

THE ENGLISHMAN'S EXPLOIT.

BY SYLVANUS COBB.

MANY years ago, when we were a mere boy, we used to sit upon a low stool, at the feet of Commodore Samuel Tucker, and hear that old veteran relate the incidents that had come under his own observation during our last struggle with Great Britain. Among the thousand and one stories that we have heard fall from the lips of that ocean warrior, the following has remained fresh in our memory:

On the western shore of Penobscot bay, between Belfast and Camden, there was a small club of fishermen's cots inhabited by a hardy set of men, who had been brought up amid the music of the breaking waves, and who knew no fear beneath the power of mortal man.—Foremost among these hardy children of the sea, and occupying the station as a sort of ruler among them, was a middle-aged man, named Enoch Nightingale, or, as he was generally called, Captain Nightingale; and never was a man better fitted by nature for the post he held by general consent than was he. Powerful and athletic in his physical mould, bold and fearless as the forest monarch, and frank and generous in his social relations, he was beloved and respected by all who knew him. He was a jolly fellow too, and often, as his small gray eyes twinkled in their merry mood, a close observer might have seen a keen love of practical joking lurking in their gleaming depths.

At the time of which we write, the fishermen dared not venture far out to sea—for a close blockade was kept along the coast, and so they were forced to forego the advantages of their best fishing-grounds; but a new idea had taken possession of their brains, and they had thought of fitting out a privateer against the English. For two weeks had this matter been talked over, and all the arms necessary to personal warfare, had been procured, but no vessel suitable for the enterprise could be obtained, nor could they raise guns heavy enough for sea use, had they possessed the vessel.—Of pistols and cutlasses they had enough, and that was all, unless we add one old iron six pounder, which served as a kind of signal gun in cases of heavy fogs and stormy nights.

It was just at nightfall that Obed Nightingale's shallop (Obed was the old man's son), came up the bay, and as the young man came on shore he reported that there was an English topsail schooner, a clean clipper-built craft, laying off and on between Manhegan and the Ledges. She was heavily armed, and seemed to play about in the water as though her heels were made for running.

Now, Captain Enoch Nightingale had said but very little about the various projects that had been set on foot with regard to the privateering expedition, but he had thought a great deal, and as soon as his son communicated the above intelligence, his thoughts came to a focus. A plan of operation was clearly marked out in his mind, and he at once set out about the work of putting it into effect. The man who stood second to Captain Nightingale, and who was, in fact, Nightingale's first mate, was Jabe Haskins, and upon him the old man first called.

"Jabe," said the captain, "did you know there was a British Clipper just outside?"

"Yes."

"Well, suppose we go out an' take her."

"Do wat?"

"Take that Englishman."

"W-h-e-w!"

"But I'm in earnest."

Jabe looked at Nightingale in utter astonishment.

"I can go out in my little Rhody an' take her before she knows where she is. Now, will you help?"

"I'll foller yer, cap'n, if yeou go to thunder," was Jabe's hearty response, as he saw the old man was in earnest.

Captain Nightingale took his mate by the arm and led him off. The night was dark, but still there was a busy scene on board the schooner Rhody, which was the heaviest fishing vessel in the place.—Torches were gleaming and all the night long, hammers and saws were sending forth their music, and when the morning dawned, the Rhody was ready for sea. The old iron signal gun had been hoisted on board, and placed upon a rude sort of a carriage amidships, and the cod-line beackets and bait boxes had been cleared away, and, take her all in all, she bore some faint resemblance to an embryo pirate or privateer.

She was manned by twelve men, of whom Jabe Haskins took the command.

The people wondered where Capt. Nightingale was, but Jabe set their hearts at rest by telling them that he would get outside as soon as the schooner did.

In an hour after daylight the Rhody hove up her anchor and made sail, and in less than five hours she poked her blunt nose into the waters of the blue Atlantic. Shortly after the schooner had passed White Head light, the Englishman was made out about two miles distant, to the south'rd and west'rd, just off the Ledges, and hauling sheets flat aft, Jabe brought his vessel up to the wind, which was fresh from the north'rd and east'rd, and stood off towards the latter point. This looked amazingly like trying to run away—at least, so the Englishman thought—and consequently the clipper was immediately put in full chase, and though she was somewhat to the leeward, still, it was evident that she would not be long in overhauling the Yankee.

About four o'clock in the afternoon, the Englishman came almost within hailing distance, and fired a gun. As the shot came whizzing over the fisherman's deck, Jabe Haskins at once hove to, and ere long the clipper came up.

