

to accompany him, not doubting but his uncle would provide for me for his sake. Any thing like adventure was always welcome to me, and my mind was soon decided.

We had no money however to carry us to Greenock; but I recollected a person who owed my father money, and I proposed to go and ask it from him in my father's name. This was the first time I had ventured to do any thing so glaringly dishonest; and I hesitated long: I passed the door a dozen times before I mustered effrontery enough to go in. It was drawing near the hour of shutting up, and I was obliged to resolve. I went in and asked him for the money. The candle burnt dim, and I stood as much in the shade as possible; but I am sure he noticed my embarrassment. However, he gave me the money; and, whenever I got it, we hurried out of the town immediately.

We travelled all night, and next morning arrived in Greenock. After getting some breakfast, and brushing ourselves up a little, although we were very tired, we

resolved on looking out for a vessel. On inquiry, we learned that there was no vessel in the harbour bound for Surinam. This was a disappointment; but, we thought, if we were once in the West Indies, we would find little difficulty in getting there.

The first vessel we came to, was a ship bound to Kingston, Jamaica. We went on board; and, inquiring for the captain, asked if he wanted any men. He looked at us with a smile of contempt, and eyeing us from head to foot, "*Men,*" said he, laying a particular emphasis on the word (for neither of us was more than thirteen years of age), "it would be a pretty vessel that would be mann'd with such *men as you*—Whaur hae ye come frae na? Ye'll be some runawa weaver callans, frae Glasgow, I'se warrant; but ye had better gang hame again; for I'm thinkin' ye'll like the sea waur than the loom." This was a "stomacher" at the outset. I was galled by his reply; but I thought some one else would be glad to get us.

We tried several other vessels with

nearly the same success. At last, tired and crest-fallen, we were going home to our lodging; when an old man, who had seen us going from one vessel to another, accosted us, and asked if we wanted a ship. We replied we did. "Oh, then," said he, "you need not want that long; for, if you go with me, I will soon find one for you. Where do you wish to go?" We replied to Surinam. "Then, you could not have come in a better time; for there is a vessel lying in the roads ready to sail for that place." We were overjoyed at this intelligence; "but will they take us?" said we. "Oh, to be sure they will, and glad to get you. I'll take you on board now if you like." We assented, and he went to procure a boat to take us on board.

When he was gone, a sailor, that was standing by, and saw us talking to the old man, came up, and asked us what he had been saying. When we told him, he said the sooner we were off out of that the better; for the fellow, that had been talking to us, was one of a gang of rascals in pay of the press-gang; and that, instead

of putting us on board of a vessel such as he described, he would put us on board of the tender; and that there was actually no such vessel in the roads as the one he mentioned. We lost no time in taking his advice, and hurried home to our lodgings.

When there, my spirits began to sink; and the thought of how I had left my parents, and the distress they must be in about me, completely overcame me, and I burst into tears. My companion felt nearly as bad as myself. We resolved to return home, and ask forgiveness of our parents; but, as we were fatigued with travelling, we put off our return until next morning.

Next morning, when we got up, our minds had recovered some of their former elasticity; and we did not feel so much disposed to return as we did the preceding evening. The idea of the ridicule which we would have to bear from our acquaintance, and, on my part, the stigma which would be thrown on my character for drawing the money in my father's name, seemed to be insurmountable barriers in the way of our return; and we walked

out into the town with our minds still undecided.

In crossing the main street, we met one of our old school-fellows, who had ran away from his parents about six months before. He had just returned from the West Indies; and, having leave for a few days to go to Glasgow to see his friends, he had got himself rigged out in the true jolly-tar style--his jacket and trowsers of fine blue cloth, white stockings, short-quartered shoes, a coloured silk handkerchief tied loosely round his neck, over which the neck of his checked shirt was folded down, a glazed hat on his head, and an enormous quid of tobacco in his cheek. In fact, he was so completely metamorphosed that we scarcely knew him; for when he was at school, he was remarked for being a soft dull sort of boy.

