordered them back on board.

Towards four in the afternoon the coaling-vessel was set at liberty, and she set sail for Sisal, this time without saluting. The commodore, wishing to ascertain the speed of the *Fulton* when laden with coal to her very decks, put her through various evolutions for more than an hour. During these manœuvres the decks were washed, so that all might be trim before entering the port. It was close upon six o'clock when the ship reached the fort of the Morro, just as gun-fire announced that the roadstead was closed.

M. Pinson bore this disappointment well, for the commodore had warned him that he could scarcely hope to land on that day. The *Fulton* therefore stood out in the offing in order to tack about till morning, a precaution rendered necessary by a stiff breeze from the north. The next morning at daybreak her head was put to land, and she steamed rapidly for the harbor.

Two ships were issuing from the port; and, although passing at a great distance from the American vessel, they both saluted her by hoisting their colors.

Behind the two was a steamer, painted white, and carrying the Spanish flag.

"Only for that vessel's hull being white, and for the height of her masts," said the commodore to his lieutenant, "I would swear she is the *Davis*."

The white steamer was hugging the coast at half speed.

"What do you see on her decks, lieutenant?" asked the commodore.

"Sailors in Spanish uniform, sir," replied the lieutenant.

The little steamer lay across the *Fulton's* bows, and saluted

her by lowering her flag, while the drum beat as a signal for departure. The *Fulton* acknowledged this courtesy by saluting in her turn, and continued on her way to the port.

M. Pinson, with his bundle of shirts under his arm, could scarcely contain himself for joy at seeing the land so rapidly nearing.

"We were fated to see Havana," he said to Quicksilver; "but don't let us complain. We will bring away with us several boxes of cigars; I have friends in France who will be pleased to have some. Talking of friends, poor old Boisjoli must be settled somewhere by this time. How surprised he will be to receive a letter from me dated Cuba; he will scarcely be able to credit our adventures. We are going to see the town founded by Diego Velasquez, and the tomb of Christopher Columbus, who was buried in the land he had discovered, although he died in Spain. Here we are, in the straits—hurrah!"

The *Fulton* had just passed the point of the Morro, and the interior of the bay could be discerned. The steamer stopped for a moment to reply to the port captain, who demanded through his speaking-trumpet her name, her nationality, whence she came, and whither she was bound.

Meanwhile a skiff approached the steamer.

"Are you looking for the *Davis?*" asked the master of the skiff, a pilot who had come to meet the *Fulton.*

"Yes," said the commodore, "bring us near her anchorage."

"She put to sea this morning."

"What are you saying?" said the commodore, leaning over to such an extent that he looked as if he were about to jump into the sea.

"That the *Davis* painted her hull white, bought a lot of old Spanish uniforms, and went out to sea this morning at six o'clock precisely."

The commodore swore his roundest oath, smashed his speak-

ing-trumpet against the rail on which he leaned, and in a voice of thunder shouted to the helmsmen:

"Tack about!"

The *Fulton* immediately described a long curve and stood out to sea.

"Stop!" cried M. Pinson, "one minute, only one minute, just time to jump into this boat—"

The boat had paddled to a short distance off, and the *Fulton*, finishing her evolution, was leaving the straits at full steam, not even giving herself time to return the salute from the fortress of the Morro.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE GULF OF MEXICO.

This time M. Pinson uttered no remonstrance. He returned to the quarter-deck, put down his bundle on a bench, and began to pace to and fro, grave and absorbed, taking no notice of what went on around him. Occasionally, when his walk brought him face to face with the land, he would stop short, and contemplate the bare, rugged rocks which form a natural defence to Havana, or the black vultures poised in the sky. At other times he would stand watching the sea, whose blue waters melted in the distance into the azure of the atmosphere.

Some sea-gulls were following on the track of the *Fulton*, darting down in rapid flight to seize the fragments cast from the ship. Then M. Pinson would shake his head and utter that longing of every poet:

"Oh, that I had wings!"

Nor did Quicksilver feel pleased, although he said nothing. He too looked with longing on the land, not towards the rocks, but lower down, to some cliffs crowned with curious foliage. Where was the ship going? The boy longed to ask this question. Unfortunately, M. Pinson seemed too much absorbed for him to venture on disturbing him; and the officers were all so much engaged that he did not dare to approach them.

By degrees the coast-line assumed a bluish color. Confused masses, black, white, or green, were alone distinguishable; then all melted into gray, and the boy's attention reverted to the *Davis*.

The privateer, whose white hull seemed to glide over the waves, had a start of about five miles, and seemed besides to be gaining on the *Fulton*. The commodore, from his post on the bridge, constantly gave orders to the engine-room to increase the heat, to put on more steam, to quicken the movement of the screw. All at once the *Davis* tacked, put about, and stood for the north. The *Fulton* put about also, and advanced in a parallel line with her.

"If this pirate contrives to shoot ahead of us," said the commodore to his lieutenant, "she will lead us back to Europe. Let the safety-valves be closed, sir; we had better blow up than endure such an affront."

For an hour the two steamers advanced side by side.

The commodore, surrounded by his officers, followed their double progress with anxiety, taking note every minute of his own position and that of the enemy.

Clouds of black smoke were poured forth through the funnel of the *Davis*, showing that the pirate's engines were, like those of the *Fulton*, being strained to their utmost. Land had been out of sight for a long time, before M. Pinson, ceasing his walk on the quarter-deck, began to interest himself in the race between the two enemies. In his heart, and without letting it appear, the engineer was ardently wishing that the *Davis* might outstrip the *Fulton*, and lead her on either to the United States or to Europe.

It soon became evident that the *Davis* was losing some of the start she had gained, and a triumphant cheer rang out on board the *Fulton*.

But the big steamer could not long maintain her furious rate of speed; notwithstanding the oil with which the stokers deluged the engines, the pistons were gradually getting hot. For a moment the *Davis* seemed inclined to fight. Had she known the state of affairs on board her enemy she would certainly have persisted, risked a broadside, and shot ahead. That would, how-

ever, have been to expose herself to probable destruction; so, after having lost some of the start that her stratagem had gained her on leaving the harbor, she resumed her course to the west. She entered the Gulf of Mexico, that enormous boiler where the waters of the ocean come for heat, before returning under the name of the Gulf Stream to wash the shores of Europe with waves still tepid after their long journey.

"A good ship! a good ship!" said the commodore gleefully, striking the deck with his foot. "What do you think of her, M. Pinson?"

"I deplore," replied the engineer, "the conduct of the *Davis*. A French commander, in her captain's place, would have fought long ago."

"And he would have been beaten, sir," said the commodore, "for all the chances are in our favor. It is a defect of your countrymen that they will never reckon their enemies. It is true that a dashing deed of rashness sometimes succeeds; but what would you say to a chess-player who should trust to chance and push his men about anyhow? While the *Davis* is afloat she will be a terror to our trading-ships; her commander knows that well, and so he takes good care of her."

"You seem pleased, commodore?"

"I am pleased. At this present moment the *Davis* is in a 'no thoroughfare,' where I confidently expect to lay hands on her."

"We are in the Gulf of Mexico?"

"Yes."

"And we are bound for—"

"Sisal, Vera Cruz, Tampico—who knows whither? That depends on the enemy."

M. Pinson made no comment, but resumed his pacing of the deck.

"I was to have gone to Calais," he thought—"I went to Liverpool; I was to have gone to New York—I was taken

round, first to the Canary Islands, then to the Cape Verd Islands, and lastly to the Virgin Isles. From the Antilles, which I never thought to see, I have now set sail for Mexico, and all this means that I may find myself in China, at Labrador, the Sandwich Islands, or Madagascar, and all because I have a friend who—"

"Sir," said Quicksilver, softly.

"What is it?"

"I want to ask you about the Gulf of Mexico."

"The Gulf of Mexico is a vast inland sea, bounded on the south by Yucatan, on the north by Florida, and on the west by the Mexican provinces of Tabasco and Vera Cruz. It is divided from the Atlantic Ocean by the Straits of Bahama, along which we coasted as we came here. In these straits are situated the Lucayo Islands."

Quicksilver went to look at a map, and studied for a long time the Archipelago of Lucayo, which is very dangerous to navigate, on account of sand-banks.

At dinner the commodore, overjoyed at having barred the way to the *Davis*, opened several bottles of champagne. This sparkling beverage from his own country somewhat cheered M. Pinson, and the officers assured him that the pirate could not possibly go far, now that the passage was barred.

