

Adventures on a Man of War.

CONCLUDED.

"CATHAL, Cathal O'Hara! My poor little friend, can it be you?"

He grasped my extended hand, and then, with the rough old tars about him, and the laced officers gazing curiously from the quarter-deck, he clasped my neck with his arms, but uttered not a word.

"One of the lost family found at last; and now where's Cathleen, and where is your mother? And have you seen your father since his rescue from the French?" I asked.

"Rescued from the French? O yes; you mean that he was washed off the Hiron-delle's deck. I saw that he was saved by the Englishman, but I have not seen him since."

He then told me how the Hiron-delle had been wrecked among the Bahamas. His mother, and sister and himself were saved, together with most of the crew. In wandering, however, about the Island of New Providence, immediately after the shipwreck, he had been seized by a press-gang, put on board a British tender, and thence transferred to the Agamemnon. The French sailors were made prisoners, but the fate of his mother and sister he had not been able to learn. This had distressed him greatly, and he would gladly risk his life in any attempt to escape, for the purpose of seeking them out. Great was his satisfaction at my recital of his father's release from the insurgent.

He told me further that the same officer whom I had knocked off the wall at Londonderry was now lieutenant of marines on board Sir Edward Berry's ship, having been appointed to that vessel only a fortnight previous. Fortunately Cathal had nothing to do with the marines, yet the officer recognized and looked upon him with a malicious eye.

"No doubt," said Cathal, "he will get me into a scrape if he can."

The young lad was now recalled to his ship, and on the evening of that day we reached Barbadoes with our three remaining prizes.

Soon after this, I learned that a seaman of the Agamemnon was publicly complimented by Sir Edward Berry for heroism in the late battle. A shell having struck on the maindeck of the ship, it was caught up by its still burning fuse, by a young lad of the crew, and tossed into the sea, where it exploded. This act of coolness had saved many lives. "The name of the brave young seaman," said the gazette, "is Cathal O'Hara, of Londonderry."

Nearly at the time of this announcement an officer of the same ship was court-martialed, and sentenced to be shot for cowardice. The execution was to take place on the Agamemnon's decks, which he had so dishonored. An officer of those glorious oaken walls a coward!

Our captain went on board to witness the execution, and I was one of the crew of his gig. I recognized the officer at once, and not without pity softening my contempt. He was the same man whose red coat I had last seen in the Cramble under Londonderry wall. A single crash of musketry, and he was dead.

We had been but a short time at Barbadoes when I was sent on board the Yarmouth, sixty-four, an old ship, and the same which, twenty years previous, during the American Revolution, had fought a battle with the Randolph frigate, the General Moultrie, sloop of war, and one or two smaller vessels, in which encounter the Randolph blew up, her consorts being thereupon obliged to save themselves by flight.

Great was my satisfaction to find Cathal O'Hara detailed to the same ship. But our officers were so distrustful. It seemed as if all that was cruel in the service of George the Third had been concentrated upon this old sixty-four. And then how long was this to last? What a future for Cathal and myself? What would we not risk should the slightest opportunity offer for escape! The glaring injustice of our detention filled us with indignation, till we hated the sight of a Briton.

Soon the old Yarmouth went out of the harbor to look for the Monsieurs. On the first day we spoke an American vessel from Pernambuco for New York, out of which our captain coolly impressed a couple of excellent seamen. "But it is an ill wind that blows no one good, and from this incident came our first gleam of more fortunate days.

The two seamen, drawn by sympathy toward Cathal and myself, took every opportunity to converse with us. Among other things, they spoke of a ship which lay at Pernambuco, commanded by Captain O'Hara, an Irishman, who had with him his wife and daughter—the latter the most beautiful creature that ever wore a suit of sails. The ship was a New Yorker, they said, called the Onondaga, and was, at the time of their departure, loading for home.

