

"England Expects—"

The thrills and adventure of the days when the Jolly Roger menaced the seas, and the glamour and romance of Lord Nelson's epic victory at Trafalgar, combine to make this old-time yarn one that you'll want to read again and again.



THE FIRST CHAPTER

The Jolly Roger!

"SAIL, ho!" came the hail from the look-out at the masthead.

"Where away?" shouted the first officer, Reeves, from the deck. "What's she like?"

"On the port bow, sir. Looks like a brig."

The answer caused considerable excitement on board the good ship *Mediator*, for a strange sail in those days caused many misgivings. Privateers were harassing the merchant shipping in all seas, and a merchantman would often escape from a danger to run into a worse one in the form of a pirate.

It was a glorious morning in early October of the year 1805, and the *Mediator* was licking along at a good ten knots, with a fair breeze, hoping to make the shores of Old England in less than a week.

The *Mediator* was a full-rigged ship of some one thousand tons burden, bound from Port Royal, in Jamaica, for the Port of London. She carried, as well as a valuable cargo, a complement of thirty-five passengers, amongst whom were Charlie and Victor Dane, the

sons of a wealthy planter in the West Indies.

The two boys were coming home to England alone to stay with their uncle for a short time, and then to enter his Britannic Majesty's Navy as midshipmen.

Once more the look-out hailed the deck.

"She's changed her course, sir, and is pointing straight for us. She's a brig, right enough, sir; but I can't make out her flag."

"Ay, ay!" hailed back the officer of the watch. Then, addressing a seaman who stood near, he said: "Hoist the ensign!"

In a few seconds the Red Ensign of Britain was fluttering at the peak, while the excitement on the ship was becoming more intense; small arms were being distributed to all the able-bodied men, both passengers and crew, and the six small carronades which formed the *Mediator's* armament were got in readiness;

in fact, everything showed that the plucky old skipper was going to, if necessary, make a fight for it.

Terrible tales were being freely circulated of bloodthirsty pirates, particularly of one, Captain Peter Dark, and his brig the Scourge, who frequented these waters.

"Suppose we run up against the Scourge!" said Charlie Dane to his brother, as they stood in the fo'c'sle. "That would be something of an adventure, wouldn't it?"

"Yes," broke in sailor who was standing by; "it 'ud be an adventure as none of us 'ere 'ud ever live to talk of. Pete Dark believes in the sayin' that dead men tell no tales. If that there brig's the Scourge, we won't see to-morrer's daylight, young masters. You think o' that."

The two youngsters did think, and came to the conclusion that perhaps it wouldn't be such an adventure after all.

In the meanwhile the ships had approached quite close to one another, and from the deck the view of the stranger, with her long, low, black hull and her tall, raking masts, inspired a certain amount of fear, for, whatever she might turn out to be, she certainly looked dangerous.

"She's sending up her flag!" came a cry; and, breathlessly, the company of the Mediator waited to see what the small, black object which was being hoisted up the halyards would be.

The flag reached the peak and broke out, and as it did so a groan went up from the ship's deck, for the worst had happened. The flag the brig sailed under was the so-called Jolly Roger—the white skull and crossbones on a black ground—the flag of the pirate.

The brig was determined to waste no time, for hardly had her infamous flag fluttered free in the breeze than a couple of shots from her big bowchaser hit the water a short distance ahead of the Mediator's stem.

"To your stations!" shouted Captain Trehearne in a firm voice.

In an instant each man had gone to his appointed place, with a look of grim determination on his face, though each knew well that it was an almost hopeless task that they were up against.

The two ships had now approached within hailing distance, and a man on the pirate was seen to spring into the main rigging, speaking-trumpet in hand.

"I'm Captain Dark of the Scourge," came a voice across the intervening water. "Will you hand over your cargo and keep your lives, or will you fight and lose both?"

In a voice of thunder Captain Trehearne, the gallant old sea-dog answered the pirate's impudent question.

"You and your murdering crew," he yelled through his speaking-trumpet, "can go to blazes!"

The pirate captain made no reply, but hardly had he left the rigging than the fight started with a broadside from the Scourge which raked the Mediator's deck, killing two men outright and wounding a third.