"Schooner ahoy!"

"Hello!" returned Jabe.

"Do you surrender?"

"Wal, ef yeou want t' take us, I suppose I can't help myself."

The clipper hove her fore-top sail to the mast and lowered a boat, and in some five minutes afterwards, her commander, followed by fifteen men, came over the Yankee's side. The first object that met his gaze as he stepped upon the deck, was the old iron gun amidship, and though the thought of an American pirate made him feel sore, yet he could not help laughing at the almost ridiculous scene thus presented to his gaze. The twelve green-looking fishermen, together with that gun did present rather a ludicrous appearance.

"So you are on a piratical expedition?" tauntingly remarked the British officer.

"I dono," returned Jabe, with an offended air. "I s'pose ef I'd cum across one o' your crafts 'at I could 'ave took, I should 'ave done it; but I dono as I should a been pirating enny more'n yeou are neow."

"How many men have you got?"

"Here's twelve on us, an' ef yeou've got twelve men 'at ken lick us, I'd like to see 'em."

"Never mind about that, Jonathan.—We'll take you into Halifax, and there, perhaps, you will find your match."

The schooner was searched fore and aft, but all that could be found were a dozen old pistols, and about as many swords which were in the cabin, while in the hold they discovered nothing but an array of empty boxes and barrels. The Englishman left twelve of his own men to take charge of the prize, and took six under charge of the officer who had been appointed to the command of the Rhody, and also left orders that the schooner should be left close in his wake during the night, as he intended to see her safely out of reach of the Yankee coasters.

Until nine o'clock at night the Rhody stood on after the clipper, with all sail set while the latter carried her mainsail and two jibs. The six Yankees who had been left on board were secured in the long-boat, while the lieutenant in command and five of his men had the first watch.—When the clipper struck two bells, the vessels were not more than two cables' length apart, the prize being a little windward, as owing to her bad sailing, the lieutenant wished to keep the weather gauge. The night was quite dark, and the wind, which had fallen some since sundown, had veered slightly to the northward.

While the prize-masters were earnestly engaged in keeping up with the clipper, a very novel scene was being enacted in the hold. One of the boards which seemed to form a part of a stationary floor, was lifted from its place, and the head of old Captain Enoch Nightingale appeared through the aperture. In a moment more another board was removed, and ere long, forty stout fishermen, all well armed, had come up from their place of concealment. It was but a moment's work to leap on deck, and ere the thunder-struck lieutenant could see from whence came the enemy, he was bound hand and foot, and so were his men, while the poor prisoners were set free from the long-boat. Obed Nightingale took the helm, and his father pointing a cocked pistol at the head of an English officer, said:

"Do you think we are in earnest, or not?"

"I should think you were," replied the trembling officer.

"Then if you do not obey me, you will

get a bullet through your head in an instant. Go hail the clipper."

"Scorpion ahoy!" shouted the lieutenant, as if for dear life.

In the meantime the Yankee had been let off a little from the wind, so that she was now within little more than a cable's length of her captor, while the bold fishermen were nearly all crouched beneath the bulwarks.

Some one from the clipper answered the call.

"Tell them the schooner has sprung a leak, and that the cursed Yankees must have thrown the pump brakes overboard."

The poor lieutenant looked first at the stern face of the old man, then at the muzzle of the pistol, and then stretching his lungs to the utmost he obeyed the order.

"Now, tell them to heave-to, and you'll run alongside."

The frightened officer obeyed, and on the next moment the clipper's helm was put hard down, and her main-boom shoved over to windward.

Seven of the Yankee fishermen were stationed along the lee rail, with stout grapplings in their hands, and in less than five minutes, the Rhody's bowsprit loomed up over the clipper's weather quarter.—Obed shoved the helm down, and letting go the sheets fore and aft, the Yankee schooner shot gracefully alongside.

"Why in—didn't you come up under our lee quarter?" shouted the English captain, as the fishermen thumped against the side of his vessel; but before he could utter any more of his wrath, with which he was literally boiling over, he found his deck swarming with strangers.

The whole thing had come about so unaccountably, and, withal, so suddenly that hardly a blow was struck by the astonished Englishman, and before they were fully aware that they had been captured by their own insignificant prize, they were securely bound and most of them stowed away below under a strong guard.

"Wal, cap'n," said Jabe Haskins—who had been released from duress vile—as he came aft to where that functionary stood by the side of old Nightingale, "when dew yeou think of takin' us into Halifax?"

The Englishman looked very hard at his uncouth tormentor, but he disdained any reply.