This was news! So, then, the scattered family was thus far reunited. Doubtless Cathleen and her mother, after the loss of the French privateer, had found their way from the Bahamas to New York. Captain O'Hara, an excellent shipmaster, had been

employed by some house in that city, sailed upon a South American voyage and taken with him his wife and Cathleen. But what must they not suffer from their uncertainty with regard to Cathal? I could hardly contain myself. It seemed, for that moment, as if I could swim a thousand miles.

"We must get out of this ship," I said. "The first land she makes must be our land." For I spoke under that transient excitement which makes all things easy.

Now my readers cannot see the old British sixty-four as I saw her, with her old-fashioned bands, and bulwarks, and channels, with her huge clumsy windlass, and her heavy creaking yards. There were the marines, the blue jackets, and the laced officers. There was the scrubbing of stanchions, there was the polishing of cannon; and even at this distance of time, I seem to take in the peculiar odor of her tarry decks. So, day by day, we rose and fell easily in the slight undulations, now becalmed and heading all around, the compass, now bracing sharp up on the very light trade wind; and all the while subject to curses, or witnessing acts of cruelty.

One impressed American (and we had many on board) was savagely whipped for an indignant glance at the third lieutenant, who had kicked him. Another was knocked flat to the deck and beaten with a rope's end, because when ordered to put a "matthew walker knot" in a lanyard, he asked the boatswain how it must be done. The American was from some merchantman, where he had been a "green hand."

Off the British island of Antigua, we chased a French brig, which proved to be a privateer. At first we had all the wind there was, and bore right down upon her while she lay helpless. She finally took the breeze and began to make off, with the great sixty-four close at her heels. We saw the French sailors aloft throwing water on the sails; then they pitched their guns overboard to lighten the ship; then their ammunition, barrels of provision, cables and anchors; and at last their boats. We could perceive that the privateer sat lighter after this, and what was still more favorable to her, the wind now died out with us, and she carried the breeze away with her.

"Flap," at intervals went the sails, with the Yarmouth's lazy roll. Now she headed south, and now north. At sunset Cathal and myself stood looking out over the sea. Antigua was six miles off. How tempting looked the green land! But no—it was a long way to swim—six miles!

A mile from us, as we judged, in a line parallel with that of the shore, we saw one of the boats which the Frenchman had cut adrift, and at some distance beyond it the other. The nearer boat had been stove, but the further boat seemed to float lightly, as if the French in their confusion had neglected to render her useless. Oars, of course, neither of them was likely to contain, but might not the thwarts and sheathing be pried up and used for paddles wherewith to reach shore.

Whenever the ship was in harbor or near land the marines kept constant guard in every part of her (how the blue jackets hated those marines!), but six miles from the coast this vigilance would be much relaxed. We looked at each other, then at the boats, and then at each other again.

There were some thirty Americans on board, but we confided our plan to only ten of them, so that we were twelve in all. The wind had generally sprung up in the latter part of the night, and should it do so on this occasion, the ship would be wide off from us ere our escape became known. The hour fixed upon was midnight, at the changing of the watch. And we blessed ourselves that the old man had not thought fit to lumber his decks with the Frenchman's cast-off boat, or all our hopes would have been stranded high and dry.

"Eight bells!" We breathed quick—it was midnight at last. In the bustle of "turning out" and "turning in" we might not be observed. Letting ourselves down from the gundeck ports, which in that sultry atmosphere were always open, we struck out from the ship, twelve men, and all good swimmers.

The darkness was not such but that there was great danger of being seen by the "lookouts" as we swam from the ship's side, and felt relieved when the great man-of-war became indistinct. We had calculated that the drift of the boats must correspond with that of the ship, and that hence the same relative positions would be maintained. A star was our compass; yet the probability of missing so small an object as a boat was very great. To increase the chances of success, we extended our line considerably. Having at length swum more than the requisite distance, as we imagined, our missings were becoming painful, when from the centre of the long line, we heard the low glad exclamation: "Here she is!"

The boat was full of water. Reaching a moment by laying hold of her gunwales, we cheered each other and grew almost mazy. A further effort, over half a mile of ocean, and then from the larboard extremity of the line came the cautiously uttered words:

"Hist, lads! This way. I've found her!"

and coils of rigging lying in her, together with rudder and six oars. The Frenchman must have hoisted her out just as she stood, glad to get rid of everything that had weight; for at the time she went overboard our twenty-four pound balls were skipping unpleasantly near.

We pulled obliquely toward the shore, in a direction away from the ship, but resolved not to land until morning. Meanwhile the land breeze began to spring up, and we knew that the Yarmouth would stand away. When daylight appeared we saw a party of English mariners on shore, and over a point of land rose the masts of a small schooner at anchor. Of course, we had now to put straight out to sea.

The Yarmouth was entirely out of sight, for we had rowed many miles along the coast. There were two porpoise-irons lying in the boat, and with one of these we killed a porpoise in a school which came round us. We had, however, no water, but as the sky thickened we hoped for rain. There had, indeed, been a shower every day since the frigate left Barbadoes. Soon we saw the schooner in pursuit of us, but she moved slowly with the slight breeze, and we had a long start.

In the afternoon it rained very hard, and by one contrivance and another we caught several gallons of water, preserving it in four sheepskins which happened to be in the boat, and which told a tale of some excellent soups that had whilom rejoiced the French privateersmen. With porpoise and water we were now secure from immediate famine, as was our intention, when night should again cover our movements, to alter our course and make for the island of Guadalupe, about eighty miles distant.

That night, however, we had squalls from the southwest, directly from Guadalupe itself and against the usual course of the northeast trade wind. We could run only before the wind and sea, and about daybreak the boat capsized. We succeeded in righting her, but it was impossible to free her from water, and we clung to the gunwales, feeling that all was over.

Suddenly, in the gray breaking morning, we saw a dusky object close upon us, and high above, in relief against the sky, rose a ship's topgallant-masts. With all our might we shouted:

"Ship ahoy!" Then there was a patter of feet on deck, and the ship came up in the wind with her afteryards aback. With great difficulty her boat succeeded in reaching us. The light had now broadened, and passing close under her bow, I read upon her weather headboard the name "Onondago."

The meeting of Cathal with his parents I need not describe, further than to say it was a joy unspeakable. I found the Onondaga a new ship, launched since my absence from home, and by a singular coincidence owned by an uncle of mine, with whom I had through all my boyhood been a great favorite. He was now on board the vessel, having been in her to Pernambuco.

"She is an excellent ship," said Captain O'Hara, "but she will hardly sail with my old brig St. Patrick. Why, that brig was the fastest vessel that ever sailed from Londonderry. The French have made a privateer of her, and I have been expecting to exchange compliments with her ever since we came up with the Windward Islands."

The Onondago was armed with six guns, and for fear of the French, she was manned with a double complement of men, sixteen before the mast. The captain, his two mates, a boatswain, the cook and my uncle, increased the number to twenty-two; yet the ship was only three hundred and sixty tons. Myself and shipmates now furnished twelve hands additional, raising the entire complement of the Onondaga's crew to thirty-four.

Succeeding the squally night came a dull fog, and at noon a vessel was reported close aboard of us. Her captain hailed in broken English, informing us that his vessel was a French merchantman in distress. Our commander, however, was not to be deceived, and he instantly prepared for a more formidable visitor. From the lightness of the wind, the vessels moved but slowly, and a brief parley was in progress, when suddenly the Frenchman, who had the weather gage, put up his helm and ran us on board. Instantly his deck swarmed with men, and they made a rush for our ship yelling as they came.

But we were ready for them. Three of our great guns were fired into their midst with terrible effect; and then springing to the bulwarks, we met them cutlass in hand. Fierce and brave, and outnumbering us two to one, it seemed for a few minutes as if they would gain a firm foothold on the Onondaga's decks. But the Yankee tars were too hard for them. The Monsieurs recoiled in a body, and Cathal in his enthusiasm followed them, leaping right on board their vessel.

To save his life, I sprang after him. To save both our lives, Captain O'Hara followed. This was the signal for a prodigious effort, and every man of our ship leaped into the French brig. The enemy ran below, or surrendered where they stood; for so sudden an onslaught struck them with panic.

The brig was ours. It appears that she had not a single cannon; and we found her

to be the same vessel that had thrown over her guns when chased by the Yarmouth—the French privateer St. Dennis, formerly the St. Patrick, of Londonderry.

She was endeavoring to make the island of Guadalupe, when falling in with our ship, her captain conceived the plan of capturing us by surprise.

Captain O'Hara had recovered the St. Patrick, a very excellent vessel; but I had done more than this—I had made sure of Cathleen, whose beautiful face was more eloquent than any words of English, or even of her own ancient Irish, could have been, as Cathal and his father recounted to her, with peculiar emphasis, my feats of arms.

My uncle was wounded in the battle, and died on the day that we passed Sandy Hook. He was a bachelor, and among other bequests, he left to me the ship Onondaga, together with a considerable sum of money. We had but one man killed outright, and three wounded.

Great was the curiosity of the New Yorkers to see the brig St. Patrick. In her Captain O'Hara afterwards made many voyages.

The Secretary of the Navy granted me a discharge from the service; and Captain Truxton was ever a kind friend to me.

Cathleen and myself thought of naming our first little girl "Constellation," but the name seemed to present too vast a breadth of space and splendor for a thing so minute, and we therefore abbreviated it to "Stella"—for a little girl is so much smaller than a ship.

Story about a Hawk.

A curious incident occurred a few days since a short distance from Baltimore, a local paper says: One of our well-known merchants had gone out on a visit to a friend, at whose house there was a bright little boy, and one day, to please the child, he manufactured a very large kite, and as the wind was strong enough, the kite was raised at once. After it had gone up nearly half a mile, a large crowd of country people collected to admire it, as such a magnificent toy had never been seen in that section before. While the spectators were admiring it, a very large hawk was seen to fly slowly out of a neighboring grove and go directly toward the kite. The hawk approached within a few feet of the strange looking object, and then circled about under it for perhaps five minutes, when he flew just above it again circled around several times. Suddenly he hovered directly over the kite, and after looking at it intently for a short time, darted downward, and striking the paper, passed directly through the kite, coming out on the other side. After this strange experience, which no doubt puzzled the hawk vastly, he flew off a short distance for reflection, but still keeping the kite in view. Not being disposed to give it up so, he quickly returned to the charge, and this time fastened on the long string of rags that were used as a tail to the kite, which he tore and scattered in the air in a savage manner. Finding however, no resistance on the part of the kite, he became disgusted or scared, and flew away toward the woods whence he came. The gentleman says that whenever the hawk made an attack he would retreat a little, as if he expected the strange bird was going to return the assault.

A Divorce Romance.

Some twenty years since, says the Cincinnati Times, the daughter of—at that time—one of our wealthy merchants, was married under the most flattering auspices. It was not, however, very long before the pair discovered that there was not anything congenial between them, and, after living together some nine years, and having three children, they by mutual agreement were divorced, the children remaining with the father, the mother being permitted to see them at her own convenience. The wife went home to her father, who shortly afterward died, hopelessly bankrupt. The woman, who, previously, as the child of luxury and the wife of opulence, had never known what it was to want for a single thing, suddenly found herself thrown out upon the world, and forced to seek a livelihood as best she could. At first she undertook sewing for shops, then attending stores, and finally keeping a very plain boarding-house, in none of which did she succeed. One day, when almost driven to despair, she mustered up courage and went to her former home and asked the one who had succeeded her as the mistress of the house if she would not befriend her, even ever so little, as she was on the point of starving, as her wan and haggard condition too plainly showed. Women's ears and hearts are ever open to the sufferings of their more unfortunate fellow beings. The unfortunate woman was invited to remain until the husband returned, which she reluctantly did, and when he came the matter was thoroughly discussed. It was mutually agreed for wife No. 1 to remain and make her home in the house over which she had once ruled as mistress. And there she is to be found to-day, seemingly satisfied with the change, and apparently not caring that the love that was once pledged solemnly before God to her alone is now bestowed upon another.

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