"Remember, men," cried the captain, "there'll be no mercy if we're taken. We must fight to the end!"

A cheer greeted this speech, as each man settled down to his appointed task.

The work allotted to Charlie and Victor was that of bringing ammunition from the small magazine to the gunners at the carronades, and hard they had to work.

The fight had now waxed furious, as the pirate poured in broadside after broadside on the unfortunate merchantman, who was only able to reply with her six small guns, all of which were concentrated on one side.

It soon became evident that the Mediator had no chance, for men were dying all around, and she was literally riddled with shot. Still the gallant remainder fought on calmly and steadily.

The air was rent with the crash of the guns and the oaths of the pirates and shrieks of the dying on both ships. There was no time to attend to the wounded, as one by one the men fell at their posts, for every available man was wanted to work the guns.

The mainmast had gone, and the deck was encumbered with ropes and gear of all kinds, yet the Britishers fought, stern and collected as ever.

The Scourge had drawn off for a time, and the weary Englishmen were glad of the respite to clear the wreckage away.

"I'm afraid it's all up, captain," said Reeves. "They're coming up on the other side."

It was so, for the pirate was now bearing down again on the starboard side—the side on which there were no cannon to meet her.

Frantically the remnant of a crew strove to drag the tiny guns to the other side across the debris-strewn deck. But they were too late. The pirate had the merchantman at her mercy.

Crash! went a broadside as the brig drew near.

"They're going to board, captain!" shouted a gunner; for through the smoke the Scourge's rigging could be seen crowded with men preparing to board their helpless antagonist.

Captain Trehearne had long anticipated this. He saw the case was hopeless, so, advancing to his men, who were still striving to get the carronades across, he shouted:

"We've done our best, men, but it's no good. We shall get no mercy from that scoundrel. But he shan't have our ship. I'll sink her first!"

"Ay, ay, captain!" answered the seamen. "Blow the old ship up, and trust to blowing that villain up with her!"

The two boys stood by, half dazed with the awful scene of slaughter and battle which they had seen; and as the skipper went below to fire the magazine, Charlie took Victor's hand.

"Good-bye, old chap!" he said.

"Good-bye, Charlie!" Victor answered.

And the brothers waited calmly with the rest for their death, preferring to die bravely on board their own vessel rather than to fall into the hands of the scoundrel, the captain of the pirate.

There was a scraping noise as the two vessels came together, a hideous yell from the ruffians of the Scourge as they leapt on the Mediator's deck, a short, sharp scuffle, then a dull boom, mingled with inhuman shrieks, and the boys were hurled senseless to the deck as a great mass of flame broke out in the middle of the ship, and the gallant old Mediator slowly filled and sank.

THE SECOND CHAPTER

On Board the Scourge.

"Is that you, Charlie?"

Victor opened his eyes and gazed across a small, unfamiliar, dirty cabin at his brother, who lay in the opposite berth.

Victor roused at his brother's voice.

"Yes," he said. "But where are we, Vic? I don't seem to remember anything."

"I don't know," replied Victor. "Let me see. Why, of course, don't you remember the fight with the pirate, and the blowing-up of the Mediator? Why, this must be the Scourge! We've been picked up, and are now imprisoned on board the brig."

"Yes, that must be it. The last I remember was a blinding flash, and being hurled to the deck."

At that moment footsteps were heard coming down the companion-ladder, and in a few seconds a tall man, with a swarthy complexion, entered the cabin and gazed at the boys.

"So you brats are awake? The cap'n wants to see you."

"Who's the captain?" asked Victor as he slid out of his bunk.

"Why, Pete Dark, of course. He'll soon let yer know who he is, my young beauties!" replied the man, with a malicious grin.

Fearing the worst, the two boys got up and followed the sailor along a passage, and presently entered cabin, where a short, evil-visaged man, with black hair and deep-set eyes, sat perusing a chart.

"The two prisoners, cap'n," said the sailor, then left the cabin.

Dark looked up from his chart and surveyed the boys for a moment.

"What's your nationality?" he said at length.

"We're British!" replied Charlie proudly. The reply and its spirited intonation seemed to infuriate the pirate captain.