Two more days were passed between sky and sea; the heat was suffocating, for the month of April, which was approaching, is the hottest month in the year in the regions which they were then crossing. Quicksilver knew that in Mexico, the coasts of which would soon be visible, there were primeval forests inhabited by pumas, monkeys, and parrots, and prairies roamed over by buffaloes and wild horses. His one wish, therefore, was to see this privileged land, and above all to set foot on it. And when he heard the officers saying that in all probability the *Davis* would seek shelter in Port Campeachy or Port Tampico, he greeted the information by turning a noble catherine-

wheel behind the long-boat. But, on the other hand, when a discussion was held on the possibility of the *Davis* rounding an island, and then making for Europe, Quicksilver went and sat sadly in the bow, watching the deep waters cleft by the powerful action of the screw.

One morning, when Quicksilver had reached the quarter-deck earlier than M. Pinson, and had assured himself that the *Davis* was still in sight, and at about the usual distance from the *Fulton*, he was astonished to see a bird skim along the sea and then plunge into it and disappear beneath the waves. The boy stared, thinking his eyes were deceiving him. All at once he saw a shoal of fish spring from the water, skim along its surface, plunge into it again, and spring from it once more, like a flight of sparrows.

"Am I dreaming?" he said to himself, "or have we at last reached those wonderful countries which the sailors so often talk about?"

He ran to M. Pinson, who was observing the state of the sea and the position of the *Davis*.

"What is that?" asked the boy, who, as he reached the side of the engineer, pointed to another shoal of fish skimming over the water.

"They are flying-fish, as you can see."

"Flying-fish?" repeated Quicksilver.

Flying from a dory who was pursuing them, the fish came tumbling against the sides of the *Fulton;* one of them, springing higher than the others, fell on the deck. Quicksilver ran to pick it up. He greatly admired the long pectoral fins, and the silvery blue of the pretty little fish. Some one suggested it should be cooked; Quicksilver, quite indignant, instantly threw his little prisoner back into the sea, where it was lost to sight in the foamy track of the vessel.

Towards evening a council was held among the officers; the ship was approaching some rocks level with the water, known

as the Alacranes, or Scorpions; and the *Davis*, to judge by her speed, seemed to be ignorant of her danger. As soon as night was come the officers took the altitude of various stars and made minute calculations.

There was no longer room for doubt, the privateer, at full steam, was making for the Scorpions. The watch was doubled, and the electric light thrown on the *Davis*.

Towards midnight the *Fulton* was discovered to have gained on the privateer, which seemed to have slackened her speed. Already the ships were within range, and the gunners of the *Fulton* were getting ready to fire, when the *Davis* veered to the left. The electric light, falling beyond her, showed a line of black dots against which the sea was frothing.

"Luff! luff!" cried the commodore.

There was a moment of agony aboard the *Fulton*, as she scraped the rocks on which her enemy had hoped to inveigle her. But the delay caused by the stratagem nearly cost the *Davis* dear. She received several broadsides.

A real engagement seemed imminent, when to M. Pinson's great surprise the commodore gave the order to stop the ship.

The *Davis* was rounding the reef; and, but for the commodore's presence of mind, the *Fulton*, making the same curve, would have left a passage open to her enemy, who, taking the lead, might have led her adversary back to Europe. After manœuvring for an hour against the *Fulton*, without success, the *Davis* once more steamed ahead.

"We have her at last!" exclaimed the commodore; "in forty-eight hours," added he, turning to M. Pinson, "I will crush this pirate against the coast of Mexico; I can apologize afterwards to the Juarez government."

The next day but one, at sunrise, the peak of Orizaba, visible at sea from a distance of thirty leagues, was signalled by the man on the lookout. Quicksilver, astonished to see a snow-capped mountain on the horizon, ran to fetch the bundle of

shirts, and then took up his post by the side of M. Pinson. At ten P.M. they were opposite the fort of San Juan de Ulloa, taken by the French in 1839. Behind the fort, which is built on a small island, stretches a vast sandy plain, in the midst of which is situated the town of Vera Cruz, adorned with domes which make it resemble an Eastern city.

M. Pinson looked on with such indifference as to surprise Quicksilver.

"We are going to land, sir," said the boy. "Don't you care about it?"

"To land?" said the engineer. "Do you really think so, my boy? Were we not to land at Queenstown, at St. Thomas, at St. Domingo, at Havana? We shall land here after the same fashion; we are at the end of the Gulf of Mexico, but not yet at the end of the world."

The *Davis* took a pilot on board, and was soon in safety under the guns of San Juan de Ulloa. The commodore, following in the track of his enemy, passed in his turn before the fort, and entered the open roadstead of Vera Cruz.

He placed himself a hundred yards from the *Davis*, and ordered the anchor to be let go.

The night was sultry; the moon, full and bright, shone on the jetty, constructed at great cost by the Mexicans, and which projects three hundred yards into the sea. Behind was a line of white fortifications, for Vera Cruz is a stronghold.

"Would you like to land?" the commodore suddenly inquired of M. Pinson.

The engineer sprang up.

"Should I like it?" he cried.

"Lower a boat," said the officer.

When M. Pinson saw that the commodore's order was obeyed, when he was told that the boat was ready for him, a sudden emotion brought tears to his eyes.

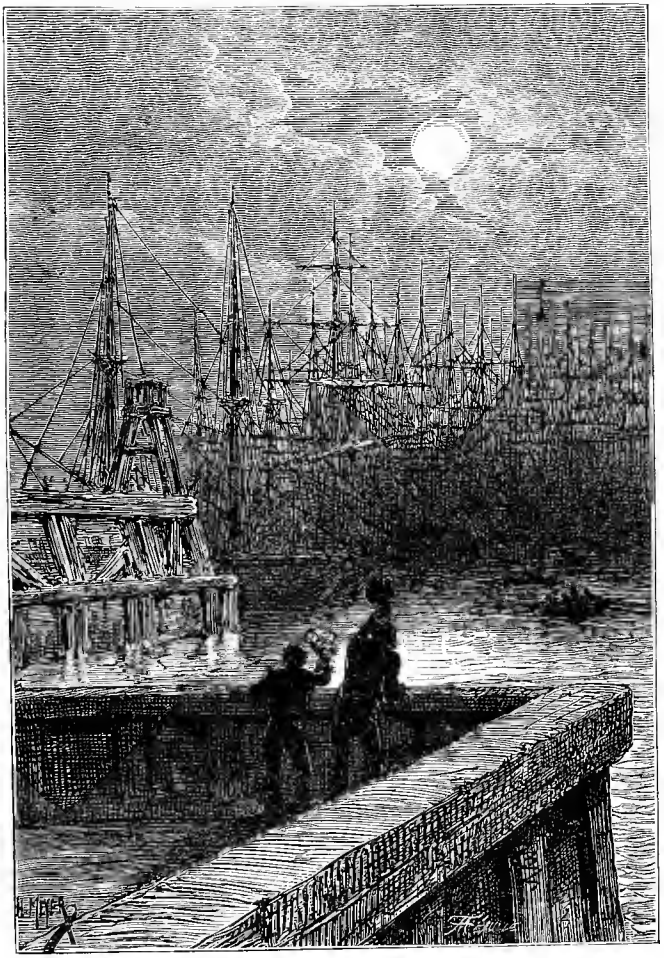
He warmly thanked the crew of the *Fulton*, who surrounded

him, and, shaking hands with the commodore and his officers, gave them his address in Paris, and wished them good luck.

"When the *Davis* leaves this," said the commodore, "we shall follow her at a distance of a hundred yards, and her business will be soon settled. Now, come, M. Pinson, won't you remain with us?"

"No," answered the engineer; "in your engagement with the *Davis* some stray ball might find me out, or Quicksilver. Were I a Northerner, your offer would be tempting; but I come from Batignolles, and I prefer returning to Europe by the steamer which runs direct from the Antilles and Mexico. I hope to see you again some day, commodore, and I thank you a thousand times."

A quarter of an hour later M. Pinson and Quicksilver, who had been trembling lest the engineer should have been induced by the commodore's invitation to remain, were landed on the jetty. Their boat immediately put back. The travellers could watch it in the moonlight until it regained the *Fulton*—they then shouted a last farewell to their friends, and directed their steps towards a stone gate at the landward end of the jetty.