When he saw us, he seized each of our hands with his, and exclaimed, "Oh, D---n my eyes, Jem and Bill, how are ye my hearties? what has brought you to Greenock: be ye looking out for a birth?" We were expressing our pleasure at having met him, when he said, "Don't be stand-

ing here in the street. Let's go and get a glass of grog." We remarked that it would look very odd for boys like us to go into a tavern and call for liquor; but Tom thought that a very foolish objection, and, leading the way into a tavern, we followed him. As he walked in before us, I perceived that he had altered his manner of walking quite to the rocking gait of the veteran sailor; and I certainly thought that Tom had been an apt scholar; for, in our eyes, he seemed to be as finished a sailor as if he had been 20 years at sea. From being a boy of few words, he had acquired a surprising volubility of tongue, along with an affected English accent. He could curse and swear, chew tobacco and drink grog: and, although we perceived a good deal of affectation in what Tom did and said, still we were disposed to think him a very clever fellow. When we were seated over our grog, we disclosed our minds to him, and inquired if he could assist us in getting a vessel. Tom looked grave on the subject, and, sinking his voice from the high English accent he had acquired so rapidly, he said

he was not sure whether he could get a vessel for us or not; “but,” said he, “in the mean time drink your grog, and we will see about that after.”

Warmed by the liquor, Tom began and gave us an account of his voyage, which, as he afterwards owned, he had painted in very extravagant colours. We were so charmed with his description that we gave up all idea of going home; and we adjourned from the tavern to Tom’s lodgings, where he displayed to our “wondering eyes” the treasures he had acquired by his West India voyage—conch shells, cocoa nuts, and stalks of Indian corn, which were designed to grace his mother’s chimney-piece, and excite the wonder of her visitors.

Between the liquor we had drank, and what we had heard and seen, we were in high spirits, and went out to take a walk through the town; but, going up the main street, towards the head inn, I met my father full in the face. He had just alighted off the coach from Glasgow, in search of us. I thought I would have sunk into the earth. Confounded and ashamed, I

stood like a felon caught in some depredation. Tom set off, and left William and I to manage affairs as we could. My father was the first who broke silence.—“Well, James,” said he, “will you tell me the meaning of this jaunt you have taken? but,” said he, “I am going to Mr. C——’s, and you had better come with me, and we will talk over the matter there.” We followed him without saying a word, and, when we were seated in Mr. C——’s, he again asked my reason for leaving home. I looked in William’s face and saw he was determined. I then said we were resolved on going to sea, and that we had come to Greenock for that purpose. Mr. C. and my father said every thing they could to dissuade us from our foolish resolution; but to little purpose. The idea of the ridicule we would have to bear from our acquaintance if we returned, and Tom’s exaggerated description of the pleasures of a sea life, had confirmed us in our determination.

“Well,” said my father (after he had reasoned the matter with me, and painted what a sailor’s life was in reality, with

little effect), “Well,” said he, “I might exert the right I have over you, as a parent, in forcing you to return; but I will not do that. If you have so far forgot your duty to me, and to yourself, after all that I have done for you, as to throw yourself away as a common ship-boy, where you can have no opportunity of learning any thing but wickedness, you may do it; but remember my words—*you will repent it*, when you will perhaps have no father to question the propriety of your conduct. Indeed, after the dishonest action you have been guilty of at home, I don’t know but your presence would be more disagreeable to me than your absence, unless you altered much for the better; and, if I have any very anxious wish that you should return, it is more on your poor mother’s account than my own.

“Oh, how could you leave us in the manner you did, without a cause?—The first night you were absent from home your mother was frantic about you. She wandered from place to place in search of you. She was sure you were not in life—

that some accident had befallen you. When she knows the truth, how cruel must she think you!—Oh, James, after all our care and attention to you, I am afraid you will bring down our grey hairs with sorrow to the grave.”

Here the tears came into my father's eyes, and his voice became choked. I could bear it no longer, and I burst into tears. My first impulse was to throw myself at his feet, and beg his forgiveness; but the obstacles, which were in the way of my return before, again recurring to my mind, prevented me, and I only wept in sullen silence.