"Those cursed British!" he roared. "I hate them! The fools always defy me! But you'll learn what I do with the dogs when I get my hands on them! You're the only survivors of your ship, and you won't survive much longer!"

Then he called aloud:

A terrific explosion, mingled with inhuman shrieks, came from the centre of the ship, and Charlie and Vic were flung to the deck.



“ Hernandez ! ”

The swarthy sailor whom the lads had first seen came in answer to the call.

“ Hernandez,” said the pirate, “ take these British brats and put them in irons.”

Seizing the unfortunate brothers, the man dragged them down below, fixed heavy irons to their hands and legs, and left them in the darkness of the hold.

“ We’re done for this time, old chap,” said Charlie, in a hopeless voice.

“ I’m afraid so,” Victor replied. “ Though we mustn’t give up hope yet. Something may happen before to-morrow.”

The brothers then lapsed into silence, a prey to every kind of despair as the hours passed by, the monotony of the darkness only broken by the sound of the water splashing against the hull and the scuttle of rats as they ran about the hold.

Both boys were feeling weak and exhausted from hunger and thirst, and after a while they dropped off to sleep.

Many hours later, however, they were rudely awakened by a brutal kick, and found Hernandez’s swarthy face leering at them.

“ Come on, rouse up ! ” he growled, and proceeded to knock off the irons.

The boys got up and followed him, each feeling sure that the moment had arrived when he was to meet his death.

So weak and exhausted were they that it was with the utmost difficulty they stumbled up the ladder, out into the light ; and then, staggering rather than walking, they were led into the pirate captain’s cabin.

Dark, surrounded by half a dozen pirates, was in the midst of a drunken feast when Charlie and his brother entered, and a burst of coarse laughter greeted their appearance.

Pete Dark rose unsteadily to his feet.

“ Well, comrades,” he said, addressing his ruffianly companions, “ we’ve had a good day, and we’ll finish it with a good night’s amusement. These two brats shall walk for us at sundown.”

Charlie cast a despairing glance at the outside world. The sun was already sinking low, and he was wondering how much longer he had to live. Dark read his thoughts, and replied brutally :

" Yes, my young cub, about another half hour and you'll be howling for mercy at the end of the plank."

The boy drew himself up.

" We don't ask mercy from cowards and murderers ! " he replied scornfully.

" We shall see, you brats ! " shouted the pirate, in an angry voice. " Here, Hernandez, we won't wait for sundown ; run the planks out now, and we'll watch these two walk without asking for mercy ! "

A shriek of drunken laughter greeted this speech of Dark's, and, without further ado, the boys were taken out and bound with their hands behind their backs. Then from the side of the ship two planks were run out, projecting some twelve feet overboard.

The brothers stood, guarded by a couple of men, watching the arrangements without the slightest sign of fear on their young faces. The feeling of fatigue and exhaustion was gone, and only a determination to die with a stiff upper lip remained.

The order was given, and bravely each lad walked to the end of the planks placed side by side.

The deck of the Scourge was crowded with men, all anxious to see and enjoy the foul murder that was to be perpetrated.

A howl of joy went up from this collection of brutes as Dark ordered the planks to be raised.

" Now ! " he shouted. The boys gave one glance at one another, and then were precipitated with a splash into the water beneath, a confused medley of oaths and coarse laughter ringing in their ears as the water closed over them.

Luckily, Charlie and Vic were both excellent swimmers. In a few moments they rose to the surface, and as they did so a dull boom greeted their ears.

Boom ! Again the report rang out, and the boys, throwing themselves on their backs, gazed eagerly in the direction from which the sound came, and saw that, unnoticed by

the pirates in the confusion and excitement of the last half-hour, a large gun-brig had approached, flying the French tricolour at her peak.

With feverish haste the crew of the Scourge sprang into the rigging to set all sail, for the pirate did not relish the chance of a fight with anything likely to be properly armed.

Shots were now falling fast around the floating boys, who forgot their peril in the excitement of watching the fight. They were lightly clad, and found little difficulty in keeping afloat.

The pirate was now well under way, and moving rapidly through the water. There could be no doubt as to the result if it came to a chase, for the Scourge could sail two feet to the other's one.

At last a well-aimed shot from the Frenchman struck the foretopmast of the pirate, and a great mass of white canvas and a tangle of ropes came overboard with a crash.

Rapidly the crew cut the wreckage loose, and as the Scourge tore along, it was soon left far behind.

" Victor, " cried Charlie, " there's a chance."

" What ? " queried the other.

" The wreckage, if we can swim to it, will keep us afloat for a long time ; we may be picked up yet."

Without another word, both struck out with their legs, and swam on their backs for the floating topmast.

It was a long swim, and the boys were severely handicapped by their bound arms and their terrible fatigue. But the hope of rescue bore them up, and they toiled on bravely, lessening the distance foot by foot, till at last the distant wreckage was reached. Throwing themselves across the floating spars, they managed to get astride and look about them.

Then each turned his attention to the now far distant ships. It was a wonderfully pretty sight, those two brigs, their white canvas showing up with startling distinctness against the sunset sky as little by little the Frenchman decreased the distance between herself and the pirate. The sound of incessant firing was borne across the waters to the helpless

lads who had found temporary safety on the wreckage.

It was almost dark now, and the reports from the guns were growing very far away, and the ships were almost invisible. Despair was creeping again into the boys' hearts.

"I'm afraid there's not much chance," said Charlie hopelessly. "Goodness knows when another ship will pass, and even if we sight one we can't wave a signal here in any way."

"Cheer up," said Victor; "we must hope for the best." Then, after a pause, "I think I can—yes, good!" He raised one arm above his head. "I've got the rope off," he continued, more confidently. It was so, for the rope which bound his hands, becoming soaked with water, had stretched slightly, and Victor slipped his arms free.

"Now to get you undone," he said as he worked his way along the spar, and started to untie his brother's arms. In a few moments Charlie, too, was free, and, making use of their bonds, they lashed themselves securely to the spar.

The sound of firing had completely ceased, and only the gentle splash of the waves broke the silence.

Some three hours must have passed, since darkness had set in, when Charlie heard some noise other than the splash of the waves. It was a gentle creaking, and then the sound of human voices.

Turning his head, he gazed in the direction of the noise. Showing black, like a shadowy blot on the ocean, was the form of a ship, with a dim light showing here and there.

"Victor!" he yelled. "Victor! Look!"

Slowly Victor, who had been dozing, opened his eyes, and turned to the ship.

"Hail her!" he said. "We must make her hear." And putting all their remaining strength into a shout of "Ship ahoy!" the two boys proceeded to unlatch themselves.

"Ship ahoy!" Again the hail rang out, and this time an answering hail, in a foreign tongue, came back through the still night air.

"Help!" cried back the boys; and in reply a long babble of indistinct words, followed by the creaking of blocks and the splash of a boat dropping from the davits.

The boys continued to yell as the regular dip of oars drew nearer and nearer, till at last a man could be distinguished standing in the bows with a lantern and boat-hook in his hand.

"Allri, ve come quick!" he shouted as he caught sight of the mast and its human crew, and in another minute strong arms reached over and dragged the boys into the boat in safety.

THE THIRD CHAPTER Bound for Cadiz.

NEITHER Victor nor Charlie knew much of the next forty-eight hours, for, utterly worn out with fatigue, and exhausted by lack of food, the two boys fell asleep the moment they were rescued, and didn't wake until two days had passed.

When at last they did wake it was to find themselves in a comfortable cabin, and with a cheerful-looking Frenchman tending them.

"Good!" exclaimed the Frenchman. "You 'ave 'ad a ver' long sleep, but you vill be soon allri' now."

"Where am I?" muttered Victor, who was the first to grasp the situation.

"You are on the French ship *La Gloire*; ve did pick you up two days ago from a ver' small piece of wreckage."

"Oh, yes, I remember now," said Vic. "May we see the captain?"

"Yes, ze capitaine vill come 'ere to see you soon," the foreigner replied, in a friendly tone. And then, promising to send some food, the good-natured Frenchman went away.

A few minutes later a boy appeared with a tray full of good things to eat, and as the boys rapidly set to work on the food, they plied the youngster who had brought it with questions, to all of which the only reply was a smile, a shrug of the shoulders, and "I speak no Engleesh."