"GOOD-BYE, GOOD-BYE!"

CHAPTER XIX.

VERA CRUZ.

M. Pinson and Quicksilver were surprised to find, when they began to walk, that the ground seemed to move beneath their feet, exactly as if they were still on board the *Fulton.* This sensation remains during several days with people who have just made a long sea voyage, and is a phenomenon well known to sailors. But it was the first time it had occurred to our travellers, and they imagined in consequence that the tessellated pavement on which they walked was really rising and sinking on the waves which broke against it. Managing as best they could to preserve their equilibrium, they at last reached the great gate, which, like a triumphal arch, stands at the head of the jetty, and gives access to the town.

After inspecting the principal gate and the two smaller ones at each side, they were reluctantly convinced that all three were hermetically closed, and that they also lacked knocker or bell. M. Pinson struck the gate with his foot.

"*Quien vive?*" called out a voice.

Neither M. Pinson nor Quicksilver understood the question, but they both answered together:

"Open the gate!"

"*A lo largo,*" returned the voice.

There was a long silence, during which the engineer thought they were preparing to open the gate.

But hearing nothing more he struck it again. A wicket opened in a groove, a bayonet glittered, and a threatening and imperious voice ordered the two travellers to go away. M.

Pinson understood the sign, if not the words, and renewed his request.

The words "*reglamentos maritimos*" caught his ear.

"'*Reglamentos maritimos*,'" he repeated, turning to Quicksilver; "that clearly must mean naval regulations. Are we going to knock our heads again against these confounded—"

The wicket was so violently shut that M. Pinson was quite taken aback.

"Could you see the man who just spoke?" asked Quicksilver.

"No, he was in the shadow."

"It's a black man, sir, with great white eyeballs."

"Were he the devil himself," said the engineer, "he shall open to us."

And he was about to knock for the third time when Quicksilver seized hold of his coat.

"Sir," said the boy; "do not let us provoke this man; he levelled his bayonet at us."

"On the contrary, my boy, let us provoke him. He will give us in charge; will send us to the station for creating a nocturnal disturbance, and we shall not have to sleep under the open sky."

"But this man, sir, speaks a language which we do not understand, and we cannot explain ourselves. What can we do or say if he wants to beat us?"

"Beat us!" cried M. Pinson, clinching his fists; "is it because I used to give in to the commodore, whose guest I was, that I am to let myself, or you, be beaten? We will see about that!"

M. Pinson moved forward; suddenly he stopped.

"You are right," said he to the boy; "don't let us begin a quarrel. Naval regulations, so far as I can make out, forbid our entering Vera Cruz, after bringing us here against our will. Let us respect these precious regulations and wait for the day."

Midnight struck. Voices, sad and monotonous, rose up in

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the night, apparently chanting prayers. Other voices echoed along the ramparts and died away in the distance.

M. Pinson and Quicksilver seated themselves on a stone bench. The causeway was barely five or six yards in width, and it was washed on each side by the waves, which frequently covered it with spray.

Before them rose the dark mass of the fortress of San Juan de Ulloa, behind which the *Fulton* and the *Davis* were in shelter; to their right and left the sea was breaking over the rocks with a monotonous regularity of sound, like a smith's hammer falling in measured cadence.

When one o'clock struck, the voices they had previously heard were raised again. M. Pinson, listening attentively, was able to distinguish the words "*Sentinela, alerta!*" and "*Ave Maria!*" The night watchmen in Mexico were calling the hour as they used to do in Europe in the Middle Ages, and bidding the inhabitants sleep in peace.

After asking a hundred questions about Mexico, which, conquered from the Aztec emperors in 1519 by Ferdinand Cortez, shook off the Spanish yoke in 1821, and constituted a federal republic, Quicksilver, soothed by the monotonous rhythm of the waves, fell into a profound sleep. M. Pinson reflected awhile on the strangeness of his destiny, and then he too was overcome by slumber.

It was barely dawn when our travellers were awakened by the sound of voices. Quicksilver awoke with a start, and drew close to M. Pinson. Six mulattoes in military uniform, barefoot, armed with matchlocks, and wearing broad-brimmed hats, had surrounded them and were addressing them in unintelligible language. M. Pinson began a narrative of his adventures, of which the soldiers did not understand one word. They made signs to him to follow them. Glancing towards the fortress, the engineer perceived that the *Fulton* and the *Davis* were no longer in sight.

M. Pinson and Quicksilver passed through the great gate at which they had knocked in vain the night before, entered a passage, and found themselves in the presence of a young officer. The engineer recommenced his story; but his interlocutor, not knowing a word of French, sent for the captain, who spoke that language.

"Your passports?" said the captain, after saluting the prisoners.

This request, preferred in French, relieved M. Pinson, who began once more the history of his adventures.

His auditor heard him with patience, but shook his head incredulously.

"This is all very well," he said, "but you can only enter the Mexican Republic with papers in proper order. Where are yours?"

"Did I not tell you," returned M. Pinson, "that I left my house in the Rue Nollet, at Batignolles, on a mere excursion, and—"

The captain exchanged a few words with his young subaltern, then, on a sign from the latter, a corporal and six men shouldered arms.

"Follow these gentlemen," said the Port Captain to M. Pinson, "they will conduct you to your consul; if his Excellency answers for you, you will be set at liberty."

"What!" exclaimed M. Pinson, "are we to walk through the town, with a guard, like criminals?"

"Forward. March!" said the corporal to his men.

M. Pinson and Quicksilver, who, rather frightened, kept close to him, were surrounded by the soldiers, and obliged to advance. They left the guard-house and soon reached a large open square. The shops and coffee-houses were still closed—the town was not yet astir. Nevertheless the prisoners had scarcely advanced half a hundred paces when a crowd of about fifty persons — women wrapped in long scarfs, men in great

striped blankets, and half-naked children — began to follow them with curiosity. These people were all of a deep copper color, and the wide-brimmed hats worn by the men made them look like brigands.

It was already known that a pirate, chased by a United States steamer, had taken shelter below the fort during the night, and a rumor spread that M. Pinson was no other than the corsair himself, who had been captured by the Mexican authorities.

"Now, my boy," said the engineer to Quicksilver, "Boisjoli may say and do what he likes, he can never clear himself of this last piece of iniquity. It is through taking his advice that I am two thousand miles away from my home and my country. It is on his account that I am now marching along, a public prisoner— No—it is too bad."

When the little troop reached the consul's house, it was followed by at least five hundred persons.

The secretary to the consulate received the visitors, and M. Pinson gave him the outlines of his deplorable adventures. The secretary, much surprised, called the consul, and M. Pinson had to begin his story over again.

"And now, sir, what proof can you give us of your veracity?"

Honest M. Pinson reddened to the forehead. Restraining, however, the indignant words that rose to his lips, he drew out his pocket-book, showed several letters addressed to himself, and explained every circumstance with composure and straightforwardness such as an impostor would in vain try to assume.

The consul, notwithstanding the singularity of the story, soon felt scarcely any doubt about it. The engineer, besides, expressed himself in terms which showed him to be a well-educated and well-informed man. The secretary, therefore, handed to the travellers a pass, which authorized them either to remain in the town or to travel whithersoever they pleased.

On leaving the consulate, M. Pinson and Quicksilver could scarcely make their way through the curious crowd. At the request of the secretary their escort accompanied them to the *Hôtel du Commerce*, situated opposite the harbor, and kept by a Frenchman. On their way thither the soldiers vainly endeavored to explain to the crowd that, far from being a pirate, M. Pinson was but a simple French citizen. Convinced that this was an attempt to put them off the scent, an inquisitive crowd remained until nearly ten o'clock opposite the hotel; the heat of the sun alone drove them away.

With what a feeling of delight did M. Pinson, after a plentiful breakfast, seat himself in the window of the double-bedded room which had been allotted to him! From this window there was a view of the Place du Mole, and at the farther end of it of the custom-house. Above stood the fortress of Ulloa, and beyond the sea was glittering in the light of a tropical sun. Yielding to the heat, and to the tranquillity around him, as well as that of his own mind, M. Pinson fell asleep.