"I say, cap'n," continued Jabe, in a very unfeeling manner. "I rath'er guess as heow't that ere exploit o' yourn won't amount tew a great deal, will it? But look here, don't for mercy's sake, go home an' tell yeour king 'at yeou got took by a Penobscot cod-fisherman, 'cause it might hurt his feelin's."

This time the Englishman's answer was more wicked and unfeeling than had been Jabe's, for he not only swore terribly, but he even wished that every Yankee in Christendom was in the immediate kingdom of that horned and hoofed individual who is said to reign somewhere beneath the earth.

Before the sun had set on the next day the English prisoners were all landed at Belfast, and Captain Enoch Nightingale found himself in command of a handsome privateer as floated in American waters, and until peace was declared and the embargo raised, he carried on a most destructive trade among the British merchant-men.

Remarkable Salt Mine.

The great Humboldt salt mine, near Austin, Nevada, is described by a California paper as looking like a lake frozen over. The salt is as hard and as smooth as ice. Were it not for fine particles which are condensed from vapors arising from beneath, and which covers the crystallized salt to the depth of perhaps one-eighth of an inch, it would make an excellent skating rink at all times of the year, except on the very unfrequent occasions when it is covered with water. The expanse of crystallized salt is no less than twenty miles in length and twelve in width, without a flaw for the greater portion of that extent. The stratum of solid salt is about six or seven inches thick, under which comes a layer of sticky, singular looking mud, about two feet thick, and under this again another stratum of solid salt, as transparent as glass, of which the depth has been found in some parts to be six feet. In summer, this salt plain glittering and scintillating in the light of an almost tropical sun, presents a brilliant appearance. The frosty covering and solid salt is as white as the snow, while the crystalline portion, when exposed, reflects dazzling prismatic colors. This immense deposit is remarkably pure being, 95 per cent of soda, which is purer than what we commonly use for our tables.

A CLEVER CAPTURE.

A WELL-KNOWN inspector of the detective force once related to us a clever capture, effected by himself, of a daring thief, who had more than once escaped from prison. The inspector himself had considerable experience, and tracked his man to a low public house; and, under pretense of being an old thief himself, threw his companion off his guard by relating anecdotes. He was unarmed himself, and knew that the real burglar—who was known to the fraternity as "Bill the Cracksman"—had a revolver in his breast pocket, with the use of which he was thoroughly acquainted; and the question was how to arrest him single handed. Story followed story, and reminiscence reminiscence, until Bill and his companion—who called himself Jerry Blake—became as thick as members of the former's profession was proverbially supposed to become.

"Now," said Mr. Blake, after a pause, "as a last bit of anecdote, I'll show you how Joe the Tinman was took. He'd sworn as there wasn't any man in the colony or out of it as would take him single-handed. Well, as the reward for his capture was a heavy one, a chap named Simmons, who was then out of the mounted police, determined to try it on. So what does he do, knowing some of Joe's haunts, but bribes a stockman, who lived in a lonely hut, on the side of a deep gully among the hills, to let him take the possession for a week or so. It was a hut where Joe was accustomed to call when he wanted to get a fresh supply of rum, for the stockman had been a convict like himself, and a pal of his; but, pal or no pal, he sold Joe this time and no mistake."

"I'd have blown his brains out if I'd been Joe," observed the cracksman with a savage oath.

"I honor your sentiments," responded Mr. Blake; "and from what I know of Joe he shared 'em. But, you see, when he looked in one night at the hut, no stockman was there; but in his place Simmons, looking the very picture of a rough shepherd, was seated over the fire making tea and cooking damper."

"Hallo! where's the stockman here?" asked Joe, stalking into the hut and approaching the fire; for Joe wasn't afeared of the devil himself; besides, he was all stuck around with bowie knives and six shooters, so that he was a caution to look at.

"Where's the stockman?" says he. Simmons only looked up for a minute, then went on cooking the damper.

"He's gone."

"Gone where—dead?"

"Pretty nigh it. He's down at the station with marsh fever. I've been ordered up here in his place."

"And who may you be, mate, when you're at home?" asked Joe, savagely, for he was disappointed at losing his friend.

"When I'm at home," said Simmons still busy with his damper, "if home means England, I might be lord mayor or chancellor of the exchequer, for any chance I have of getting back there; but being here where I am, I'm only a jailbird, like you, mate."

Joe, who wasn't accustomed to bold speaking of this kind stepped back a pace or two and laid his hand on a six-shooter.