“Say no more to him now,” said Mr. C. “Give him until to-morrow to think on what you have said; and, if he is then of the same opinion, we will procure a good ship for him, and see him properly fitted out.” My father took his advice, and did not resume the subject that day. He wrote off, however, to William's father, telling where his son was.

Next morning, he arrived and insisted on taking him home by force, and even beat and kicked him in the house we were

in; but my father and Mr. C. interfered, and representing to him how foolish his conduct was, as he might be sure the boy would take the first opportunity of running away again. He was at last brought to reason, and he agreed to be guided by my father. We were again asked what we had determined on doing, and I replied that we were fixed in our determination of going to sea; for William was so terrified for his father that he durst not express his opinion before him.

It was then proposed to get us bound immediately, as my father could not be spared from his business, and was obliged to return next day. Mr. C. took us to a friend of his, a Mr. G. a respectable merchant and ship-owner, who was in want of apprentices at that time for some of his vessels. We were there bound for three years, and attached to a letter-of-marque brig, which carried 18 guns, loading at that time for New Providence.

The afternoon was spent in purchasing the necessary articles to fit me out. When that was finished, my father, feeling uneasy on my mother's account, resolved



to return to Glasgow that night. Before going away, he said, " I could almost wish your mother saw you before you went away—and yet, I don't know—perhaps it would be better that she would not. You will soon find yourself among very strange company ; and, if I am not wrong informed, company from whom you will be able to learn little that is good ; but I trust you will remember the religious instruction you have received from your parents, when you are far away from them ; and, although you have grieved and disobeyed your earthly parents, I hope you will not forget your Creator. Remember his eye is on you, wherever you go ; and, although you may be bereft of every other stay, still he will be ever with you, to succour, and to help, if you call upon him. Farewell, my boy, God help you !"

My heart sunk within me. As the coach started, I saw him wipe the tears from his eyes. I must surely be a hardened wretch, thought I, to persist so resolutely in what I know to be wrong, and what is breaking the heart of my parents. I was

roused from my reflections by some one slapping me on the shoulder. It was Tom—"Well, my boys, so you have got bound to our owner—have you?" "Do you belong to Mr. G. also?" said I. "To be sure," said he, "and I don't think but I will get into your ship too, although she sails so soon; for I don't like the one I am in."

We felt well pleased that Tom was to be our shipmate; and, in the contemplation of all the good fortune that we thought awaited us (I am ashamed to say), that I nearly forgot my distressed parents.

As for William, the moment his father set off (for my father and his went up to Glasgow together), he seemed quite relieved poor fellow! His mother had died when he was very young, and his father being a man of a morose severe disposition, he scarcely knew what parental tenderness was.—How different from me! He had some excuse for what he had done; but I had none.

Tom went up to Glasgow next day, to see his friends; and a day or two after, William and I were sent on board, to

commence our seamanship. The first day or two passed away well enough. There was little or nothing to do. The third day, the mate called us aft to the quarter deck. "Do you see that flag," said he, "pointing to the mast head?" It had got entangled in the signal halliards. "Now, let me see which of you will get up soonest and clear it."—Will and I got on the shrouds, and mounted with great alacrity, until we got to that part of the shrouds which takes a sweep outwards to meet the edge of the top. Will was up over it in a twinkling; for he had been used to mount the rigging of the vessels at the Broomielaw: but I thought it a dangerous-looking place, and seeing a hole through the top, by the side of the mast, I proceeded to squeeze myself through it; which being an offence against the laws of good seamanship (as the sailor's name for it denotes, being called the *lubber's hole*), the mate seized a rope's end on deck, and, running up the shrouds after me, called out, "You young dog, is that the way you are taking?" I made haste to rectify my error by taking

the same route that Will had pursued; but, in my haste, and the fear of the rope's end together, when I reached the edge of the top, I let go my hold with my feet, and, being suspended by my hands, would soon have dropped on the deck, or into the sea, had the mate not caught hold, and assisted me up. Will had by this time got as far as the cross-trees; but he was foiled in his attempts to climb up the royal mast. The mate however thought we had done enough for once; and we were ordered down. If I was bad at getting up, I was worse at coming down; but I took care not to let go with my feet again.