Feeling much refreshed by the sleep and the hearty meal, Charlie and Vic began to think of getting up. Somehow or other they managed to convey their meaning to the French boy, and also pointed out that they had no clothes to put on.

Heartily amused at the situation, the youngster disappeared, and returned shortly

with an armful of odd garments, which, with much laughter, the English lads soon donned. Hardly had they finished than the door opened, and a man, whose uniform was much bedecked with gold lace, entered.

"I am Captain Roche, of the French gunbrig, *La Gloire*," he said in excellent English; "and we picked you up from a piece of floating wreckage the night before last."

"Yes," said Vic; "the last thing I remember was being pulled into one of your boats, and I cannot tell you how grateful I am to you for your timely rescue."

"There is no need for thanks," replied the officer; "but I should be interested to hear how you managed to be adrift in the Atlantic on a small spar."

In a few words the boys told their story, and the face of the French captain grew very dark as he heard of the barbarous way in which the boys had been treated.

"So that was the Scourge, was it?" he said, when Charlie had added the last word of their adventures. "We very nearly captured her, but she escaped in the darkness, so we gave up the chase, and returned luckily in time to pick you up."

"Thank Heaven for that, sir!" said Victor fervently. "So you were the ship we saw attacking the pirate?"

"Yes," replied the other, with a smile; "and though she escaped us, I think we left our mark on her."

"What are you going to do with us?" queried Charlie, at length.

The Frenchman looked thoughtful for a moment.

"Well, monsieur," he replied, "unfortunately our countries are at war at present, and, really, I suppose you must be considered, for the time being, prisoners. But," he continued kindly, "I need only ask your word not to escape, and I will try to make the rest of your voyage with us as pleasant as possible. I am now bound for Cadiz, where I join our fleet."

"I promise, on my word of honour, not to interfere with or attempt to escape from this ship," replied Victor.

"And I promise also," Charlie added.

"Thank you, messieurs. Being Britishers,

I know that your word is sufficient. And now," he continued, "this cabin shall be set aside for your use, and you will, perhaps, do me the honour of taking your meals with me."

The boys offered their profound thanks, and the captain, bidding them au revoir, left them to their own devices for an hour or so.

The next four days passed very happily for the two English boys. They were treated kindly and courteously by their captors, who spared no pains to make the lads feel more like guests than prisoners.

Early in the morning of the sixth day after they had been picked up, the two boys were talking over their adventures right up in the bows.

"I somehow feel that we shall see the Scourge again," said Charlie lazily.

"Perhaps," answered Victor. "If, as Captain Roche said last night, we are released when we get to Cadiz, and sent home, we may be midshipmen on board a ship that meets her. Then," he added feelingly, "we'll have an account to settle with Pete Dark."

At that moment there came a hail from the look-out. Following the general gaze, the boys looked away to the east, and saw a number of tiny specks on the horizon.

"I wonder what it is?" said Charlie.

The boys had picked up several words of French since they had come aboard *La Gloire*, and from the conversation of the seamen they soon learnt that it was a fleet that they saw, but whether French or British no one could say.

All was bustle and excitement on the French brig, for this fleet they were rapidly nearing might mean that she would have to run, or even to fight. Every telescope was levelled at the collection of white sails rising higher and higher every minute.

Presently a cheer from the masthead set all doubts at rest, and the captain sent up the French tricolour to the peak, and pointed the brig for the approaching fleet. It was the French fleet that had been sighted, and towards the very centre of them *La Gloire* made her way.

Another half-hour, and they were quite in the midst of a magnificent collection of thirty-four line of battle ships, both French and

Spanish—great three and four-deckers that towered above the little *La Gloire*, and made her seem like a tiny cockle-shell beside them. Running close up to the huge *Bucentaur*, the French Admiral Villeneuve's flagship, Captain Roche put off to report to the commander-in-chief.

The wind, which had been blowing fresh early in the morning, had now dropped entirely, and the great Armada swam with loose and flapping sails on a sea of glass.

After some twenty minutes Captain Roche returned, and as soon as he reached his brig's deck he asked for the two boys.

"Monsieur Dane and your brother," he said, addressing Victor, "I much regret to say that you must now leave me. I have just received orders from my admiral to start at once on a commission, and he requests me to send you both on board his ship, the *Bucentaur*—that big three-decker there."

Five minutes later found the boys at *La Gloire*'s gangway, bidding farewell to the kind and courteous French captain; and then, entering the cutter, they were rowed rapidly towards the great battleship *Bucentaur*.

After the confined space of the brig, the huge decks of the three-decker seemed tremendous. At the gangway the boys were met by a lieutenant, who gave them over to a corporal of Marines to escort to their cabin down below.

"What are they going to do with us now?" asked Charlie of the Marine.

The corporal shrugged his shoulders.

"I not know," he replied. "I 'ave no orders received. If you keep out of the way, I suppose you do vot you like."

With this he left them, and after a few minutes the two youngsters made their way on deck again.

The wind had now risen slightly, and the whole fleet was slowly moving in splendid formation to the south, while away to the north the little *La Gloire* could be seen moving rapidly along, with every stitch of canvas set.

No one on board the big ship seemed to take much notice of them; so, keeping—as the Marine corporal had suggested—out of the way, the two boys wandered about and did pretty well as they liked. Their meals they

The REMOVE PASSAGE



The noise is appalling, for Bolsover's calling
And Loder is bawling aloud for a fag!
Some voices are merry, some miserable—very—
While Wharton and Cherry are staging a rag.

The victim is Coker, a senior joker,

And Bob with a poker is giving him beans;
While Ogilvy gaily is singing "Bill Bailey"—

The Remove Passage daily does witness such scenes.

For Linley is swotting, and Skinner is plotting;
Frank Nugent is rotting with other bright boys.
Whatever they're doing, there's trouble a-brewing
For one thing's accruing—that one thing is NOISE!
To-night they're excelling the record for yelling,
The tumult is swelling—a Babel of sounds;
And Quelchy, the master, will come with disaster,
And much sticking-plaster, will bind up our wounds.

Now Coker's inviting a licking by fighting,
And we are delighting to pile in our hits;
He's roaring with anger, and yells like a ganger
As Bob lands a banger which giveth him fits.
And Coker, who's muddy, shrieks, "Stop, everybody!
To-night from my study at twenty-past six
Some tuck-hunting rotter a cake stole from Potter,
'Twas Bunter who got her—it's one of his tricks!"

Now Bunter is under a crowd with his plunder;
He rends them asunder and bubbles with fright;
Then this fat defrauder, to add to disorder,
Says, "My postal-order is coming to-night!"
A great roar of laughter resounds from each rafter;
We know what he's after—we've heard it before.
He's trying to borrow a bob till to-morrow,
But finds to his sorrow we laugh all the more.

We kick him and lick him—we never can stick him—
We all try to trick him—our misguided Bill;
He's speaking and squeaking, for mercy he's shrieking;
But we never like sneaking—he goes through the mill.

Then, Wingate appearing, soon starts interfering;
Says, "Bed-time, I'm fearing—get up from the floor."

The screaming, the streaming, the scheming and
beaming
All sink into dreaming—and peace reigns once more.

took with the junior officers, and, from the conversation at supper, it was plain the French fleet expected to encounter Lord Nelson's fleet before long.

"I wonder whether we shall see a big fight?" said Vic as he turned in that night.

"I wonder?" replied Charlie. "Good-night, Vic!"

THE FOURTH CHAPTER

The End of the Scourge.

IT was a glorious morning when Charlie and Victor came on deck. The sun had just risen, and a light breeze from the west hardly ruffled the surface of the water. There was a heavy roll on, and the beautiful ships, as they rose and fell to the swell, made a lovely sight. A faint line to the north showed where the coast of Spain lay; but the most important thing of all was the sight which was to be seen southward, for there, showing clear in the early sunlight, lay a great fleet, moving slowly towards the French and Spanish ships.

"Nelson's fleet, Vic! Look!" cried Charlie as he caught sight of the distant sails. "Vic, we're going to see that fight!"

Victor made no reply. His eyes were fixed on the oncoming ships, and his thoughts were with them.

After a hurried breakfast the two boys came on deck again. The fleets had approached very close now, and from the ships all around the Bucentaur came the sounds of preparation for the coming battle.

From the Bucentaur the French and Spanish ships stretched out on either side, forming altogether a huge crescent, moving slowly, but in splendid order, to meet the foe, while the approaching English fleet had divided into two parts, each of a wedge-shaped formation.

Nearer and nearer came the two masses of ships, gracefully and silently, their white canvas glittering like the spray at their bows.

Suddenly, from the foremost of the left column of the British fleet, from a fine three-decker flying St. George's Cross at her fore, a string of little black dots ran rapidly up the signal halyards, and then broke out into a string of brightly coloured flags, fluttering in the fresh morning breeze.

"That's the Victory, Admiral Nelson's flagship, making a signal," said a sailor standing near to Charlie.

Little did the two boys think, as they watched those tiny flags flutter free, that they conveyed a message to the fleet that would be remembered as long as the British Empire should last.

Just then the lieutenant who had first received them came up.

"You boys will have to go below now," he said. "The action is about to begin. Your Admiral Nelson has just signalled the rest of his fleet."

"What was the message? Can you say?" inquired Vic and Charlie eagerly.

"Yes," replied the officer grimly. "It read, 'England expects every man will do his duty.'"

The sudden crash of guns which followed drowned the lads' hearty cheer. Without further ado, the lieutenant left the boys to themselves, as he turned to go to his post of duty.

"They've started now, Vic. Let's watch for a bit."

And the brothers turned again to watch their country's fleet.

A great change had come over the formation of the ships, as with the first shot fired each wedge-shaped column had spread out fanwise, every ship pointing for one particular opponent; and bearing straight for the Bucentaur came the Victory herself, her sails riddled with shot and her mizzenmast trailing over the side.

The two ships were close—almost touching—when a deafening crash came, and the deck of the French flagship was literally mown with flying, shrieking ball. Crash, crash! The Victory poured broadside after broadside into the Bucentaur, who replied gamely enough, though she had suffered fearful punishment.

In the midst of this scene of carnage and death stood Charlie and Victor—untouched, almost unconscious—spellbound by the scene before them, and watching the great Victory as she drifted by with the tide.

"Look, Charlie—look! That's him!"

Victor clutched his brother's arm and pointed to a small man in a faded uniform, who

was pacing the English ship's deck as calmly as if he were strolling along a London street.

The small man in the faded uniform, conspicuous by the number of stars on his breast and the gold lace on his coat, was Admiral Lord Nelson, his right sleeve empty and pinned across to his left shoulder.

Slowly the two flagships drifted apart, the Victory taking her place alongside the Redoubtable, the next ship in line, while on the

and at last, after some two hours' engagement, her mainmast went by the board.

There was nothing else to be done. Admiral Villeneuve had fought a plucky fight, but his ship was honeycombed with shot, leaking badly, on fire in four places, and his crew decimated. The brave men had to submit, and, amid ear-splitting cheers from the Englishmen, the French flag was lowered, and the Bucentaur surrendered.



The pirates made a rush towards Vic and Charlie, but they were not quick enough. The boys leaped from the gunwale into the sea.

other side the fine old Fighting Temeraire took her position.

The noise was deafening. The smoke hung about in dense clouds in the motionless air, and still the fight grew harder. The shrieks and yells, the crash of broadsides, the storm of cheers, the scrunching of great ships together, and the flying, tearing cannon-balls, all joined to make a fearful picture never to be forgotten.

The British ships on either side of the Bucentaur poured in a continuous hail of iron,

Still, in other parts of the line the action continued with unabated fury, though one by one the ships of the allied fleet drew free—sinking or on fire—and before the end of the afternoon the victory was achieved. The great Armada had been utterly defeated, and before the sun set, of that brave crescent of thirty-four ships that swept on to meet the British in the morning only fifteen battered and ruined hulks remained!

Nelson had triumphed and died, and Napoleon's power on the sea had gone for ever.

Less than two hours of that October day remained, and Charlie and Victor were still walking the *Bucentaur*'s deck, watching the last of the great sea fight, both lost in thought, when suddenly Victor stopped and gazed far away through the smoke.

"What is it, Vic?" said Charlie.

Victor paid no heed for a moment; then he turned on his brother suddenly.

"Look at that ship yonder, Charlie. It's the *Scourge*, flying the White Ensign."

"You're right! It is, true enough! There's no mistaking her build. Vic, what can we do? She's absolutely unsuspected, and in a few minutes, with her heavy guns, she'll have the *Victory* at her mercy for a time."

The boys were right. Pete Dark, in his hatred for Britishers, had arrived at the scene of battle, and, hoisting the White Ensign, had come up unnoticed right to the centre of the fleet, bent on vengeance and destruction.

"Charlie, we must get aboard her and stop her somehow," said Vic firmly. "Come on, old chap, follow me!"

And, without further parley, the youngsters proceeded to divest themselves of their clothing, and dropped noiselessly down the ship's side into the sea.

With long, swift strokes the boys quickly covered the three hundred yards that lay between the *Bucentaur* and the pirate brig; and, reaching the latter, they managed to haul themselves up to an open porthole in the starboard side. Peering cautiously through the open port, they saw that all was safe, and, climbing into the ship, they stopped for a minute to make their plans.

"I'll find my way to the magazine somehow, Charlie; and you must get on deck, wait for a few seconds, then cut the flag down, and trust to luck. Good-bye, old chap!"

Victor disappeared along a passage to the right, and Charlie, picking up a knife from the table of the cabin they had entered, carefully made his way up the ladder to the deck.

As he wormed his way along he saw that he was only just in time—if that; for upon the port side of the gun-deck a host of men were concentrated, with the whole broadside trained on the rapidly approaching *Victory*.

Cautiously Charlie made his way up to the main deck, crawled along by the bulwarks till he reached the halyards that supported the White Ensign and with a swift slash of the knife severed the rope.

Down came the flag with a run, drawing the immediate attention of the few sailors on deck, who at once rushed towards Charlie.

Then, to add to the confusion, a form appeared from the companion ladder. It was Victor, having completed his task.

"Over, Charlie—over!" he cried, catching sight of his brother. And, suiting the action to the word, he made for the side, and leaped into the sea. Charlie followed suit, and in a couple of seconds the boys were swimming madly away from the brig.

"I've done it!" gasped Vic between the strokes. "The magazine will explode in a few seconds!"

Just then a crash from the brig showed that she had fired her first broadside. Then, before the sound had died away, the whole hull seemed to quiver, there was a deafening roar, a huge mass of flame shot up, and the sea and air was black with falling spars and burning rigging. The boys, pausing in their swim a minute later, looked back to see that the place occupied by the *Scourge* was now but a smudge of charred and burning wood on the water.

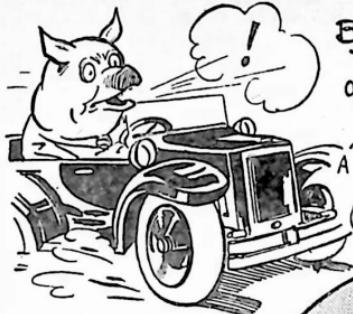
With the explosion of the brig a dozen boats put out from the surrounding ships, and the two gallant lads were quickly drawn from the sea and taken aboard the *Victory*, where they told their story to Captain Hardy, from whose lips they learnt of the death of the brave admiral.

Three weeks later found the boys in old England, safe with their uncle—an old country squire, who lived near Winchester. A month after that two proud boys set out on the Portsmouth coach to join their first ship as midshipmen.

Although new to the Navy, Charlie and Victor were not new to the sea and to naval fights, and the fame of their brave action went before them, so that when they got on board the *Hannibal* they were welcomed as heroes.



THE GREYFRIARS "ZOO"!



BILLY BUNTER,
THE FAT BOY
OF GREYFRIARS,
IS THE PRIZE
PORKER.
A PROPER PIG
AT MEALS!
(HERE IS A FANCY
PORTRAIT OF HIM!)



COKER
IS
THE
GREYFRIARS.
ROAD - HOG.

COKER
IS ALSO
A VERY BIG ASS!



OF COURSE EVERYONE
KNOWS JOHNNY BULL



THE AMERICAN FISH,
THE GAY DOG LODER



AND ALONZO TODD
THE RABBIT!

The "HOLIDAY ANNUAL" artist went to the Zoo the other day, with the above result! We're hoping he won't do this too often!