"Who do you take me for?" he asked with an oath.

"I don't take you for any one but your proper or your improper self," said Simmons quite unmoved, and filled two tin mugs with the sweetened tea.

"And who am I?"

"Joe the Tinman."

"Joe handled his pistol as one prepared for action, but Simmons burst into a laugh.

"Leave off handling your barking-iron, he said, 'and take that mug of tea. I'd advise you to put a taste of rum in it, for the night's nipper."

You know where the bottle is, so make no bones about it. When old Mike—that was the name of the stockman—sent me up here in his place, he didn't forget to say who was his friends and best customers."

"All this was said in so easy and comfortable a way that the bush-ranger was thrown off his guard; and no wonder, for Simmons was a tall, thin, young fellow at that time, and the Tinman, beside being armed to his teeth, was middle-aged, short thick-set, and with the muscular development of a bull. The hut was miles from any other habitation, and the night, what with wind and rain was a screamer.

"So, Joe the Tinman and Simmons 'the trap' sat to their tea together, and a jol-

ly night they had of it, I've heard. The pitcher of spirits was filled and emptied again and again. Songs were sung and tales were told till the noisy revelry within the lonely hut almost rivaled the dash of the rain and the scream of the blast without.

"Towards morning each took to boasting of his powers of doing this thing or that thing, and among other things, Simmons, who'd been when a mere boy a sort of acrobat at a circus, boasted of his powers of jumping.

"Now," he said, "supposing the traps were about me, and you was one of 'em, I'd clear a short man like you at a bound—and provided you weren't armed, I'd defy a dozen like you to catch me."

The Tinman, who was bumptious in his cups, denied this.

"Why," said he, "if you was to try to leap over me, as you say, I'd just up with my arms and pin your two thread-paper legs so."

He illustrated his words by action, but Simmons only laughed.

"Nonsense! I'd skim over you as a swallow skims over a bit o' water. You wouldn't even touch my shadow as I passed."

"The Tinman, drinking more rum, grew angry.

"I'd like to see you try it. You're more of a grasshopper than a properly built man, that's what you are. Come, I'll bet you this good watch that you don't jump clean over me as I stand now, back toward you."

"Watch be hanged! says Simmons. 'I bet you a bottle of rum against the bowie you've got in your belt that I clear a short chap like you, hold up your hands as high as you can, at a jump, only give me the run of a few yards."

"Done!" And drawing the Bowie knife from his belt, the bush-ranger laid it on the table."

"Gammon!" observed Bill, who had listened with much attention to the story. "It's a thing as Leotard, or any o' them springy chaps couldn't do."

"It's only a trick," replied Mr. Blake—"a mere circus trick—which every clown in the ring understands. Here, I'll show you how it's done in a minute—that is, I'll show you how Simmons must have done it, according to my belief."

With ready obedience Bill stood up, and turned his back to the operator.

"I suppose that's how the Tinman stood?"

"I should fancy just so. Raise your arms a little above the level of your head. That's it. Throw them back a little, and I will show you how the trick was done."

Bill, following every direction, raised his hands high over his head, then let them decline slightly in the direction of his new friend.

The latter, taking Bill's wrists in his hand, brought them gently together.

"This is how the thing must have been done," he said. "Simmons must have taken advantage of a position that placed the bush-ranger absolutely in his power to draw a pair of handcuffs from his pocket, and before the other could make a movement, slip them on so."

The thing was done in an instant, and before the cracksman could well realize the fact he found himself seated in one of the chairs, his hands fettered, and his captor, calm and smiling, standing over him.

"What do you mean by all this?" Bill gasped out at last, looking about him with bewildered amazement. "Is it a joke?"

"A capital joke!" replied the other. "It was I who tried the same joke on the Tinman, and it succeeded capitally."

"You?"

"At that time I belonged to the colonial police, now I'm Mr. Inspector Simmons. My address is Scotland Yard, and I'm very much at your service."

Teaching a Dutchman.

A Dutchman lately left Austin for White Pine with something less than a cart load of provisions, tools, and blankets, carrying them on his back. On his arrival, not meeting with any success at trade, he took on a big disgust and left for Austin, carrying with him his stock in trade. On his way home a man driving an empty wagon overtook him, and seeing him so heavily loaded, asked him if he would get in and ride.

"No, py gosh!" was his answer.

"But," said the teamster, "my wagon is empty, and you are perfectly welcome."

"No, py gosh!" replied he. "I learns dis Dutchman some tings! I learns him to go to Vite Pines! He carries these plankets, py tam!"