Our exercise at this kind of work was continued every day, while in harbour, and we soon became expert at it,

CHAPTER III.

SAILS FROM GREENOCK—CURE FOR SEA SICKNESS
—STEERAGE MESS—INSTALLED IN OFFICE—
BLUNDER—FORE-CASTLE—MY COMRADES—THE
BOYS MUSTERED—APPOINTED TO WATCHES—
DUTIES—USAGE.

At last, the long-expected day of sailing arrived, and among the first of the men who came on board was Tom. He had received liberty to join our ship, and brought a farewell letter from my parents. Men and boys, we mustered in all about sixty hands. They were mostly all, when they came on board, "half-seas-over;" and the ship was in great confusion.

Towards evening, it began to blow fresh, and I became miserably sick. No one took any notice of me, unless when I went to the weather-side of the vessel, to vomit, when some one or other of my tender-hearted shipmates would give me a kick, or a push, and "D——n my eyes, to go to leeward." In this state, I was

knocked about, from one place to another, until at last I lay down in the waste of the vessel, on the lee side, with my head opposite to one of the scuppers.* I had not been long there, when some one came running to the side to vomit. I looked up to see who it was, and saw poor Tom in nearly as bad a plight as myself. I was too sick to speak to him, or I would have asked why he had omitted this in his description of the pleasures of a sea life.

I had not seen William from the time I became sick; but at that time I could feel interested for no one, nor about anything. I only wished I was on shore, and nothing should ever tempt me to put my foot on board of a vessel again. I was sure that I was near my end; for every attempt I made to vomit, I thought my very inside would come up.

Night came on, and the weather being cold, I began to wish that I could get below. I crawled to the first hatchway I could find, which happened to be the steerage. As this place was appropriated to the petty officers of the ship, and they

* Scuppers, the holes by which the water runs off the deck.

being all employed on deck, I was allowed to get down unmolested. There were some of the cables coiled in the steerage; and, as I had experienced the inconvenience of being in the way, I crept in as far as I could, beyond the cables, where some old sails were lying, and there, although not relieved from my sickness, I was at least free from annoyance.

I was not long there when the steerage mess came down to get their supper; and I quaked with terror when I heard the gunner say, "I wonder where all those d——d boys are. I can't get one of them to do either one thing or another." "They'll be stowed away in some hole or other I'll warrant ye," said the boatswain, "but if I had hold of them, I would let them feel the weight of a rope's end on their backs." I strove to keep in my breath lest they should hear me; but, at that moment I felt the desire to vomit so strong, that, in spite of all my efforts to suppress it, I made such a noise that I was overheard. "Who the devil's that?" cried the boatswain. "Some of the rascals

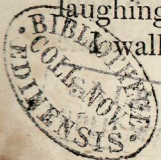
stowed away in the cable teir, by G—d. Hold the lanthorn, and I'll haul him out whoever he is." Already I thought I felt the rope's end on my shoulders, when I was unexpectedly relieved from my apprehensions, by the mate calling them on deck to arrange the watches for the night. While they were gone, I squeezed myself in behind some boxes, where I was pretty sure they could not get at me. When they came down again they had forgotten the circumstance; and those whose watch was below got into their hammocks.

I Before day-light a little, I felt inclined to go on deck, as I was nearly suffocated in the place I was in. I slipped out cautiously, got up the ladder without disturbing any of them, and, making for the head of the vessel, commenced vomiting again. I had felt pretty well settled, when my head was down; but, whenever I got up, the sickness returned. My stomach was completely empty, and my efforts were most distressing. An old sailor who was standing near me advised me to take a drink of salt water. I

thought it was a rough cure; I tried it however, but it was no sooner down than up again. "Take another drink," said he; I did so—the same result followed. He advised me to take a third. "Oh, no," I replied, "I can take no more." I then leaned over the lee bow of the vessel; and, whether it was the fresh air or the salt water I know not, but I soon got better; and, in the course of an hour or two, began to move about pretty briskly. My appetite was sharp, and I could have ate heartily, I thought, if I had had any thing to eat.