Quicksilver, from his station at the window, was eagerly watching the scene before him and the passers-by. On board the *Canada*, and on board the *Fulton*, it had always seemed to him that he was in England; but now, as if by the stroke of a magician's wand, he suddenly found himself in a town of novel architecture, with men of another race and color, speaking a language of which he was ignorant; then, before him in the street, instead of the sparrows he had seen in the London squares, great vultures were hopping about, so tame that they scarcely condescended to get out of the way of the passers-by.

By noon all movement seemed to have ceased in the town; a few pedestrians indolently passed the windows, keeping close in the shade of the houses and dragging themselves along rather than walking. The burning heavens seemed to be one vast sun; a thin blue vapor pervaded the atmosphere; it required an effort to breathe. Quicksilver, though sitting mo-

tionless, was surprised to feel drops of perspiration on his forehead. The fact is that Vera Cruz is one of the hottest places on our globe, and the months of May, June, and July are peculiarly unbearable.

The boy's attention was soon concentrated on some mulatto women, who, squatted before heaps of watermelons, oranges, lemons, pineapples, and twenty other fruits unknown to Europe, defied the furnace-like heat of the atmosphere and of the ground. Now and then a little cart would pass by, drawn by a couple of lean mules; or some Indians, each bending under a burden which was kept in its place on his back by a strap passed round the forehead.

For the three hours during which M. Pinson enjoyed his nap Quicksilver did not stir from the window. He was enchanted with all he saw, and congratulated himself on the splendid idea he had had in hiding on board the *Canada*. Twenty times he was sorely tempted to try a catherine-wheel, but he refrained for fear of awakening his companion.

When M. Pinson stood by him in the window, the boy, as if still half doubting, made him repeat that they really were in Mexico, in one of its chief cities, Vera Cruz.

"Vera Cruz," said the engineer, "was founded on the spot where Cortez landed in 1519. Its fortress, which had long been believed to be impregnable, surrendered in 1839 to Admiral Baudin. I think I told you all this before."

"Shall we go to Mexico, sir?" asked Quicksilver.

"No, indeed. To-day is the 30th of May; to-morrow, or the day after, according to the consul, the English packet, which runs monthly between England and Mexico, comes back from Tampico, and we will go on board her without delay."

"Without having seen the primeval forest, or the prairies, or the monkeys and pumas?"

"We will take a ramble outside the town," answered M. Pinson, "and look from a distance at the forests and plains of

which that little head is so full. As to pumas and monkeys, you shall see as many as you wish in the Zoological Gardens in Paris."

Quicksilver did not venture on a reply, but his heart sank within him. Had they come such a distance, and were they to go back again without seeing the interior of this splendid country, where vultures walked about the streets, and where parrots perched in couples on palm-trees? In his secret soul the boy ardently wished that some accident, such as had happened before, might upset M. Pinson's present plan.

At five o'clock the two travellers set out to inspect the town, of which the highest houses have but one story, and all have terraced roofs, where the inhabitants pass the evening, enjoying the breeze from the sea. In less than a quarter of an hour they had traversed the town, which is of but small extent. What was not Quicksilver's disappointment when, instead of the beautiful scenery he expected, he found himself in the midst of a boundless plain of sand! Here and there were some stunted mimosa-bushes, but not a tree, not a blade of grass, not a flower. The boy could not make it out. Far away on the horizon were the outlines of high mountains, the snowy peak of Orizaba rising above them all.

For a long time our travellers gazed on these mountains, which run parallel to the sea, and on whose summit lies the great plain, two hundred leagues in length, on which is built the city of Mexico, two thousand yards above the level of the sea. This great chain of mountains, with its hundred ramifications, is called in the States the Rocky Mountains; in Mexico it bears the name of the Cordilleras, and in Peru that of the Andes.

Our two explorers having trudged for some time along the sandy plain, whose aspect was continually changing under the north wind, drew nearer to the sea in order to return to the town. Quicksilver was struck with the size, the shape, and the

coloring of the hundreds of shells beneath his feet. He filled his pockets with them, and M. Pinson followed his example, judiciously remarking that these shells, so plentiful there, would be regarded as very great curiosities in Europe.

At six o'clock M. Pinson and Quicksilver sat down to a long *table d'hôte*, and partook of fish and fruits unknown to them. Conversation in Spanish interesting them but little, they left the table as soon as dinner was over, in order to ramble once more through the town. The only establishments they found open were coffee-houses, where ices and cooling drinks were to be had in plenty. Towards eight o'clock, ladies and gentlemen, in European dress, walked up and down on the mole, or jetty, which is the only public promenade of Vera Cruz. At nine the town seemed to be asleep, and the watchmen, carrying halberds and lanterns, and stationed at the corners of the walls, began to chant the hours in somewhat melancholy fashion.

The next morning at eleven o'clock, just as breakfast was over, a gun was fired. Every one rushed from table and out to the jetty. The monthly steam-packet from England could be distinguished on the horizon, and its arrival was a cause of great excitement in Vera Cruz, which at that period could only receive news from Europe through this channel.

CHAPTER XX.

ANOTHER JOURNEY.

M. Pinson and Quicksilver repaired to the jetty, which was already crowded by the Vera Cruz merchants and by idlers. In less than half an hour, a boat, carrying the letters and newspapers from Europe packed in heavy leathern bags, touched at the end of the mole, and English officers in full uniform escorted the despatches to their consul's house.

M. Pinson was then informed that the mail steamer, which was forty-eight hours behind time, would probably start again that very day. The engineer immediately hastened to the agent of the Royal Mail Company, to arrange for a passage for himself and Quicksilver. The agent spoke French, and after having scribbled the two passengers' names on a sheet of pink paper, he handed it to them, saying:

"I will trouble you for ninety-two pounds sixteen shillings and eight pence."

M. Pinson started and turned pale. He drew out his pocket-book and his purse, and nervously began to reckon their contents. After having protested against the charges of the *Canada*, he had not allowed his friend to pay for him. Was he not about to return to Europe, while Boisjoli, unless he could find some employment, would need all his money for himself? When he left the *Fulton*, where he had been entertained as a free guest for a month, M. Pinson had thought himself bound to be liberal, and had handsomely feed the servants who had waited on him. All told, there remained to him but a sum of sixteen pounds, from which his expenses

of thirty francs a day at the *Hôtel du Commerce* must be deducted.

"I should prefer, sir," he said to the agent, "not paying my passage-money, and that of the boy, until we arrive at Southampton; can this be arranged?"

"Certainly," replied the agent, "provided the luggage or merchandise you bring on board is of the value of ninety-two pounds sixteen shillings and eight pence."

A cold perspiration broke out on M. Pinson's forehead; his four shirts, and even Quicksilver's added to them, could not be considered as equivalent to ninety-two pounds sixteen shillings and eight pence.

Then, in the most touching words that occurred to him, the engineer began the recital of his adventures.

"Excuse me, sir," said the agent of the Steam Company, "but I have to see to the steamer's papers, she goes to sea in four hours; you can understand that I have no time to listen to you. I will trouble you for ninety-two pounds sixteen shillings and eight pence."

"But you will have me in person, and the boy, as guarantees," exclaimed M. Pinson; "give instructions to the captain of the steam-packet not to let us land until we have paid; once at Southampton, I can procure funds in twenty-four hours."

"And if you fail to procure them," returned the agent, "you will have reached Europe, and the captain, at whose cost you will be living, will find it shortest to let you land. Then I should have to pay your expenses on board out of my own pocket, which I cannot undertake to do. I am perfectly satisfied you are an honorable man; but if you wish to go on board the mail steamer, bring me either ninety-two pounds sixteen shillings and eight pence, or the guarantee of some merchant in the town."

"I have only been in Vera Cruz since the day before yesterday; I know nobody; I left my home—"

The agent was not attending, he had too much to do. M.

Pinson, quite cast down, took Quicksilver by the hand, and repaired to the house of the French consul, to whom he explained the difficulty in which he found himself.

"And what do you want me to do?" asked the consul.

"To be good enough to advance me the sum required to restore me to my country, sir; and to be my guarantee. I am a French citizen, and—"

"Be good enough, sir, to remark," said the consul kindly, "that your reasons for asking me to lend you the large sum you require are insufficient. Every day some poor immigrant finds himself in the same difficulty. If I were to listen to the dictates of my heart, I should have to spend four thousand pounds a year, whereas I only receive a salary of four hundred, which, owing to the high prices of provisions here, scarcely suffices for my support."

"I only ask a loan from you," answered M. Pinson; "I possess, thank God, some small property which will enable me to repay you at a fixed date."

"I am quite willing to believe it, but I cannot give you what I have not got. Were there a French man-of-war in the port, I would interest myself to get you taken on board; but, much as I wish to help you, I am not able to lend you the heavy sum you require."

M. Pinson persevered for a long time, the consul always replying with the same arguments. He received petitions similar to that of M. Pinson every day, and was obliged to turn a deaf ear to them.

"But what am I to do?" cried the engineer in despair.

"Write to France for funds," said the consul.

"When shall I get a reply?"

"In three months, if your correspondent is prompt."

"Three months!" exclaimed M. Pinson; "I shall have to stay here three months! while my servant at home, my rent, my business—"

The engineer was choking; as to Quicksilver, though outwardly he wore an aspect of dismay, he was in reality longing to turn his very best catherine-wheel.

The consul, like the agent of the Royal Mail Company, had to prepare his letters for the packet; and therefore had to dismiss M. Pinson. The engineer immediately returned to the hotel, where he took the landlord aside, and endeavored to move him to pity.

"I do not doubt your honesty," said the landlord; "but you will admit, sir, that one does not lend a large sum off-hand to a creditor one has only known two days, and who is going away to a far-distant country."

M. Pinson then obtained a guide and sought the office of a French merchant, to whom he explained the position in which he found himself, and offered to return double or thrice the sum he wished to borrow. This offer had the opposite effect to what he intended. The merchant replied that he was no usurer, and that he could not afford to risk the affair; and poor M. Pinson once more turned his steps towards the office of the company's agent.

This time he could not even see that official.

"Well, well," he said as he took Quicksilver back to the hotel, "it is our fate to live three months in this furnace; I will write, since I must."

M. Pinson had hardly begun to write his letter when he heard the report of a cannon. He ran to the window; black clouds of smoke were pouring from the funnel of the mail packet. The steamer, with the English flag floating from her poop, trembled and shook, then saluted the fort of San Juan de Ulloa, and, winding through the reefs, stood out to sea.

M. Pinson thought at first it was a mere manœuvre, but he soon had to acknowledge that it was a reality. The mail steamer was gone, and for a month at least he must remain at Vera Cruz.

For about ten minutes he watched the horizon, as if expecting to see the ship put back and return to port. A slight noise made him look round, and he remained staring at Quicksilver, who was standing on his head with his heels in the air. The boy sprang to his feet, reddening, and not daring to look up.

"Perhaps you are rejoicing over our deplorable position," said the engineer severely. "Don't you know, you unlucky urchin, that we are at an immense distance from France, without money, and fated perhaps to die of hunger? Don't you know—?"

"We can work, sir," replied the boy; "after all, it can't be worse to be lost in Vera Cruz than in London. We don't know Spanish, certainly, but there are both French and English in the town, and we will go and ask them for work. Then, though the consul cannot lend you money, he will help us to work for our bread, since we cannot live otherwise."

"I am afraid of everything," returned M. Pinson in a low voice. "It is easy to talk, but do you think that at a moment's notice I could obtain work in this town, where I am a stranger?"

"M. Boisjoli is a stranger in New York, and—"

"Boisjoli!" exclaimed M. Pinson; "you choose a nice moment to speak of that— Silence! Boisjoli takes diplomas, certificates, letters of introduction, with him, and enough money to keep him for two years doing nothing, or to bring him back to France if he likes. Why do you talk of Boisjoli, and compare his position with ours?"

Until evening M. Pinson paced up and down the room. Quicksilver, seeing his state of anxiety, kept quiet in a corner, and did not venture to open his mouth. The dinner-bell rang, but M. Pinson seemed not to hear it.

"Sir," said Quicksilver; "we had better eat our dinner today; it will be so much to the good."

M. Pinson shook his head, and the two travellers went down

together to the dining-room. Quicksilver made a plentiful repast, and frequently whispered to his companion, who let the dishes pass him untasted, to follow his example. The boy, who was accustomed to live from hand to mouth, and to rely on Providence for to-morrow's dinner, was perplexed by the anxiety of his companion. He heard him walking up and down the room during part of the night, and, depressed by seeing him so cast down, he himself slept but badly.

After breakfast, next day, M. Pinson called upon the consul.

"I have been interesting myself about you, sir," said that gentleman, "for I am greatly concerned at your misfortunes. Unluckily, I have no good news for you. There is a French ship in the harbor, and the captain is willing to take you back to France. But he is obliged to go and get his cargo at Campeachy, and will hardly sail for Havre before six weeks."

"Better than remaining here for four months," cried M. Pinson. "I accept."

"You must observe," said the consul, "that, owing to the delays sailing vessels always meet with in these parts, the captain's six weeks will probably extend to at least two months; it will then take you two months more to reach Europe, and it might, perhaps, be better for you to write to your friends, and to take your passage in the mail steamer as soon as the funds arrive."

"In the meantime how am I to live?" said the engineer.

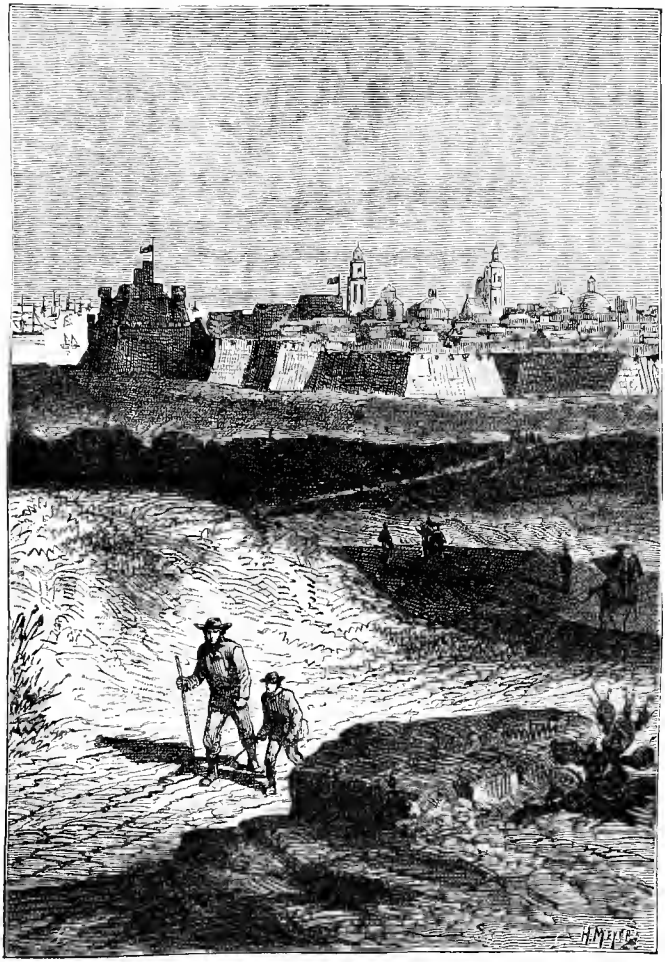
"Sir," replied the consul, "although one hundred pounds is a larger sum than I could lend, I can advance you a few hundred francs."

M. Pinson gratefully shook the hand of the consul, who continued:

"Let us consider the case. Living is expensive at Vera Cruz. You cannot live here, you and your young companion, under twenty francs a day. Moreover, yellow fever is making its appearance, and you should not needlessly expose yourself to it.

Go to Jalapa or Orizaba; you can there wait until it is time for you to embark, and you will be out of danger of the dreadful disease which once a year transforms Vera Cruz into a cemetery."

This advice was too sound to be disregarded. Provided with a letter of introduction to a merchant at Jalapa, M. Pinson took leave of the consul, who authorized him, if necessary, to draw on him to the amount of twelve pounds. When he had settled his hotel bill, and bought a revolver and shoes and walking-stick for himself and Quicksilver, there still remained to him about eight pounds. On the next day but one, at daybreak, and taking with them written instructions and a little manual, or vocabulary, of Spanish phrases, M. Pinson and Quicksilver left Vera Cruz and entered on the sandy plain that surrounds it. In order to reach Jalapa they had to cross woods inhabited by monkeys, and prairies over which buffaloes roamed. In his eagerness to enjoy these delights, Quicksilver would have liked to run, instead of walking.



OUTSIDE THE WALLS OF VERA CRUZ.

CHAPTER XXI.

YELLOW JACK.

No sooner were the walls of Vera Cruz left behind him than Quicksilver gave free expression to his satisfaction. At last he was going to see those primeval forests, those countries of the New World, which to his fancy, kindled by the adventures of Robinson Crusoe, and further excited by the yarns of the ship's crew on board the *Fulton*, were a sort of Paradise, planted with trees bearing azure leaves, with flowers of gold and with fruits of diamonds.

As for M. Pinson, he seemed to have made up his mind to the fresh journey which circumstances had forced him to undertake; but he was full of forebodings, and he wondered whether an unexpected accident might not take him to an opposite point from that he wished to reach—whether he should not find himself at Mexico while trying to get to Jalapa.

For an hour the two travellers pursued their way over little mounds of shifting sand—a miniature Sahara, whose aspect is constantly altered by the action of the north wind, the simoom of the Mexican coast.

No vegetation except dried-up and stunted mimosas, with here and there a cactus, was to be seen. Great green or gray lizards ran across the path from time to time, or disappeared down a hole. The heat was so oppressive that Quicksilver walked on with his head sunk on his breast, scarcely looking about him, but drinking constantly from the gourd of water with which M. Pinson had provided him.

"Shall we have to walk over sand all the way to Jalapa, sir?" the boy asked, at length.

"According to the route the consul traced out for me," answered the engineer, "we have nearly five miles of sandy plain to cross before we get to solid ground. But as in every three steps that we take the shifting sand makes us lose one, we must reckon over five miles."

"This road, sir, is neither pretty nor cheerful."

"No, indeed, and it is very fatiguing, as are all shifting footholds to bipeds. This was one of the active causes of road-making. But don't drink so often, it is not healthy."

For another half-hour M. Pinson and Quicksilver walked on in silence. They reached the foot of a sand-hill higher than any they had hitherto climbed. The ascent was toilsome; their lips were dry; their eyes burning from the refraction of the sand; and they were panting for breath. At the summit they halted for a moment; before them, at a distance of about a mile, they could discern a line of verdure.

"Is it a primeval forest?" asked Quicksilver.

"I think not," said M. Pinson, smiling; "primeval forests are scarcely to be found at the side of a high-road. We are on one of the branches of the main road from Vera Cruz to Mexico, which was made by the Spaniards, and along which, I have been told, there are buildings worthy of the Romans. Hitherto, however, I have seen nothing to admire."

The two wayfarers, having turned to estimate the distance they had travelled, found their gaze fixed on the glittering sea. M. Pinson, who was extraordinarily affected by the heat, complained of headache. He quickened his steps in order to reach the dark line which from afar off looked like a little wood.

The engineer sank rather than sat down at the foot of the nearest tree. Quicksilver, almost worn out with the long tramp on burning sand, did not even notice that the birds which flew

away from the dusty-leaved gum-tree as he approached it were actually a pair of parrots.

No sooner had M. Pinson reached the shade than he stretched himself on the ground and fell asleep. When Quicksilver had drunk copiously and rested himself, his inquisitiveness returned.

Decidedly, thought he, it is harder work walking about Vera Cruz than in the streets of London. What a sun! One would think it is not the same sun that shines in England, it is so large, so red, and so scorching.

Looking about him, he also perceived that the tufts of grass on which he was seated bore no resemblance to the grass in the London parks, and he jumped up when he saw a big horned beetle approaching him, and thought,

"Wouldn't the English sparrows be glad to snap up a cockchafer of that size? They would think they had caught three at a time!"

The insect crept along a branch, and Quicksilver saw with admiration that it was bigger than a bird with emerald green plumage which just then came hovering over a flower, like a bee.

Quicksilver was going to chase the tiny bird, when he saw a swarm of large butterflies with red, blue, black, yellow, white, silver, and golden wings. What a sight! it seemed to the boy like a bouquet of flowers scattered in the air. He began to pursue the beautiful lepidopters. But the heat soon brought him back to his companion.

The engineer, whose brow was wet with perspiration, still slept on. Quicksilver, seated by his side, began to feel uneasy at this long slumber, and wondered what he should do if a lion or a boa-constrictor should turn up.

Two men, driving before them lean asses laden with crockery, passed by and saluted Quicksilver, who, astonished to see men clothed only in short drawers thus braving the heat of the sun,

would have taken them for savages but for their salutation. A little later, seven or eight Indians, wearing various costumes, according to the villages to which they belonged, and each one carrying a load, passed in single file.

Quicksilver, only half-reassured by the civil manners of these aborigines, gently shook M. Pinson.

"What is it? Who is there? Boisjoli?" said the engineer.

"It is I, sir," answered Quicksilver. "Ought we not to be starting again?"

"Starting for Liverpool, for Calais, for the Virgin Isles—Swim, swim, the buoy will support you."

Quicksilver, alarmed by the incoherent words and the fixed gaze of the speaker, shook him again.

"Wake up, sir," he said. "Your looks, your words—you frighten me!"

M. Pinson, who was in a high fever, did not answer. A quantity of dark blood flowed from his mouth, and Quicksilver uttered a cry.

The child knew they were leaving Vera Cruz in order to escape *vómito negro*, or yellow fever; and now, without doubt, his companion was attacked by this terrible disease.

For a quarter of an hour Quicksilver, alarmed and in tears, tried to induce M. Pinson to rise and resume their journey. In vain: the engineer either answered incoherently or remained passive and inert. At length the boy nodded his head, and said to himself,

"It is stupid to cry, and it does no good."

He wiped away his tears, and stationed himself on the roadside to watch for a passer-by.

For more than an hour, and a very long hour it seemed to poor Quicksilver, he waited in vain. At last he perceived a team of mules, and, running to one of the drivers, he took him by the hand and led him to M. Pinson.

The muleteer, surprised to meet with two Europeans on foot

CAUGHT BY "YELLOW JACK."

in that place, questioned Quicksilver in Spanish. The boy answered first in French, then in English, but made the situation no more intelligible than before. The muleteer called to his companions; they put the engineer on the pack-saddle of one of the mules, and the team started again for Vera Cruz, where they arrived at five P.M.

In the Mexican hotel which the muleteers frequented there was a negress from Jamaica, who interpreted for Quicksilver. He had again become the sensible little man he had been in London, where he had had to provide for himself every day. He did nothing hastily. Having inquired the charges, and bargained over them, he settled M. Pinson in a tolerably comfortable room and sent for a medical man.

The doctor soon made his appearance. After a careful examination, he pronounced that M. Pinson really had yellow fever. Fortunately there were none but ordinary symptoms, and a man of robust constitution ought to recover from the disease.

"If you nurse him well," said the doctor, "and if nothing unfavorable occurs, he will be out of danger in a week."

There were a few complications. For two weeks, at every hour of the night or day, whenever M. Pinson opened his eyes, he saw Quicksilver bending over him with a cup of cooling drink in his hand. The boy lifted him up, helped him to drink, and then gently placed him again on the pillow. The engineer would try to speak, but his weakness was so great that he could barely articulate a few words.

"You know, sir," said Quicksilver to him one morning, "that you are now quite convalescent, and that you are to eat an egg to-day."

"I owe you my life," said the engineer, in a languid voice. "I was unable to speak these last few days, but I was quite conscious, and I noticed everything: you have behaved like a man."

"Like one who loves you, sir, and has to give an account of you to M. Boisjoli."

"Boisjoli!" cried M. Pinson, trying to sit up; "is it not he—"

"Hush! hush!" said Quicksilver, "don't let us talk of anything that vexes you; the doctor forbids any excitement. He has warned me that your recovery will be slow; but that's no matter. The point is that you are getting well."

M. Pinson drew the boy to him and kissed him.

"Dear child!" he murmured, "who would have thonght the day, or rather the night, I picked you up in the streets of London—"

"You must not excite yourself," exclaimed Quicksilver, withdrawing himself from M. Pinson's clasp; "that is quite against orders."

In four days M. Pinson was able to get up, to dress himself, and to sit in an arm-chair. He could not as yet walk, and felt vexed with himself for his own weakness. He asked for a looking-glass, and could scarcely recognize himself, his cheeks were so hollow, his beard was so long, his face was so pale. His greatest consolation was his good appetite.

From that time forth the engineer spent long hours near the window of his room, whence he could look on the sea and breathe the life-giving breeze. In another week he was able to go down into the court-yard of the hotel and to walk about, leaning on his stick.

Quicksilver, who had stayed so assiduously by his pillow while M. Pinson was confined to bed, would now go out every morning, only reappearing once or twice during the day.

"Poor little fellow," thought M. Pinson; "he was so long a prisoner, he must want a little freedom."

But, surprised that the boy stayed away more and more, he thought it necessary to question him.

"You don't play with the street-boys, I suppose," he said to him, one evening when Quicksilver seemed worn out and almost asleep on his feet.

"I? Oh, of course not. I walk about."

"Why don't you stay with me? I begin to walk pretty quick. I went to the beach yesterday. I am studying Spanish."

"So am I, sir; but I study it in the harbor, listening to the people talk. But pray always walk on the beach; the doctor recommended it."

For a while M. Pinson continued very weak; but when his good constitution at last triumphed, and he began to regain strength, he questioned Quicksilver about their hotel expenses, and remarked that the boy answered evasively.

"There's no more money in my purse," said M. Pinson, one evening.

"True, sir. Doctors, chemists, and chickens are dear here. But we are not yet starving, and that is the great point."

"I must make up my mind to speak to the landlord; I must tell him he shall not lose by me; that if need be the consul—"

"I have told him all that," returned Quicksilver. "Don't worry yourself, and, above all, walk on the beach."

"Well, dear boy, don't let me walk there by myself; it vexes me to think you are wandering about the town all day long."

"Very well, sir, I will do as you wish."

Notwithstanding this promise, however, Quicksilver would still slip away every morning, and M. Pinson made up his mind to call him to order. One day, after Quicksilver had disappeared as usual, M. Pinson resolved to go down into the town. In the porch, at the principal entrance, he met the landlord, and felt himself bound to speak to him of the long stay he was making at the hotel, and of his expenses.

"Stay as long as you like, señor," answered the innkeeper. "When people pay as you do, exactly to a farthing every fortnight, business is satisfactory."

"Every fortnight!" repeated M. Pinson, mechanically.

"Your little boy, señor, has never failed to pay me, and no later than yesterday he settled with me up to date."

"Then I owe you nothing?" asked M. Pinson, with a little hesitation.

"Nothing," replied the innkeeper.

M. Pinson made no remark, but bent his steps towards the centre of the town. The heat was overpowering, and the engineer was surprised at his own strength and recovered activity. He looked about him as he walked along. The streets of Vera Cruz are never very animated, especially at mid-day. M. Pinson reached the custom-house, opposite the jetty. Here there were more signs of life. Sailors, bathed in sweat, were hauling about huge heaps of goat-skins, cases of indigo, bales of cochineal, ingots of gold and silver—in fact, everything that constitutes the Mexican trade with Europe. On his left was a pile of enormous casks of flour and bacon, imported from the United States. One of these casks seemed to be rolling all by itself from the jetty to the custom-house, and as it came nearer, M. Pinson watched it with curiosity. All at once, behind this enormous load he caught sight of Quicksilver, pushing it with all his might.

For an instant M. Pinson remained open-mouthed, staring at his little companion. The boy had stopped for a moment to take breath, and to wipe the heat-drops from his forehead.

An unspeakable emotion stirred M. Pinson's heart. He understood now the reason of the boy's absence. While he had thought him to be sauntering about, or at play, Quicksilver had been at work for—

M. Pinson sprang forward. Before the boy, who was astonished at his appearance, could say one word, he felt himself lifted from the ground in the arms of the engineer, who was weeping.

CHAPTER XXII.

GOOD LUCK AT LAST.

"Sir," said Quicksilver, trying to escape, "people are looking at us."

"All the better," cried M. Pinson. "I should like the whole town to know of your conduct, and, above all, that Boisjoli—"

The engineer broke off, in order once more to embrace Quicksilver; then he continued,

"This, then, is the explanation of the riddle. While I was feasting on chicken and drinking the best wine, you— And I was fool enough to think you were enjoying yourself."

"And so I was, sir, be sure of it. The reason that we are not in debt at the hotel, and that you were able to have chicken as the doctor ordered, is that I had safely kept the present from the passengers on the *Canada*. About a fortnight ago, when I saw our five-franc pieces—they call them piastres here—flying away like birds, I began to reflect, and I thought that in a town like this it ought not to be difficult to find work. I was not mistaken. I had not been hanging about the jetty more than an hour when a boat from an American ship came alongside. The boatswain who was in charge of her was looking for a man to roll the casks they were going to put on shore, as far as this. I offered my services; the boatswain, quite pleased to hear me speak English, engaged me at once. Since then I have stuck to the work; it is not hard."

"Not hard!" exclaimed M. Pinson. "Oh! the brave little man; he pushes loads bigger than himself, beneath a tropical

sun, and— Go and rest, my boy, out there in the shade; it is my turn to work."

"Oh, sir!" said Quicksilver, "go back to the hotel and don't risk falling ill again; besides, this is not work for you."

"You are wrong: all work is honorable, and you have triumphantly proved it. Now, let me see; your task is to roll these casks from the jetty, and place them opposite the custom-house?"

"Yes, sir; but let me finish it, I will go back with you to the hotel when it is done."

"It will be done all the quicker, my boy, if two work at it."

In spite of Quicksilver's protestations and entreaties, M. Pinson took off his coat and helped to roll the casks. The sight of this white man employed at a task which, in the colonies, is the lot of the colored race, attracted many curious on-lookers. Among them was the consul, who was leaving the custom-house.

"You here, sir!" he exclaimed, with amazement, "and working at— But how pale you are! Have you been ill?"

In a few words M. Pinson related their departure, his own illness, and Quicksilver's conduct.

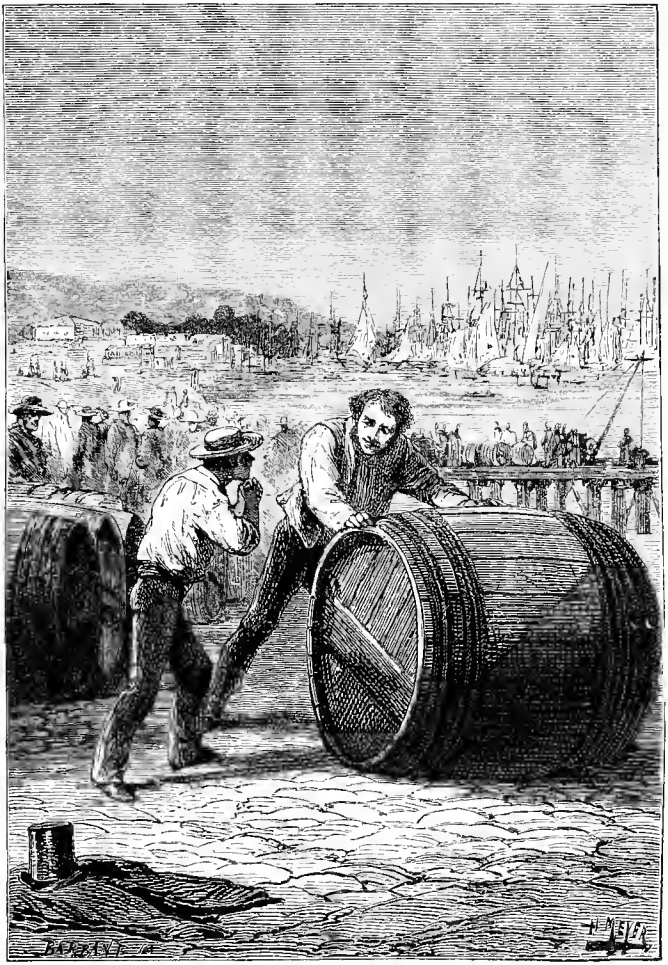
"How was it," said the consul to the boy, "that you never thought of coming to me and telling me all these things?"

"I did not know, sir, whether you would see me; and, besides, Mother Pitch, one of my friends, used always to tell me it was better to ask for work than for charity. If I had not found work on the jetty, I would have come to you sooner than let M. Pinson want for anything."

The consul drew the engineer into the shade of the custom-house.

"Sir," said he, "three days ago I wrote to you at Jalapa, believing you to be there. You know, probably, that the English steamer we were expecting has been wrecked?"

"No," said M. Pinson, turning to Quicksilver.



M. PINSON TAKES HIS TURN.

"I would not tell you, sir," said the boy, looking down; "I knew it would vex you, and—"

"So," said the engineer, "we are prisoners here for an extra month."

"What does it matter?" said Quicksilver. "You have nothing to fear now from yellow fever—"

"And you?"

"Oh, I am in no danger; yellow fever, it seems, does not like boys!"

"No, it only kills them," muttered the consul. "Now, sir," added he, turning to M. Pinson, "will you be good enough to call on me to-morrow morning? We must have a talk."

M. Pinson promised to be punctual; then, notwithstanding the entreaties of the consul, who joined Quicksilver in begging him to return to the hotel, the engineer insisted on helping his young companion to finish his task.

The next day, at the hour that had been agreed on, M. Pinson went to the consul's.

"Here," said that functionary, taking a roll of paper and handing it to the engineer—"here is a plan for the reconstruction of the jetty at Vera Cruz. It contains some calculations of the relative strength of iron, wood, and stone in resisting the action of the sea, which seems, so far as I can judge, not to be accurate. I wish to have them examined by a competent person. Will you undertake the work and submit to me your remarks upon it?"

"I shall require four days," said M. Pinson, after looking through the documents in his hand.

"Take the necessary time," said the consul; "there is no hurry."

On returning to his hotel, M. Pinson, whose strength was rapidly returning, instantly set to work. It was understood that the consul would remunerate him; he would therefore not allow Quicksilver to return to his work on the jetty.

"Let it be, my boy," he said; "if we are driven to it, we will go and work together, and at any kind of labor. But in the meantime study your Spanish."

"I begin to speak it a little," said Quicksilver; and, in fact, thanks to the ease with which young people learn a foreign tongue, especially when they are willing to take a little trouble, Quicksilver could already make himself understood in the Spanish language.

Five days after receiving the papers, M. Pinson took them back, together with his own notes and remarks. The consul paid him eight pounds on account, and gave him hopes that the proposed works might be intrusted to him. But a fortnight passed away and M. Pinson heard nothing more of the matter. His health was re-established, and his appetite was alarming.

"I really believe," he said one morning to Quicksilver, "that as our funds decrease my appetite increases. The consul makes no sign, and I think we must return to our work at the harbor."

"If you had allowed me my way, sir, we should now have some money laid by," said Quicksilver, dolefully.

That same evening a mulatto brought a message from the consul to the effect that he would see M. Pinson the next morning at nine o'clock. The engineer kept the appointment punctually.

"The loss of the English steam-packet on the Scorpion Rocks is confirmed," said the consul, without further preface. "I tell you this rather abruptly, perhaps, for it must delay your return to Europe, and keep you perforce a visitor in Mexico for, it may be, six months."

M. Pinson hung his head: he thought of the Rue Nollet, of Boisjoli, of Liverpool, of the *Fulton*, and made no reply.

"You are an engineer and a skilful one," continued the consul; "I know it, for I handed your report to the town architect, and there can be no doubt of your abilities."

M. Pinson raised his head.

"You must excuse me for these preliminary observations," said the consul, "as I have a serious proposal to make to you. I think I mentioned that I had written to you at Jalapa, where I believed you to be?"

M. Pinson assented. The consul continued:

"And that I am not mistaken in understanding you to be without means and obliged to wait at least five months before you can return to France?"

M. Pinson bent his head as an affirmative reply.

"Well, then, one of our wealthy landowners, Don Ambrosio Lerdo, wishes to introduce several modern improvements on his estate, and to substitute them for the old fashions which keep Mexico so far behindhand in agriculture and trade. Don Ambrosio Lerdo wrote to me to get him over from France an engineer capable of carrying out his purpose. Don Ambrosio offers a salary of eight hundred pounds a year. I must add, for it will always be an incentive to a Frenchman, that there is fame to be won by carrying out such an undertaking. The plans that I gave you to look over have proved your capacity; will you for a term of three years become chief-engineer on the Héronnière lands, and undertake the wise disbursement of the millions that Don Ambrosio is prepared to spend?"

M. Pinson remained silent and thoughtful. After the incredible series of adventures which, in spite of himself, had brought him from Batignolles to Vera Cruz, a position was freely offered to him such as Boisjoli had hoped to win for himself by the hardest work. Strange are the turns of fate.

"Probably you would like a few days to think over it?" said the consul.

M. Pinson still kept silence. A country to be civilized and eight hundred a year formed a combination which might fairly tempt a less ambitious man than he. Nevertheless, for the sake of the Rue Nollet and of his old ways of life, he might have

declined it, but there was Quicksilver. Eight hundred a year! It was enough to found a fortune for the boy to whom he owed his life, and of whom he desired to make a great man.

"I accept the offer, sir," said he, as he rose from his seat, "and I thank you with all my heart."

Two hours later M. Pinson affixed his signature to a deed by which he undertook to execute, with all the care and skill of which he was capable, the necessary works for turning the Héronnière into a model domain.

"This deed will make your fortune," said the consul to the engineer; "Don Ambrosio offers hundreds, but he will pay in thousands, and you are going to live in a new country where yellow fever is unknown."

When M. Pinson returned to the hotel, he found Quicksilver battling with a Spanish exercise. He approached him without speaking, and, taking from his pockets two handfuls of gold pieces, he flung them on the table.

Quicksilver sprang up and stared at his friend, who embraced him heartily.

"But, sir," said the boy at last, on seeing his companion turning out more gold from his pockets, "to whom does all this money belong?"

"To me and to you, my boy."

"Who gave it you?"

"Providence, whose will it is that you should be rich, and by whose help I am now able to repay you in part what I owe you."

Then M. Pinson sat down, and told Quicksilver all that had passed at the consul's.

"And so, sir," he said, "we are going to live in primeval forests!"

"Yes, and even to make clearings in them."

"And what are you going to do with the gold?"

"Get our outfits with it, and buy some of the instruments I shall need."

"And will you have to spend it all?"

"That depends; any way, we have unlimited credit."

Quicksilver became thoughtful.

"Well," said M. Pinson, "what are you thinking about?"

"You are so kind, sir, that I will tell you. Would it inconvenience you to let me have the eight pounds that the passengers of the *Canada* gave me?"

"No, certainly not; but what will you do with eight pounds?"

"I should like to send it to poor Mother Pitch; I should like to feel certain she will have a fire next winter."

M. Pinson embraced Quicksilver once more, and allowed him to send not eight pounds, but twenty pounds, to good old Mother Pitch.

For a week M. Pinson and Quicksilver were engaged in purchasing at the shops of Vera Cruz their outfit and the instruments which the engineer would require. M. Pinson wrote to his landlord in Paris, and also to his old servant, and intrusted his letters to the consul. A fortnight later, Don Ambrosio Lerdo being apprised of their coming, M. Pinson and Quicksilver were accompanied by the consul to the little schooner on which they were to embark. They were to land at Alvarado, ascend the river Papaloapam, and then to travel through the uncultivated country.

M. Pinson had cheerfully made up his mind to his new life, but he did not fail to grumble sometimes at Boisjoli. As to Quicksilver, he was transcendently happy.

The schooner set sail; the fort of San Juan de Ulloa disappeared below the horizon; and, coasting along the southern side of the Gulf of Mexico, our travellers watched for the Héronnière, which was to be the last stage of their voyage.

And the *Fulton?* The *Davis?*

M. Pinson retained too keen a recollection of the kindness of the commodore, his officers and crew, not to feel interested in their fate. He had therefore begged the consul at Vera Cruz

to communicate to him anything he might hear about these two enemies. Three months after the engineer's arrival at the Héronnière, the consul, mindful of his promise, wrote to him that the *Davis*, caught by a northerly gale and driven against the coast of Texas, had been wrecked on a rock. Humanity then resumed its rights; the commodore and his men risked their own lives to save those of their enemies, and in part succeeded. Commodore Warren had recognized his own cousin in the captain of the *Davis;* and among the crew of the privateer many of the *Fulton's* seamen had found a friend or a brother. Such are the inevitable consequences of all wicked wars; in other words, of civil war. The brother slays his brother, the friend his friend; and every blow wounds their native land, the mother of both.

When he looked at his prisoners, whom he had so often wished to hang, the commodore repented. He made interest with the Federal Government to obtain pardon for the rebels, and was fortunate enough to succeed.

May France, so cruelly tried, know no war in the future except it be declared by a foreign country!

And Boisjoli! Shall we ever learn whether, in time, he came to hear all about the Odyssey of his friends?

THE END.

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