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The Florida Pirate

John Howison

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Early Visions of Florida

Poetry • Stories • Chronicles from an American Borderland

John Howison, “The Florida Pirate”

“The Florida Pirate” was first published in Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine in 1821. This historically significant and, at the time, socially relevant, piece of fiction was written by one of the magazine’s most notable and prolific authors of “tales of terror,” John Howison (1797-1859). Howison tells the story of a black pirate captain, who is ruthless yet human; who struggles to overcome the violent oppression associated with his past enslavement; and who emerges as European powers and the United States come to terms with pressing political questions. The story was immediately popular and reprinted widely. Howison incorporates some aspects from the traditional Gothic, slave narratives, as well as romance tales, creating popular appeal for audiences on both sides of the Atlantic. His portrayal of a black captain, through the eyes of a European surgeon, speaks to anxieties about slavery at the time.

Howison’s work can be seen to denote what critic Gretchen Woertendyke calls a “new gothic nationalism.” The author uses not just the tools of the British “terror,” such as psychological realism and fantastic accounts of mortal danger, but also romantic sentimentality, to detail horror and hope on the horizon. With this potent and diverse set of tools, Howison addresses slave violence, human cruelty, and the role of reason, law, and chivalry in a society. Recent agitation in England for parliamentary reform and abolition of slavery contributed to the atmosphere of dread. He incorporates tactics of early writers from both sides of the Atlantic, including American writers such as Charles Brockden Brown and Washington Irving, and foreshadows the developing American gothic styles of Edgar Allan Poe and Herman Melville in Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym and Benito Cereno. Through the influence exerted by this story on these authors, as well as other Americans like Nathaniel Hawthorne, “The Florida Pirate” marks the emergence of both a tradition of Transatlantic Romanticism and an American Literary Nationalism native to the New World, exemplified here within the liminal state of Florida.

Edited by Keith Lewis Simmons, University of South Florida St.Petersburg

Further Reading

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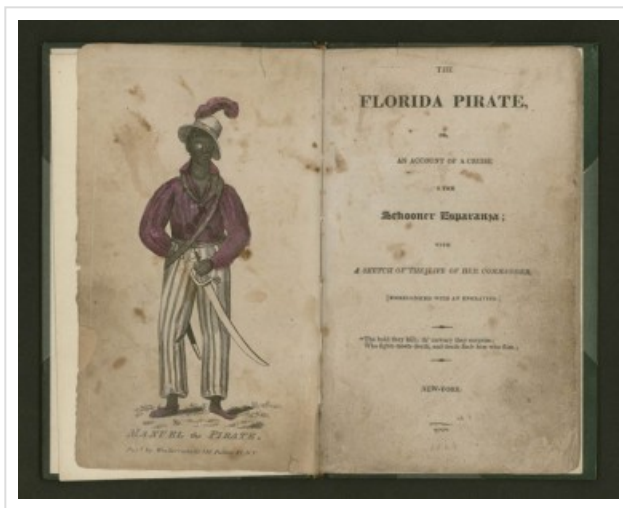
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A series of misfortunes had unexpectedly thrown me upon a foreign land, and entirely deprived me of the means of subsistence. I knew not where to apply for relief, or how to avoid the alarming evils that threatened me on every side. I was on one of the Bahama islands. I could not enjoy the temporary asylum I then possessed longer than two days, without involving myself in debts which I was unable to pay, and consequently bringing my person under the power of individuals, who, I was inclined to suspect, had nothing humane or generous in their characters. I wandered along the sea-shore, sometimes shuddering at the dreariness of my prospects, and sometimes trembling lest the horrors of want should urge me to obtain the necessaries of life by concealing from others that I was in absolute poverty.

When about a mile distant from the small town where I lodged, my attention was attracted by a schooner lying at anchor behind a projecting point of land. I knew that vessels did not usually moor in such a situation, and inquired of a fisherman, whom I met on the beach, if he could tell me what the schooner did there. 'I am not quite sure,' returned he, 'but I rather suspect she's a pirate. Those on board of her are mostly blacks, and they seem very anxious to keep out of sight. Had she been a fair trader, she would have come into the harbour at once.'

This information startled me a good deal. I became excessively agitated without knowing the reason; and felt an anxious desire to repress some idea, that had, as it were, arisen in my mind, without my being conscious of its existence.

I left my informant, and seated myself under a cliff. Half of the sun had disappeared below the horizon. I watched his descending orb, and wished I could retard the flight of time, when I reflected, that, after the lapse of two days, I should perhaps be destitute of an asylum, and perishing from want. 'Something must be done,' I exclaimed, starting up: 'If these are pirates, I will join them. My profession will enable me to render them valuable services. I shall be guilty of no crime in doing so;— the law of nature compels me to violate the laws of man.' I looked anxiously towards the schooner, which lay within half a mile of the shore, in hopes that I should see her boat approaching, and thus find means of speaking with the person who commanded her.

I waited upwards of an hour, but could not discover that those on board made any preparation for coming ashore. It was now dark, and the beach was silent and deserted. I found a small boat lying upon the sand; and, having pushed her off, I cautiously embarked, and began to row towards the schooner—but, after a few strokes of the oars, my resolution almost failed. I shuddered at the idea of forming a league with the outcasts of society, and rendering myself amenable to the laws of every civilized nation. The gloom of the night, the calm of the ocean, and the brightness of the sky, seemed to urge me to reflect upon what I was doing. I did reflect—I looked towards the town—a sense of the wretchedness of my condition struck irresistibly upon my mind, and I pushed furiously forward.

When I had got within a short distance of the schooner, one of her crew called out, 'Avast, avast! who have we here? On reaching the side of the vessel, I said I wished to see the captain. 'What do you want with him?' demanded the same voice. 'I must speak with him alone,' answered I. The questioner retired to the stern, and I heard the sound of people talking, as if in consultation, for a little time. I was then desired to come on board; and, the moment I stepped upon deck, a negro led me towards a man who stood near the helm.

He was very tall and athletic, and of a jet black, and wore only a shirt and white trowsers. His face had a bold and contemplative expression, and he wanted his right hand. 'I presume you are the commander of the vessel,' said I. He nodded impatiently. 'I understand you are going upon an expedition.'— 'I don't care what you understand—to your business, master,' returned he, haughtily. 'I know you are pirates,' continued I, 'and it is my wish to attend you in the capacity of a medical attendant.' He surveyed me with a look of astonishment, that seemed to demand an avowal of the motives that had prompted me to make such a proposal. 'You surely will not decline my offer,' said I, 'for you must be aware that I am able to render you very essential services. I have been unfortunate every way, and O, you be unfortunate! and seek relief from a black man—from a negro!' interrupted he, with a scornful laugh. 'Well, stay on board; you cannot leave this vessel again. Remember, we are not to be betrayed.' 'But I have something on shore that I wish to carry along with me.' 'I will send one of my men for it,' replied he, 'to-morrow morning at dawn.'

He walked coolly away to the bows of the vessel, and began to give some orders to the seamen, who formed a very numerous body. Most of them were loitering together on the fore-castle, and smoking segars, and they all seemed to be blacks. French and English were spoken

indiscriminately among them, and their conversation was incessant and vociferous, and intermingled, with disgusting execrations. Several disputes took place, in the course of which the parties struck each other, and wrestled together; but their companions neither endeavoured to separate them, nor paid any attention to the affrays. They appeared to have a set of jests, the spirit of which was only intelligible to themselves alone; for they frequently gave way to laughter, when their conversation, taken in a literal sense, expressed nothing that could excite mirth.

When it was near midnight, the captain, whose name was Manuel, conducted me to the cabin, and made many inquiries, which evidently had for their object to discover if I really was what I professed to be. His doubts being removed, he pointed to a berth, and told me, I might occupy it whenever I chose, and went upon deck again. I extinguished the light, and lay down in bed. The enthusiasm of desperation, and the pride of deciding with boldness and alacrity, had now subsided, and I could calmly reflect upon what I had done. My anticipations respecting the life I was now to lead, were gloomy and revolting. I scarcely dared to look forward to the termination of the enterprize in which I had embarked; but, when I had considered what would have been my fate had I remained on shore, I could not condemn my choice. Contempt, abject poverty, and the horrors of want, were the evils I fled from—tyranny, danger, and ignominious death, formed those towards which I was perhaps hastening.

Next morning, Captain Manuel desired me to write an order for my portmanteau, that he might send one of his men to bring me on board. I obeyed him, and also enclosed the sum I owed the person with whom I had resided. Shortly after the messenger had returned, the crew began to heave up the anchor; and we soon put to sea, with a light wind, and gradually receded from the shores of the island.

I breakfasted in the cabin with Manuel. His manner was chilly and supercilious; and he had more dignity about him than any negro I had before seen. The want of his right hand made his person very striking; and he seemed aware of this: for when he observed me gazing on the mutilated arm, he frowned, and enveloped it in the folds of the table-cloth.

We lost sight of land in a few hours, but I knew not where we were bound, and Manuel's reserved behaviour prevented me from making any inquiry. He walked upon deck all day with folded arms, and scarcely ever raised his eyes, except to look at the compass, or give directions to the helmsman.

The schooner, which was named the *Esperanza*, was about 120 tons burden, carried 6 guns, and had 43 men on board of her, and several boys. There appeared to be very little discipline among the crew; all of whom amused themselves in any way, and in any place they chose, except when the working of the vessel required their attention. The presence of the captain did not impose any restraint upon them; and one, who was the mate, snatched a chart unceremoniously from his hand, and told him he did not know what he was about, without receiving any reproof for his insolence. A number of old negroes lay round the fire, roasting ears of Indian corn, which were eagerly snatched off the embers the moment they were ready. An expression of disgusting sensuality characterized this part of the crew; and they looked as if they were strangers to retrospection and anticipation, and felt existence only in so far as the passing moment was concerned. One man, of a mild aspect, sat at a distance from the others, and played upon a guitar.

Many were half naked, and I could distinguish the marks of the whip V on the shoulders of some of them. The limbs of others had been distorted by the weight and galling of fetters, as was evident from the indentations exhibited from their flesh.

On awaking the second morning of the voyage, I found that Manuel was still asleep. The difficulty of the navigation had obliged him to keep on deck all night, that he might direct the course of the vessel, and he was now reposing himself after the fatigue of his long watch. The crew were preparing breakfast, and conversing together.

Some dispute took place about the price of the provisions, and one of them called the other a rascally runaway. 'You lie,' cried the accused person, 'I guess you are something worse yourself, Philip.'—'You had as well be quiet, Antony. Has anybody anything to say against me?'—'Why, that you're a Yankee slave, that's all,' returned Philip. 'Damn you,' cried he, 'I am a free man—yes, free and independent.' Here they all laughed loudly, and he demanded with fury who would venture to contradict him, or to assert that he had a master. 'Why, if we know well enough you ha'n't a master now, you pricked him under the ribs,' replied one of the crew. This excited another laugh, and Antony cried, 'Curse you for a niger—belike I'll do the same to you.'—'Don't be calling me a niger,' said Philip, 'I was born in the States.'—'I won't believe it,' said Antony, 'for you know no more than if you was fresh off the Coast—You can't roast corn.'

'Come, let us breakfast,' interrupted another, 'and leave these two black sheep to fight together, as soon as they can pick up courage.'—'I'm sure you've nothing to say, Mandingo,' cried Antony; 'you can't tell where you came from.'—'To be sure I can,' answered Mandingo, 'I was very ill used by my master, and made my escape.'—'Yes, from the gallows,' cried one of the crew, to the great amusement of the others.

'I guess there's ne'er a man on board this schooner, whose life can be better looked into than mine,' said a negro who had 'ore spoken—I was born in a Christian country, and when I was 20 years old, a great army captain made me his servant. I had the care of all his money and clothes, and could do what I pleased. I went to places and consorts, and was so like a gentleman, that a white mistress fell in love with me, and we were married.—What a grand sight the marriage was! My master gave me a gold ring to put on my wife's finger.' 'And did you put it on her finger demanded Antony. 'Why do you ask that?, because I guess from the look of your shins, that you put it on your own leg.' The whole crew joined in a loud laugh, and looked at the limb of the first speaker, which was strongly galled by fetters. 'It must have been a pretty heavy ring,' said Antony, 'and yet, for all the gold that was in it, I dare say you was glad to get quit of it.' 'I've done,' returned the object of their ridicule; 'I'll say no more. I thought I was speaking to gentlemen.' 'Never mind him. We are all liable to flesh-marks,' observed Philip. 'There now, what say you of our captain's wanting a 'Hush, hush,' interrupted Mandingo, 'that is a sore subject.'

In the course of three days, we came in sight of the northern shore of Cuba; but to my great satisfaction had not met with a single vessel of any description. Manuel hourly became less reserved, and we often had long conversations together; and one evening he promised to relate the history of his life to me, the first favorable opportunity.

After cruising about for a week, we cast anchor at the mouth of the Ibarra harbour, which lies near the eastern extremity of Cuba. Our object in doing so was to obtain a supply of firewood from the banks of a small river that disembogues into the harbour. Manuel requested me to accompany the party destined for this purpose, as he was to command it; and at a late hour one night we set out in a boat, along with seven of the crew.

The weather was clear, calm, and delightful; and we soon entered the river, and rowed slowly up its windings. The banks were for the most part thickly covered with trees, which overarched us completely, and rendered it so dark that Manuel could scarcely see to steer the boat. We sometimes could discern far before us, a portion of the sky vividly reflected in the bosom of the stream—bright and dazzling, amidst the surrounding gloom, as the contrast of divine purity with mortal corruption. Not a sound could be heard, except the regular dashing of the oars, and the rustling of fields of Indian corn, shaken by the wind. The most delicious perfumes filled the air, and fruits of different kinds, that had apparently just drop from the tree, floated past us, silently proclaiming the luxuriance of the region that bordered both sides of the river.

I sat in the stem of the boat beside Manuel, but neither of us spoke a word. The emotions produced by the surrounding objects were so delightful, that the mind contentedly remained in a state of passiveness, receiving, without resistance, every idea that presented itself. Within the space of an hour, I had exchanged the confinement and pitching of a vessel, the monotony of a sea prospect, and the noise and brutality of a set of criminals, for the harmony of wood and water—the richness of vegetable perfumes, and the quiet enjoyment of an inspiring summer's night.

When we had got about two miles above the mouth of the river, the men disembarked, and began to cut wood at a little distance from us. 'I believe my people are out of hearing,' said Manuel, after a long pause, 'and while we wait for their return, I shall tell you something about my past life.

'I need not give you a minute account of my early years, as they were not distinguished by anything remarkable. My mother came from the coast of Africa, but I was born in South Carolina, where my master had a large estate, in the cultivation of which more than one hundred negroes were employed. My mother being a house servant, was exempted from many of the hardships and privations to which the other slaves were exposed, but she' owed the comparative comfort of her situation entirely to her capability of ministering to the voluptuousness of Mr. Sexton, who was much addicted to the pleasures of the table. He gave orders that I should be brought up within doors, as he intended me for a waiting man.

'After I had attained the age of sixteen years, I was obliged to be in continual attendance upon my master, and to submit quietly to all his caprices. The treatment I received from him, and the knowledge I acquired of his character, made me feel what a degrading thing slavery was. Had I been forced to work in the fields, like the other negroes, I might not perhaps have repined at my condition, because I would have known nothing better, and at the same time believed that my condition was irremediable, and consistent with the laws of nature. But being continually in the presence of Mr. Sexton, and of other white people, and daily hearing their conversation, I soon discovered that they were superior to us in nothing but knowledge: that they were mean, wicked, cruel, and unjust; and that they sometimes feared we would assert our rights, and overpower them by numbers.

'They seemed to consider negroes as creatures who were destitute of souls and understandings. Though I felt indignant when I heard these opinions uttered, I was aware that I derived some advantage from their being acted upon; for my master and his friends, not believing that I could comprehend a sentence of their conversation, felt no restraint when I was present, and thus afforded me an opportunity of hearing their sentiments upon every subject, and becoming acquainted with their principles and characters.

'Often, while waiting at table, and listening to their disgusting opinions, I have been called forward by one of them, and struck severely on the face, for some trivial mistake I had committed in serving him with food or wine. In South Carolina, the guests do not hesitate to chastise their entertainer's servants, whenever they feel inclined; and a party of white people there, often make the cursing and beating of the slaves in attendance their chief employment during the dinner. On such occasions, the burning tears of resentment would rush into my eyes. I would tremble with ill-dissembled rage, and implore the God of my fathers to let loose his rage upon my tormentors, although I should become its victim along with them.

'There was an old free negro upon the plantation, who had travelled through the Northern States of America. He could read and write tolerably well, and knew a good deal about the countries he had visited. I happened to become a favourite of his, and he often gave me minute accounts of the condition of the Africans who lived in New York, and contrasted their independence with the abject state of our race every where else. I listened to these details with the deepest attention, which pleased him so much that he offered to teach me to read. I gladly availed myself of his instructions, and profited so much by them, that in the course of five or six months, I was able to peruse the newspapers which my master received from different parts of the Union; many of them contained paragraphs upon the subject of slavery, and I was delighted to find that some men exclaimed against it, and denied that white people had the least right to tyrannize over negroes.'

'I used often to steal into my master's room when he slept, and read the New York journals. One afternoon he caught me with one in my hand, and demanded angrily what I was doing. I told him I was reading. He struck me a violent blow on the head with his cane, and said he would order me forty lashes if I ever again looked at a book or a newspaper. He soon discovered that the old negro had been my teacher, and immediately sent him off the estate, not being able to inflict any other punishment, in consequence of his having purchased his freedom.

'Next day, a neighbouring planter called upon Mr. Sexton, and the latter, in the course of the conversation, said, 'What do you think I caught that young hell-dog doing the other night? He was reading a newspaper.' The other broke out into a loud laugh, and cried, 'why did you not kill him? Were any of my negroes able to read, I would soon flog the scholarship out of them. Why, the little devil will begin to direct you how to manage your estate, bye and bye.'—'Oh! I'll bring him to his senses,' returned my master; 'Hark ye, fellow,' continued he, addressing himself to me, 'if you ever look at a printed paper again, I'll put out your eyes, with a red-hot poker. The whole of your duty is to clean the knives, and wait at table. Damn me, if I don't make it pretty bad for any fellow of mine who does either more or less than I want him to do.'

'I easily perceived that my master and his friend were aware that their strength lay in our ignorance, and feared lest the slightest acquisition of knowledge should enable us to discover that

they had not a shadow of right to enslave and tyrannize over our race. What excuse is there for the oppressor, when he is conscious of being guilty of oppression!

'As my ideas expanded, my situation gradually became more intolerable. I had no one to whom I could communicate my thoughts. My fellow-slaves were so ignorant and degraded, that I could hardly look at them without pity and disgust. I used to watch them when they assembled to receive their weekly allowance of provisions. Worn out by fatigue, clad in rags, and branded with lashes, they would wait for their respective portions with eager greediness, and then hurry away in a state of tumultuous delight, which was scarcely repressed by the clanking of the overseer's whip behind them. They had sunk so low that they seemed willing to accept life upon any terms.

'In the midst of my misery, I became attached to a young girl named Sabina. She was a slave upon the adjoining estate, and therefore we seldom had an opportunity of seeing each other except by stealth. I used to leave my master's house at midnight, when every one was in bed, and go across the plantation to the huts in which Sabrina and her mother lived. But Mr. Sexton once awoke during my absence on one of these nocturnal visits, and the whole affair was soon discovered. He flogged me severely, and ordered me to remain at home in future; and the proprietor of the adjoining estate, to whom he made a complaint, caused Sabrina's hut to be burned to the ground, that it might no longer afford us a place of meeting. I became half maddened with rage and misery. However, my feelings were unnoticed by Mr. Sexton, who, like other American planters, did not believe that negroes were susceptible of love or sorrow.

'Mr. Sexton had a daughter, who resided in the house with him, and took charge of his domestic affairs. The proprietor of the adjoining estate, whose name was Lusher, loved her, and wished to marry her, but Mr. Sexton would not consent to their union, and prohibited all correspondence between them. However, notwithstanding this, they sometimes met in secret, and often wrote to each other. Miss Sexton privately employed me to carry her letters to Mr. Lusher, promising that she would satisfy her father respecting my absence, should he discover it, and likewise secure me from any risk of suffering punishment on her account. I willingly became a channel of communication between the two lovers, for I hoped by doing so to be able to forward my own views.

'One day I ventured to hint to Miss Sexton that I expected some little reward for my services, and begged her to entreat her father to purchase Sabrina, and bring her upon his estate, that we might get married. She engaged to propose the thing to him, and really did so; but he refused to agree to it, and, at the same time, told her, that he suspected she had some private reasons for interceding so strongly in my behalf. and was resolved to discover what they were.

'Shortly after this, Miss Sexton desired me to carry a letter to the next estate, and bid me be extremely cautious lest her father should see me going there, but said that if he did, she would find means to shield me from all blame. I took a bye-path which led across our plantation, and reached Mr. Lusher's house without interruption; however he was not at home, and the servants pointed to a small building a little way off, and told me I would find him there.

'On entering it, the first object that struck my eyes was poor Sabrina, whom I had not seen for many weeks. She lay upon some planks, which were covered with the dry husks of Indian corn,

and seemed to be dying. The place had no window in it, and an old negro woman sat beside her, holding a candle, while Mr. Lusher and a medical man stood at the foot of the bed. The doctor muttered, 'she's been a fine slave—confounded pity to loose her—can't help it though; 'and then began to whistle and play with his cane. 'What an unfortunate devil I am!' exclaimed Mr. Lusher, angrily, 'Hang her for falling sick—what right has a niger to fall sick?—Odds, I believe she was not sound when I bought her—I'll trounce somebody for that—So you think there's no chance of her hoeing any more corn?'—'No, no,' returned the doctor, laughing; 'I would'nt like to have as little chance of eating my dinner to-day, as she has of living two hours.'

'I stood in agony not daring to express my feelings. I advanced towards Sabrina, and took hold of her arm. She raised her eyes, but it was only that I might see their lustre extinguished, for in a moment or two she fell dead upon her pillow. 'Ah, she's given you the slip,' said the doctor. Mr. Lusher cried, 'Damn her soul to hell—there's four hundred dollars lost' and hurried away, banging the door furiously behind him.

'However, he soon returned; and seeing me gaze on Sabrina, asked what I did there. I said I had a letter for him, and delivered it. 'Oh,' cries he, 'you're the fellow that wanted that girl for a wife. I wish Mr. Sexton had bought her, and then the loss would have fallen on his shoulders. Well, you may take her now, and bury her, or marry her—whichever you like—Begone, I don't want you.

'I hurried home equally afflicted at the death of Sabrina, and enraged by the inhuman insults I had received from her master. When I had come within a little distance of the house, I observed Mr. Sexton and his daughter walking towards me. 'How do you do, Manuel!' cried he, in that style of derision which he always assumed when infuriated with passion—'I hope your walk has been a pleasant one. Be so good as suggest what improvements ought to be made on this estate. Do the crops look well!—Slave! Baboon! Imp of the devil! Where have you been?'

'I made no reply, but looked to Miss Sexton. She coloured, and cried, 'What does the wretch mean by looking at me? You surely do not say that I sent you any where.'—'Answer me,' vociferated her father, raising his cane. 'Miss Sexton will inform you,' returned I.—'This is beyond my patience!' exclaimed she. I'll tell you he said, 'father—he has been paying a visit to Sabrina, notwithstanding your orders to the contrary, and wishes to make you believe that I sent him somewhere—Manuel, say instantly if you saw Sabrina this morning.'—'Yes,' answered I, 'I did, but' 'None of your buts, you equivocating villain!' Interrupted my master. Stung with indignation at Miss Sexton's ingratitude, I cried, 'Your daughter sent me with a letter to Mr. Lusher.'—'What! you give us the lie, then replied Mr. Sexton, striking me over the head. I returned the blow with my fist, and he fell flat upon the ground.

'Miss Sexton shrieked loudly, and the overseer, followed by several slaves, hastened towards me with a drawn cutlass in his hand. I made no resistance, and was immediately seized and bound. My master received very little injury from the blow, but his lips quivered with rage; and having given orders that I should be put in confinement, he walked towards the house, crying out, 'Struck by a slave! struck by a slave! —It is impossible! Am I dreaming —'Does God Almighty really permit this? —A slave! a black! a negro! —Strike me—a noble Carolinian!

Is there a law to punish this Law—nonsense Tortures, death, eternal curses!'

'I was immediately thrown into a dark apartment in a large store-house, and remained there all night without being visited by any one. In the morning the overseer took me out, and made one of the negroes flog me severely, in presence of Mr. Sexton and his daughter. My sufferings were dreadful. In short, I was indicted for striking my master, and tried, and found guilty. You know the punishment which the law awards in such cases—it was inflicted upon me. They cut off my right hand!—they cut off my right hand!' Here Manuel stretched out the mutilated arm, and sobbed convulsively. 'But, thank God, I've another,' continued he vehemently; 'and may it never be better employed than in resenting the tyranny of slave-masters. Oh! that every negro in the Southern States would risk the loss of his right hand by doing what I have done! then would we prove that our race was not made to be trampled upon,—but let me proceed.

'I was confined in jail for three months, and then sent back to my master. I anticipated a life of wretchedness, and was not mistaken. Scarcely a day passed, in the course of which Mr. Sexton did not find an excuse for punishing me. As the want of my hand rendered me unable to do the duties of a house-servant, I was employed in tending the cattle, and thus had many opportunities of conversing with my fellow-slaves who worked out of doors. I confided my thoughts to three of them, who seemed willing to attempt the execution of any project, however daring. In short, we determined to burn our master's house, and spent much time in planning how we could best effect this without the risk of being discovered,

'At last we fixed upon a time for our revenge. It was a holiday among the negroes, who were all amusing themselves in various ways on different parts of the estate. My master was dining with a planter in the neighbourhood; and as part of his road lay through a retired forest, we resolved to intercept him on his way home, lest his presence there should prove any hindrance to the success of our scheme.

'We had, at different times, placed combustibles in those parts of his house and offices that were least exposed to observation. About eight in the evening we set fire to them, and then hastened to the wood, and stationed ourselves among the trees which bordered the road. We had scarcely waited half an hour when we saw smoke beginning to ascend from the house, which was nearly a mile distant, and heard a tumultuous noise of voices. I gazed and listened with silent satisfaction, till my master made his appearance. He was in a gig, and a negro rode on horseback behind him. Two of my companions seized the reins of the horses, and, assisted by a third, I dragged Mr. Sexton out of his carriage. He was almost speechless with indignation and terror and doubtless supposed that I intended murdering him. He soon began to entreat for mercy in the most abject manner, solemnly promising that he would grant me my freedom if I allowed him to go home unmolested. 'You may well desire to be at home,' said I—'Look to the south!—' Ha,' cried he, 'what do you mean?—Desperate wretch, have you taken your revenge already?—My house is on fire! —'But if I cannot punish you, others will suffer for this!'

'We now bound him to a tree, with his face towards the conflagration, which had evidently increased very much. A bright glare of light extended far over the sky, and tinged the tops of the trees like the setting sun; volumes of smoke rose from two different spots; we heard the negroes shouting confusedly; and the crackling, crashing, and thundering of timbers falling to the ground, announced that the work of destruction made furious progress.

'Having secured the negro man in the same way as Mr. Sexton, and tied the horses lest they should go to the house, and by the means of inducing the people there to set out in quest of my master, we left them, and plunged into the recesses of the forest. We travelled all night towards the sea-shore, but did not venture to pass through an inhabited place. The want of my hand rendered my appearance too remarkable to allow me to hope that I would escape notice. I need not describe the hardships we encountered during our journey. In two days we reached the coast, where we stole a boat, and put out to sea, intending, if possible, to elude any search that might be made for us. We soon fell in with a pirate, who immediately took us on board, and I gradually acquired some knowledge of seamanship. We cruized about for a considerable time, and got a great many prizes, but our vessel at last became so generally known, that the Captain could not continue to sail her without running much risk of being captured. He therefore went into a port in one of the West India Islands, and managed to get her sold. He paid his crew very generously, and by means of his bounty, and a series of fortunate accidents, I was enabled to purchase this schooner, and to commence pirate myself. My mode of life is far from being an agreeable one, and I have as yet made but little of it. However, I have a more exalted object in view than mere gain. You must not judge of my character by that of the persons with whom you see me surrounded. I am well aware that my crew is composed of the lowest and most debased part of society, and often feel ashamed of the concessions I am obliged to make them. They consider themselves on an equality with me, and will not submit to any kind of discipline, beyond what mutual security and self-preservation render necessary. But I value and endure them only in so far as they are the means of forwarding my views. I would consider it an insult to be classed with such desperadoes.'

Here Manuel ceased speaking. I did not venture to make any comments upon his story, and we sat in silence till the men came to the side of the river, with a large quantity of firewood. We immediately took it on board the boat, and rowed down the stream, and reached the schooner a short time before dawn. At sunrise, we weighed anchor, and put to sea again.

Next day, while walking the deck, I heard one negro say to another, 'Mark, what was that you was telling me about Caesar having been hanged at Baltimore—' Why, only that he was hanged,' replied Mark. 'When I was last ashore, I heard so from one who had read it in a newspaper.'—'What did they make him swing for inquired the first, whose name was Mendez. 'Did he look sulky at his master, break a wine-glass, or bring him a knife when he wanted a fork—' No, no, he did nothing so bad as that,' replied Mark, laughing. 'He was a cruizer, like our Captain, and meeting with a vessel, he went on board, and helped himself to some biscuit and rum, and a little hard cash. Her crew wished to put him on short allowance, but he took what he wanted in spite of them all. He was afterwards caught by a Yankee ship-of-war, and carried to Baltimore. The folks there found him guilty of piracy, as they called it, and hanged him and some of his crew besides.'

'Why, I think,' said Mendez, he had a right to taste the rum, if he had helped to make as much of it as you and I have done. We nigers have a pretty time of it. They won't let us live by land or by water. I wonder if we could please our masters by flying in the air 'Why, now, wasn't Caesar hanged for what we've been doing?—' To be sure he was,' returned Mark; 'we must keep a sharp look-out. I guess our best plan will be to hinder any one from ever becoming witness against us.'—'How can we manage that? demanded Mendez.—'Why, by pinking a hole in the bottom of our prizes, and making those on board of them drink our healths in salt-water,' said Mark. 'Dead men tell no tales, you know.'—'Well, I conclude it our only way,' replied Mendez, 'though I should

feel a little strange about sending a crew of white men to hell in a moment.'—'Why, they must all go there at last, you fool,' returned Mark; 'think of the floggings you've got.'—'Ha, your words sound in my ear like the crack of a whip,' cried Mendez. 'But I wonder the Yankees don't know better than to hang us for being pirates. They can't suppose that we'll be soft now as to let away the people who fall into our hands, and so give them a chance of informing against us. I'll bet you we'll kill five whites for every negro that is hanged.'—'Ay, and more too, if we choose,' said "Mark. 'Oh, we've a merry time of it, for most people think that we blacks do not deserve to live, unless we are slaves and beasts of burden. Faith, I'm getting tired of a sea-life. If I could but scrape together 400 dollars, I would give up cruising, and go to St. Domingo.'—'Why you could have made that sum when you was last in Charleston,' returned Mendez.—'How so?' inquired his companion—'Wasn't you advertized as an outlaw?' said Mendez—'wasn't there a price set upon your life? you should have cut off your head and carried it to the magistrates, and demanded the sum that they offered for it.'—'Damn it now, Mendez, don't begin to run me,' cried Mark laughing, 'I would have been a pretty figure without a head upon my shoulders.'—'Ah, 'returned the other, 'if you ever had one upon them, you would not have let slip such a good opportunity of making money.'

We had now been cruising about for nearly three weeks, without ever seeing a vessel. The mental and bodily inaction which had characterised the course of my life during that period, were very depressing, and I began to wish for the appearance of a ship, almost as ardently as the crew, though from totally different motives. Manuel neither seemed to feel much weariness nor impatience. He spent most of his time upon deck, and when the navigation of the schooner did not require his attention, he lay along the companion, basking in the sun, and smoking a segar. He sometimes entered into a familiar conversation with the seamen, though, on doing so, his object evidently was to keep them in good humour, rather than to amuse or gratify himself.

One morning, Manuel, after having looked through his glass at intervals, during two hours, announced that he saw a vessel off our lee-bow, and gave orders that the deck should be cleared, and the guns got ready for action. In a moment everything was bustle and confusion. On the word of command being given, the negroes threw off a large part of their clothes, and dispersed over different parts of the schooner, shouting to each other, and hurrying through their respective duties with a violence and eagerness which shewed how congenial the prospect of bloodshed, oppression, and plunder, was to their feelings. They soon began to converse gaily and unconcernedly. One talked of the resistance we should probably meet with from the vessel we were in chase of; another jestingly said, 'he wished to write his will,' and mentioned what articles he intended bequeathing to his companions, should he perish in the conflict; a third complained of the defective state of his wardrobe, and enumerated the additions he hoped to make to it, when the anticipated prize fell into our hands. Manuel walked anxiously about the deck, sometimes looking through his glass, and sometimes giving directions to the helmsman.

I alone remained unoccupied and unattended to amidst the general activity. The quiescent and monotonous life I had led since I came on board the schooner, had lulled me into a forgetfulness of my real situation, all the horrors of which now burst upon my mind with appalling force. I had outlawed myself from society. I was surrounded with wretches, with whom I could have no community of feeling. I was soon to become, as it were, an accomplice in the work of rapine and bloodshed. We might, perhaps, be overpowered by those whom we proposed to attack, and I

should be seized and classed with pirates. There was no one to testify my innocence, to prove that I had no connection with the guilty, or to save me from an ignominious death.

We soon discovered that the object of our pursuit was a brig of about 200 tons burden. She seemed to suspect what we were for she made all sail, and began to go large, altho' she had kept very close hauled before perceiving us; but our schooner, being very fast, and to the windward of her, gained upon her every moment. About mid-day, we came within shot of the brig, and Manuel ordered a gun to be fired, as a signal for her to heave to. She paid no attention to it, and her crew seemed to be preparing for defence. He then pointed a cannon himself, and sent a ball through the lower part of her mainsail; but this not being what he wanted, he aimed again, and disabled her rudder.

She was now completely in our power, and we came within 30 yards of her. The boat being lowered down, Manuel, and 15 of his crew, under arms, embarked alongside of the brig, and ascended her gangway without meeting any resistance. The Captain immediately advanced towards them, and said, 'What right have you to stop me on the high seas—' Right! right!' returned Manuel; 'none that I know of—only I'm stronger than you—but shew me your manifest.'—'That I cannot do,' cried the Captain, 'unless you promise.' 'I'll promise nothing,' interrupted Manuel: 'yes, yes, one thing; none of you shall be maltreated, unless you offer to oppose my orders.'—'Fine conditions, indeed!' exclaimed the Captain; 'Be pleased to tell me what you want here?—' Bring me your manifest,' replied Manuel, and I'll inform you. I mean to take whatever part of your cargo I choose, and likewise all the specie on board. Come down to the cabin, I must not be detained.'

They now both went below, and the negroes having received a signal from Manuel, ranged themselves on each side of the companion. They had scarcely done this, when a voice requested them to make way, and a gentleman with a young lady leaning on his arm, and followed by a mulatto woman, came upon deck. They looked around them with an expression of terror and astonishment. The young lady, on seeing the blacks, turned pale, and clung tremblingly to her protector's arm, and said something to him, but in such a low tone of voice, that nothing but the word father was distinguishable. The gentleman, once or twice, seemed to be on the point of addressing the negroes, but he suddenly stopped, as if aware that interference was useless.

A dead silence prevailed upon deck for some time, but the countenances of the different parties who occupied it, expressed more than words could have done. The females discovered marks of deadening fear; the crew of the brig evidently struggled to resist the impulses of indignation, and the negroes seemed full of hope and impatience. The young lady wore a beautiful Indian shawl, and one of the blacks, smiling to his companions, stepped forward and pulled it off her shoulders. Her father, furious at this insult, seized a block that lay near him, and struck the daring wretch upon the face with so much violence, that he staggered back, and nearly fell into the hold. However, he quickly recovered himself, and rushing forwards, plunged his cutlass into the side of his antagonist, who dropped, apparently lifeless, upon the deck. The seamen belonging to the brig could no longer restrain themselves; a loud cry burst from them, and they hastily seized the murderer, and threw him overboard; but being an expert swimmer, he soon gained the surface of the water, and made furiously towards the vessel's side, with flashing eyes and loud curses.

The noise of the affray brought the Captain and Manuel from the cabin, and the first object that struck the eyes of the latter was the wounded man weltering in blood, and supported in the arms of his daughter. 'Who did this?' cried Manuel, with a voice half suffocated with emotion. The assassin was standing upon the chains, and endeavouring to climb over the bulwarks, when some one pointed him out. Manuel drew a pistol from his bosom, and fired at the negro's head; the ball took effect. Its victim lost hold of the rigging, sprung convulsively upwards, and fell headlong among the waves. A murmur of applause proceeded from the crew; but the blacks shrunk away with baneful frowns from Manuel, who, turning to the Captain, said haughtily, 'This is my discipline;' and then took a paper out of his pocket, and began to read.

The young lady's father, whose name was Mr. R, was now conveyed to the cabin, accompanied by his daughter and her attendant, the mulatto woman. Manuel then ordered his men to lift the hatches, and descended through one of them into the hold. After a little while he returned, and pointed out what articles he wished to have brought upon deck. The negroes set to work, and presently every part of the vessel was covered with bales, casks, and packages, while Manuel walked coolly among them, and selected such as he conceived to be the most useful and valuable. His men would evidently have begun to plunder privately, had they not been restrained by fear; but the instance of their leader's severity which they had just witnessed, seemed to dwell upon their minds, for while occupied in getting out the cargo, they muttered threats, and viewed him with scowling and wrathful looks.

Manuel having collected together all the articles he wanted, ordered them to be handed into the boat, which he sent off with part of his men to the schooner. He retained in his hand a bag of specie, and several other things. The boat being unloaded, they returned to take him on board his own vessel, and as he was descending the gangway of the brig, he bowed to her Captain, and said, 'I wish you a good voyage, sir.'

On reaching the schooner, Manuel ordered the crew to hoist up the boat, and to bear away; however, the wind was light and baffling, and we made but little progress. I fixed my eyes upon the brig as we gradually receded from her, and reflected upon the unhappy situation of Mr. R and his daughter, in both of whom I felt powerfully interested. I had several times been on the point of entreating Manuel to allow me to assist the wounded man; but he had always turned away, as if aware of what I intended, and unwilling to render himself chargeable with inhumanity, by refusing to grant my request. I now ventured to address him on the subject. 'We cannot part with you,' said he, 'if we did, it might ruin us all. He who becomes a pirate, must die a pirate. There is no middle course. I fervently hope Mr. R may recover. I have at least executed justice upon his murderer. Perhaps you may think me a murderer myself, but I did no more than necessary. My crew are not to be restrained, except by very terrible means. 'And yet,' continued he, starting, 'in my anxiety to save others, I have perhaps brought destruction upon myself. I am guilty of murder; there are plenty of witnesses to prove it. Oh! that both my hands had been cut off', then I could not have committed this rash act, which at once puts me on a level with my crew. Good night, good night. Go to sleep.'

About two hours after sun-set, I retired to my birth; but the events of the day had made such a strong impression that I could not sleep, and I rose at midnight and went upon deck. It was clear moonlight, and perfectly calm. On looking for the brig, I perceived, to my astonishment, that she

lay within a mile of us, and had heeled over so much, that she seemed almost on her beam-ends. I immediately informed Manuel of this, and he looked at her through his night-glass, and said she was aground on a sand-bank. 'What is to be done,' cried I; 'you surely will not allow those on board to perish?'—'To-morrow's dawn shall determine that,' returned he.

At day-break we found that the brig was still in the situation already described, and Manuel, accompanied by me and several of the crew, went towards her in the boat. The Captain seemed at a loss how to receive us, being doubtful whether our intentions were hostile or friendly; but when we had satisfied him on this point, he informed us, that his vessel having become quite unmanageable, in consequence of the loss of her rudder, had drifted away towards a sand-bank, and run hard aground the preceding night. We soon ascertained that her bottom was much damaged, and that she could not be got off. 'This brig will go to pieces the first time there is a heavy sea,' said Manuel to the Captain; 'and those who remain in her must perish. I will take you all on board my schooner, and put you ashore about 40 miles above Matanzas, seeking no compensation but part of the cargo, which you of course have no means of preserving.' After some deliberation, this proposal was acceded to by all parties, and Manuel's crew again began to unload the brig.

While they were thus engaged, I went down to the cabin, and found Mr. R and his daughter there. The former had a look of ghastliness, which gave me an unfavourable idea of the nature of his wound; and the latter sat beside his bed, and seemed at once hopeless and resigned. On seeing me, they both started, but said nothing. I told them, that altho' I came along with the pirates, I had no connection with such persons, and that my object in intruding upon them was to offer my professional services to Mr. R. The young lady sprung from her chair, and expressed her gratitude in the warmest manner, while her father's flushed countenance and beaming eyes evinced that hopes of life began to revive in his heart.

When Manuel had carried away as much of the cargo as his vessel could conveniently contain, he informed us that the boat was ready to take us all on board the schooner; we accordingly embarked, placing Mr. R. upon a mattress, and rowed away from the brig, towards which the Captain and his crew directed many anxious and regretful looks. On getting on board the schooner, our first business was to contrive accommodations for so many new passengers. I resigned my birth to Mr. R, and Manuel allowed the young lady and her attendant to occupy his stateroom. The Captain and his crew reposed upon deck, but the latter were so indignant at the familiarity with which the negroes treated them, that they would have resented it by force, had not the fear of being overcome by superior numbers restrained their fury. However, the two parties poured out torrents of abuse against each other, and the clamour of their tongues, the groans of Mr. R, the agonies of his daughter, and the confinement of a crowded vessel, all combined to render the day and succeeding night insupportably tedious and distressing to me.

In about 40 hours, we made the Bay of Matanzas, and Manuel told the Captain and the white crew to hold themselves in readiness, as he soon intended to put them ashore. At sunset we were scarcely two leagues from the coast of Cuba. The negroes lowered a small boat, and stowed a quantity of water and provisions in her; and Manuel came down to the cabin, and informed Mr. R. and his daughter that it was time for them to embark. 'Where I—What do you mean cried the young lady.—'Why, madam,' returned Manuel, 'didn't I say that all the people belonging to the brig were

to be put ashore here?'—'Oh, thanked be Heaven,' exclaimed she; 'then we are near a harbour, and a town. My dear father!'—'No, no,' interrupted Manuel, 'the coast opposite is uninhabited.'—'What do you tell me!' cried she, bursting into tears; 'you surely cannot be so barbarous—my father is dying;—have a little pity. It is indeed dreadful to be here, to be among such people;—but what will become of my parent, if you send us away? I have no more money to give you, but perhaps—' Here she covered her face with her hands, and sobbed so violently, that her whole frame trembled.

Manuel began to pace about the cabin; I saw that he was affected, and therefore did not venture to speak. 'Well, lady,' said he, after a pause, 'you may remain here. I will protect you and your father—yes, even though I should bring myself into difficulty by doing so.' He then went upon deck, and ordered the Captain and his crew, who had already seated themselves in the boat to row away. The clashing of their oars, which at first broke upon the stillness of the night, gradually became fainter, and soon subsided into almost undistinguishable murmurs.

In the course of the evening, Manuel asked me if I thought Mr. R would recover from his wound. I told him that I feared he would soon be relieved from the inconvenience of having such a passenger on board. 'So I suspect,' returned he; 'but what is to become of his daughter and the Mulatto woman? 'I wish I had sent them off in the boat to-night.' 'It would have been unmerciful,' said I; 'perhaps the seamen themselves may perish.' 'Don't fear, don't fear,' cried he; 'I treated them very generously. Most pirates would have left the whole party to drown in the brig, and been glad of such an opportunity of getting them out of the way. I gave them a good boat and plenty of provisions; they will easily reach Matanzas. My crew are enraged at my conduct in this affair. I must be on my guard; and listen to me, be you also on yours!'

A short time before midnight, Mr. R complained of the oppressive closeness of the cabin, and begged to be lifted upon deck. We immediately complied with his wishes, and spread a mattress for him near the stern of the vessel. Elizabeth, his daughter, seated herself beside his couch, and the Mulatto woman waited behind. I threw myself upon a ceroon at a little distance, and felt so fatigued, that I gradually began to slumber, although within hearing of the sick man's feeble groans and hurried inspirations.

I was suddenly awakened by the sound of light footsteps. I opened my eyes and saw Elizabeth. 'My father is—' She could say no more. I rose and followed her. Mr. R lay upon his back with half-closed eyes, and seemed scarcely sensible of our approach; but in a little time he turned his face towards me, and tried to smile. He then took hold of his daughter's hand, and attempted to greet her in the same way, but it was impossible; his lips trembled, and some tears rushed down his cheeks. None of us uttered a word, or even ventured to sigh.

It was the finest moonlight, and the whole heavens were covered with one continuous expanse of dappled white clouds. The celestial net-work, extending from horizon to horizon, floated in motionless repose, and the stars could be seen twinkling faintly through its apertures. The calm was such that our sails scarcely even flapped upon the masts, and our vessel lay as still as if she had been imbedded in a field of crystal. The balmy murmuring of the little surges upon the distant beach, swelled upon the ear, and died away again with a caprice that seemed in unison with the

irregular motions of a tall cocoa-nut tree, which stood alone upon a projecting rock, and was waved in a melancholy manner by a land breeze too feeble and unsteady to reach or affect us.

Elizabeth knelt silently beside her father, with clasped hands, and had a frozen look of condensed despair, which is almost too terrible for an inhabitant of this world. Her face and lips were colourless, and she seemed like a spirit waiting for a departing soul. None of us knew the exact moment at which Mr. R died. I soon after took his daughter by the hand, and conducted her to the cabin. She neither spoke a word nor made the least resistance, and I began to fear that grief had bewildered her perceptions. Her attendant followed us, and I left them together.

I did not attempt to sleep any that night. I was occupied in thinking of Elizabeth, who had soon awakened to a full sense of her misery, and whose sobs haunted my ears wherever I went. In the morning she sunk into a gentle slumber, which, after continuing two hours, left her in a state of comparative rationality and composure. I earnestly requested to see her, and we had an interview. I offered myself as a protector, and promised to do every thing in my power to extricate her from her present unhappy situation, and said I would escort her to a place of safety whenever I had the good fortune to effect this. I then told who I was, and related the circumstances that had induced me to seek an asylum among the pirates. In return, she thanked me for my unremitting attentions to her father, and declared that she fully believed me to be what I professed.

The calm continued during the whole of that day, and Manuel exhibited many signs of impatience at its long duration; and the more so, as the current was gradually carrying us towards Matanzas, a place which he wished anxiously to avoid. Next morning a gentle breeze sprang up, and we had scarcely begun to profit by it, when we discovered a small brig of war, with American colours, bearing towards us, under full sail. Manuel ordered his men to crowd all canvass, and tried various nautical manoeuvres, in the hope of escaping her; but she gained upon us every moment.

The negroes, when they perceived that we could not get out of their reach, were thrown into a state of consternation, and totally neglected their duty. They assembled together in groups, and conversed with outrageous looks and violent gesticulations, occasionally throwing baleful glances at Manuel. He saw that a storm was gathering, and immediately went below, and secured the door of the apartment which contained the arms. He then appeared upon deck, with a brace of pistols in his girdle, a dagger by his side, and a naked scymitar in his hand, and took his station beside the companion door.

The boldness of his deportment seemed to increase the fury of the blacks; some of whom called out, 'Down with him! down with him! he has betrayed us.' Manuel paid no attention to their cries, but ordered them, in a voice of thunder, to load the guns, and rushed forward, waving his sword in the air. They became intimidated, and hastened to obey him; and, while they were engaged in doing so, I ran down to the cabin, and armed myself as well as possible, at the same time comforting Elizabeth, and bidding her remain in her state-room.

When I went upon deck again, I found that the negroes had openly mutinied. They were ranged round the foremast, and stood glaring at Manuel, and at each other, like a set of demons. 'Hell curse you, captain!' cried one of them, 'What right had you to bring us here? Were we all to be sent to the devil, that you might put ashore them damned whites that you picked out of the brig?—'

Ay, ay, it was mercy that made him do so,' said another, 'but see if we'll get any mercy from the tyrants that are in chase of us. Ha, Mr. Manuel! I would almost be hanged myself, to have the satisfaction of seeing you swing by the throat!' —'They could'nt get him hanged,' vociferated a third,' he would always untie the rope with his right hand. Oh, captain, may the devil scorch your soul for bringing us here!'—' He thinks us a set of niger slaves,' cried the first speaker, 'who hav'nt spirit to do any thing but what he bids us—but we'll show him another story. Come on, let us have revenge! Down with him, and his companion!'

Several of the crew now rushed towards us with threatening gestures. Manuel fired a pistol among them, and wounded one with his scymitar, and I struck down another with the butt-end of a blunderbuss, and then acted upon the defensive. They were repelled; but would apparently have made a second attack, had not a shot from the brig raked us fore and aft, and carried away the binnacle. 'Now, now!' shouted Manuel, 'if you are worth any thing, fight for your lives! The enemy is close upon us; we shall be blown out of the water!—Here is the key of the armory,—go and equip yourselves, and show some real spirit.'

The negroes were almost instantaneously animated by a new feeling. Some provided themselves with muskets and cutlasses, and others took their stations at the guns. They all had a look of savage and determined resistance; which showed that they would rather perish in battle, than run the risk of terminating their lives upon a scaffold.

The brig had now nearly come along-side of us, and her captain commanded us to heave to, if we desired any quarter. He was answered by the discharge of four cannon, and by a shower of musket balls. They gave a broadside in return, which carried away our mainmast, and then bore down upon the schooner, with the intention of boarding her. The smoke prevented the helmsman of the brig from steering justly, and he suddenly brought her so close to us, that she swept away our chains, and stove in our bulwarks, and dragged us through the water a considerable distance. The fight now became very desperate. The bayonet and cutlass had usurped the place of firearms, and the negroes, who were not provided with weapons of any kind, attacked the American seaman with their fists, beating them down, attempting to choke them, and pushing them overboard. They all the while animated each other with shouts, execrations, and blasphemous cries and rushed furiously to the combat, half naked, and covered with dust, and sweat, and blood.

I kept as near Manuel as possible. He sometimes fought vigorously for a few moments, and then stood idle, apparently irresolute what to do. At last he cried out, 'It is easy to see how this day will end, but I must hasten its termination,' and then hurried down to the cabin. I instinctively followed him, and found Elizabeth and her maid nearly speechless with terror. Manuel tore open the hatch in the floor, and pulled up a small cask, the head of which he knocked in with his hand. It was full of gunpowder. He placed it upon the table. I grew breathless. He put a steel between his teeth, and then seizing a flint, began to strike the one against the other. The pulsations of my heart ceased, and my eyes became dim. Manuel seemed suddenly to dilate into fearful and gigantic size, and to pour torrents of fire upon the gunpowder. My senses were suddenly recalled by a loud crash, and by the appearance of water rushing down upon us through the skylight. I thought we were going to the bottom, and started up and pulled the fainting Elizabeth towards the gangway. There we encountered an American officer; he gave us a look of astonishment, and hastening towards Manuel, seized his arm, and said, 'Surrender yourself—you are my prisoner.'

Manuel did not attempt any resistance, but followed the officer upon deck. Having left Elizabeth, whose recollection was now pretty well restored, with her maid, I went there also. Every thing had become quiet. The American seamen were in possession of the schooner, and the negroes had been removed on board the brig of war. Her captain ordered Manuel to be put in irons, and directed that Elizabeth and I should have accommodations in his own vessel.

I was a good deal astonished to meet with several of the crew that had belonged to the brig we had plundered, and to hear them say that they were the means of capturing the schooner. Having been fortunate enough to reach Matanzas the day after Manuel had set them adrift in the boat, they found an American brig of war there, which had run into the harbour that she might repair some damage she had sustained while on her voyage from Jamaica to Charleston. They immediately gave her captain information respecting the pirate, and he set out in pursuit of them, making the seamen warp his brig along, till a breeze sprung up, which enabled him to come in sight of the schooner. During the battle, a young officer who boarded her along with the American crew, happened to observe Manuel's attempts to blow them up, and with great presence of mind, dashed his foil through the skylight, and averted the danger by pouring down a large quantity of water upon the gunpowder.

A few hours after the capture of the schooner, we set sail for Charleston, where the brig was bound. We reached that port in ten days. The pirate crew were immediately lodged in jail, I underwent an examination, and was then taken into custody, it being evident, from my own confession, that I had not been forced on board the schooner. Elizabeth, to whom I had hourly become more devoted during the voyage, found an asylum in a house of a distant relation, who resided in Charleston, and was summoned as a witness against the negroes. In three weeks their trial came on, and Manuel and seven others were condemned to death. No evidence appearing against me, I was liberated from confinement at an early period, by the intercession of several persons who appeared to take an interest in my fate. I supplied myself with means of support, by disposing of some valuables I had in my possession.

I was filled with sorrow when I heard that Manuel was condemned to death, aware that he deserved a better fate. I visited him in jail the day after he had received his sentence. He was loaded with fetters, and occupied a small cell by himself, through which he paced as quickly as the weight of his irons would permit; though he had a subdued look, the expression of his countenance was neither abject nor sorrowful.

'Ah, is it you, sir,' cried he, advancing towards me, as I entered; 'you are the person I most wished to see. How kind it is in you to visit a poor negro! For I am no more now. I am glad to be treated as a rational creature by at least one white man. I wonder they have let you escape. In this country it is a crime for a man to have anything to do with blacks, except in the way of flogging them.'—'You do not deserve to die,' said I, after a pause. 'Oh, perhaps not,' returned he; 'but law—law —law, you know—However, it is better I should. I had a weary life of it. I was chased from the land, and took refuge upon the sea; but, notwithstanding that, I could not escape the bloodhounds of the Southern States of America. But here I have written out something for you. Take this letter to Gustavus H, and accept what he gives to you in return, as a remembrance of me. But don't tell him that I am sentenced to death.' He then presented me with a paper, and having given directions where I should find the person to whom it was addressed, bid me farewell.

I immediately proceeded in search of Manuel's acquaintance, and after some time, reached his house, which was situated in the most obscure part of a narrow and dirty alley. The door was opened by an old negro, and I inquired if Gustavus H lived there. 'I am the man,' returned he; 'walk in, Master.' I entered, and gave him the letter, and at his request seated myself upon an old stool in one corner of the apartment until he read it. 'Strange—very strange,' muttered he, gazing on me intently. 'How is Mr. Manuel?—' Well enough at present,' returned I; 'but.' He stood still a moment, as if waiting the conclusion of my reply, and then went out of the room, but soon came back, carrying a bag, which he immediately put into my hands. Its weight was immense. 'That's all,' said he, 'I guess Manuel don't intend that I should be his banker long. Good morning, sir.'

When I returned to my lodgings, I opened the bag, and, to my astonishment, found it full of doubloons. I could not believe that Manuel intended leaving me such a legacy, and went to the prison in the afternoon, that I might see him, and converse with him upon the subject; but I arrived there too late; he had anticipated the law by putting a period to his existence.

Fortune had now bestowed upon me the means of returning to my native country. I communicated this to Elizabeth, and intreated that we might make the journey of life together. She consented, and our mutual happiness was soon as great as our individual misery had been, when fate first brought us together.