While I was stirring about, the carpenter came forward to me and inquired if I was sick. I said no. "Will you have any objection to attend our mess?" "I don't know," said I, "what have I to do?" "Only draw our provision, and boil our kettle morning and evening." "Very well—I am willing." He took me down to the steerage, and showed me where the things lay. When breakfast-time came I got their kettle boiled, and brought down their mess of bargoo, and sat down to take my breakfast with them; but, before I had taken half a dozen

spoonfuls, it began to discompose my stomach; and, getting up to pass them for the deck, the motion of rising brought the contents of my stomach up to my mouth. I endeavoured to keep it down; but was obliged to give it vent, and it flew like water from a fire engine over the mess. The boatswain, who was a surly old fellow, and who had been the principal sufferer, rose up in a fury, and, seizing the wooden dish that held the bargo, threw it at my head. I escaped the blow of the dish; but the contents came right on my face and blinded me. I tried to grope my way up the ladder; but they did not give me time to get up; for they threw me out of the hatchway; and I fell like a log on the deck. When I got to my feet the whole of the seamen on deck gathered round, and began to jeer me on my appearance; but I managed to flounder on through them to the head, where I got some water and cleaned myself. Ah, thought I, this is cruel usage; but I could scarcely refrain from laughing at the idea of spoiling their mess! I walked about the deck for some time,



ruminating on my folly in exchanging my comfortable home for a place like this. Towards dinner-time, the carpenter came and asked me to prepare the mess dishes for dinner; but I told him he might find some one else, for I would not do it. "The more d——d fool you are," said he, "you will soon find yourself worse off."

I was then obliged to shift my things into the fore-castle amongst the crew. Here I found William lying in one of the births, so sick he could not lift his head. When he saw me he beckoned me to him. "Oh, James," said he, "this is misery. I wish we were at home again; but I will never live to return." "No fear of that," said I, "I was as sick as you are, and I am now nearly well." At this moment the vessel gave a heave and down I came on the deck. William began to make cascades, and I was soon as bad as ever, and got tumbled into the birth beside him. Shortly after, the seamen's dinner was brought down, and having served themselves, one of them called out, "You, green horns, in there, will you have some

beef and biscuit?" "No, no," said I, "but if you will be kind enough to open my chest, you will find a cake of gingerbread in it—I will thank you to hand it to me." While he was searching for the gingerbread, he cast his eyes on a large case bottle, filled with whiskey, which Mr. C. had given me when I parted with him. He immediately gave up his search for the gingerbread, and, hauling out the bottle and holding it up, he cried, "D—n my eyes, messmates, if I ha'n't found a prize."—"Here with it," cried a dozen voices at once, and, in spite of my remonstrances, they deliberately handed it round until there was not above a glass left. "Oh, d——n," said one of them, "give the boy a drop of his own grog;" but I could not look at it—the smell was sickening. "No, no," said I, "send that after the rest." "Right," said one of them, "boys have no use for grog." "Will you give me the gingerbread now?" said I. "Oh, bye the bye, I had forgot that, here it is for you, my hearty."

The most of them went on deck, and left William and I to reflect on the

justice of their appropriation of my property. However, the liquor was a thing I cared little about, and it gave me the less uneasiness. We were now allowed to lie quietly enough until night, when those whose watch was below came down to go to bed, one of them came to the birth, where William and I were lying, and seizing him by the neck, cried out, "Hollo, who the devil's this in my birth?" "It is two of the johnnie-raws that are sick," replied one of them. "Johnnie-raw or johnnie-roasted, by G—d, they must get out of that; for I want to turn in;" and out we were bundled. During the whole course of that night we were knocked about, from one place to another, by the different watches who came below.

Next morning early, the word was passed for the boys to go aft to the quarter deck. It was hard rooting them out; but at last we were mustered—six in all. When we were assembled, the mate, addressing us, said "I think I have given you long-enough time to recover from your sickness. You, Tom, have no right to be sick. You were at sea before." I looked at Tom: