

Wolves of the Sea



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Pirate Adventure Saga

e-artnow, 2022

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EAN 4066338125262

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FOREWORD

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Anson Carlyle, aged twenty-three, the ninth in descent from Captain Geoffry Carlyle, of Glasgow, Scotland, was among the heroic Canadian dead at Vimy Ridge. Unmarried, and the last of his line, what few treasures he possessed fell into alien hands. Among these was a manuscript, apparently written in the year 1687, and which, through nine generations, had been carefully preserved, yet never made public. The paper was yellowed and discolored by years, occasionally a page was missing, and the writing itself had become almost indecipherable. Much indeed had to be traced by use of a microscope. The writer was evidently a man of some education, and clear thought, but exceedingly diffuse, in accordance with the style of his time, and possessing small conception of literary form. In editing this manuscript for modern readers I have therefore been compelled to practically rewrite it entirely, retaining merely the essential facts, with an occasional descriptive passage, although I have conscientiously followed the original development of the tale. In this reconstruction much quaintness of language, as well as appeal to probability, may have been lost, and for this my only excuse is the necessity of thus making the story readable. I have no doubt as to its essential truth, nor do I question the purpose which dominated this rover of the sea in his effort to record the adventures of his younger life. As a picture of those days of blood and courage, as well as a story of love and devotion, I

deem it worthy preservation, regretting only the impossibility of now presenting it in print exactly as written by Geoffry Carlyle.

R.P.

CHAPTER I

SENT INTO SERVITUDE

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Knowing this to be a narrative of unusual adventure, and one which may never even be read until long after I have departed from this world, when it will be difficult to convince readers that such times as are herein depicted could ever have been reality, I shall endeavor to narrate each incident in the simplest manner possible. My only purpose is truth, and my only witness history. Yet, even now lately as this all happened it is more like the recollections of a dream, dimly remembered at awakening, and, perchance, might remain so, but for the scars upon my body, and the constant memory of a woman's face. These alone combine to bring back in vividness those days that were—days of youth and daring, of desperate, lawless war, of wide ocean peril, and the outstretched hands of love. So that here, where I am writing it all down, here amid quietness and peace, and forgetful of the past, I wander again along a deserted shore, and sail among those isles of a southern sea, the home for many a century of crime and unspeakable cruelty. I will recall the truth, and can do no more.

I can recall that far-away dawn now as the opening portals of a beautiful morning, although at the time my thought was so closely centered upon other things, the deep blue of the sky, and the glimmering gold of the sun scarcely left an impression on my mind. It was still early morning

when we were brought out under heavy guard, and marched somberly forth through the opened gates of the gaol. There had been rain during the night, and the cobble-stones of the village street were dark with moisture, slipping under our hob-nailed shoes as we stumbled along down the sharp incline leading to the wharf. Ahead we could perceive a forest of masts, and what seemed like a vast crowd of waiting people. Only the murmur of voices greeting us as we emerged, told that this gathering was not a hostile one, and this truth was emphasized to our minds by the efforts of the guard to hasten our passage. That we had been sentenced to exile, to prolonged servitude in some foreign land, was all that any of us knew—to what special section of the world fate had allotted us remained unknown.

In spite of curses, and an occasional blow, we advanced slowly, marching four abreast, with feet dragging heavily, the chains binding us together clanking dismally with each step, and an armed guard between each file. Experiences have been many since then, yet I recall, as though it were but yesterday, the faces of those who walked in line with me. I was at the right end of my file, and at my shoulder was a boy from Morrownest, a slim, white-faced lad, his weak chin trembling from fear, and his eyes staring about so pleadingly I spoke a word of courage to him, whispering in his ear, lest the guard behind might strike. He glanced aside at me, but with no response in the depths of his eyes, in which I could perceive only a dumb anguish of despair. Beyond him marched Grover, one time butcher at Harwich, a stocky, big-fisted fellow, with a ghastly sword wound, yet red and unhealed on his face, extending from hair to chin,

his little pig eyes glinting ugly, and his lips cursing. The man beyond was a soldier, a straight, athletic fellow, with crinkly black beard, who kept his eyes front, paying no heed to the cries. The guard pressed the people back as we shuffled along, but there was no way of keeping them still. I heard cries of encouragement, shouts of recognition, sobs of pity, and occasionally a roar of anger as we passed.

"Good lads! God be with yer!"

"Thet one thar is sore hurted—it's a damn shame."

"Thar's Teddy—poor laddie! Luck go with yer, Teddy."

"Ter hell with Black Jeffries, say I!"

"Hush, mon, er ye'll be next ter go—no, I don't know who sed it."

"See thet little chap, Joe; lots ther lad bed ter do with the war."

"They all look mighty peaked—poor devils, four months in gaol."

"Stand back there now. Stand back!"

The guards prodded them savagely with the butts of their musketoons, thus making scant room for us to shuffle through, out upon the far end of the wharf, where we were finally halted abreast of a lumping brig, apparently nearly ready for sea. There were more than forty of us as I counted the fellows, and we were rounded up at the extremity of the wharf in the full blaze of the sun, with a line of guards stretched across to hold back the crowd until preparations had been completed to admit us aboard. As those in front flung themselves down on the planks, I got view of the brig's gangway, along which men were still busily hauling belated boxes and barrels, and beyond these gained

glimpse of the hooker's name—ROMPING BETSY OF PLYMOUTH. A moment later a sailor passed along the edge of the dock, dragging a coil of rope after him, and must have answered some hail on his way, for instantly a whisper passed swiftly from man to man.

"It's Virginia, mate; we're bound fer Virginia."

The ugly little pig eyes of the butcher met mine.

"Virginia, hey?" he grunted. "Ye're a sailorman, ain't ye, mate? Well, then, whar is this yere Virginia?"

The boy was looking at me also questioningly, the terror in his face by no means lessened at the sound of this strange word.

"Yes, sir, please; where is it, sir?"

I patted him on the shoulder, as others near by leaned forward to catch my answer.

"That's all right, mates," I returned cheerfully. "It's across the blue water, of course, but better than the Indies. We'll fall into the hands of Englishmen out there, and they'll be decent to us."

"But whar is the bloomin' hole?"

"In America. That is where all the tobacco comes from; likely that will be our job—raising tobacco."

"Have ever yer bin thar?"

"Ay, twice—and to a land beyond they call Maryland. Tis a country not so unlike England."

"Good luck that then; tell us about it, matie."

I endeavored to do so, dwelling upon what I remembered of the settlements, and the habits of the people, but saying little of the great wilderness of the interior, or how I had seen slaves toiling in the fields. The group of men within

range of my voice leaned forward in breathless attention, one now and then asking a question, their chains rattling with each movement of a body. The deep interest shown in their faces caused me unconsciously to elevate, my voice, and I had spoken but a moment or two before a hard hand gripped my shoulder.

"Yer better stow that, my man," growled someone above me, and I looked up into the stern eyes of the captain of the guard "or it may be the 'cat' for ye. Yer heard the orders."

"Yes, sir; I was only answering questions."

"Questions! What the hell difference does it make to this scum whar they go? Do yer talkin' aboard, not here. So ye've been ter the Virginia plantation, hev ye?"

"Twice, sir."

"As a sailor?"

"In command of vessels."

His eyes softened slightly, and a different tone seemed to creep into his voice.

"Then ye must be Master Carlyle, I take it. I heerd tell about ye at the trial, but supposed ye ter be an older man."

"I am twenty-six."

"Ye don't look even thet. It's my notion ye got an overly hard dose this time. The Judge was in ill humor thet day. Still thet's not fer me ter talk about. It's best fer both of us ter hold our tongues. Ay, they're ready fer ye now. Fall in there—all of yer. Step along, yer damn rebel scum."

We passed aboard over the narrow gang-plank, four abreast, dragging our feet, and were halted on the forward deck, while artificers removed our chains. As these were knocked off, the released prisoners disappeared one by one

down the forward hatch, into the space between the decks which had been roughly fitted up for their confinement during the long voyage. As my position was in one of the last files, I had ample time in which to gaze about, and take note of my surroundings. Except for the presence of the prisoners the deck presented no unusual scene. The *Romping Betsy* was a large, full-rigged brig, not overly clean, and had evidently been in commission for some time. Not heavily loaded she rode high, and was a broad-nosed vessel, with comfortable beam. I knew her at once as a slow sailor, and bound to develop a decidedly disagreeable roll in any considerable sea. She was heavily sparred, and to my eye her canvas appeared unduly weather-beaten and rotten. Indeed there was unnecessary clutter aloft, and an amount of litter about the deck which evidenced lack of seamanship; nor did the general appearance of such stray members of the crew as met my notice add appreciably to my confidence in the voyage.

I stared aft at the poop deck, seeking to gain glimpse of the skipper, but was unable to determine his presence among the others. There were a number of persons gathered along the low rail, attracted by the unusual spectacle, and curiously watching us being herded aboard, and dispatched below, but, to judge from their appearance, these were probably all passengers—some of them adventurers seeking the new land on their first voyage, although among them I saw others, easily recognized as Virginians on their way home. Among these I picked out a planter or two, prosperous and noisy, men who had just disposed of their tobacco crop, well satisfied with the

returns; some artisans sailing on contract, and a naval officer in uniform. Then my eyes encountered a strange group foregathered beside the lee rail.

There were four in the little party, but one of these was a negress, red-turbaned, and black as the ace of spades, a servant evidently, standing in silence behind the others. Another was clearly enough a Colonial proprietor, a heavily built man of middle age, purple faced, and wearing the broad hat with uplifted brim characteristic of Virginians. I passed these by with a glance, my attention concentrating upon the other two—a middle-aged young man, and a young woman standing side by side. The former was a dashing looking blade, of not more than forty, attired in blue, slashed coat, ornamented with gilt buttons, and bedecked at collar and cuffs with a profusion of lace. A saffron colored waist-coat failed to conceal his richly beruffled shirt, and the hilt of a rapier was rather prominently displayed. Such dandies were frequently enough seen, but it was this man's face which made marked contrast with his gay attire. He was dark, and hook-nosed, apparently of foreign birth, with black moustache tightly clipped, so as to reveal the thin firmness of his lips, and even at that distance I could perceive the lines of a scar across his chin. Altogether there was an audacity to his face, a daring, convincing me he was no mere lady's knight, but one to whom fighting was a trade. He was pointing us out to his companion, apparently joking over our appearance, in an endeavor to amuse. Seemingly she gave small heed to his words, for although her eyes followed where he pointed, they never once lighted with a smile, nor did I see her

answer his sallies. She was scarcely more than a girl, dressed very simply in some clinging dark stuff, with a loose gray cloak draping her shoulders, and a small, neat bonnet of straw perched upon a mass of coiled hair. The face beneath was sweetly piquant, with dark eyes, and rounded cheeks flushed with health. She stood, both hands clasping the rail, watching us intently. I somehow felt as though her eyes were upon me, and within their depths, even at that distance, I seemed to read a message of sympathy and kindness. The one lasting impression her face left on my memory was that of innocent girlhood, dignified by a womanly tenderness.

What were those two to each other? I could not guess, for they seemed from two utterly different worlds. Not brother and sister surely; and not lovers. The last was unthinkable. Perhaps mere chance acquaintances, who had drifted together since coming aboard. It seems strange that at such a moment my attention should have thus centered on these two, yet I think now that either one would have awakened my interest wherever we had met. Instinctively I disliked the man, aware of an instant antagonism, realizing that he was evil; while his companion came to me as revelation of all that was true and worthy, in a degree I had never known before. I could not banish either from my mind. For months I had been in prison, expecting a death sentence, much of the time passed in solitary confinement, and now, with that cloud lifted, I had come forth into a fresh existence only to be confronted by this man and woman, representing exact opposites. Their peculiarities took immediate possession of a mind entirely unoccupied, nor did I make any effort to

banish them from my thought. From the instant I looked upon these two I felt convinced that, through some strange vagary of fate, we were destined to know more of each other; that our life lines were ordained to touch, and become entangled, somewhere in that mystery of the Western World to which I had been condemned. I cannot analyze this conception, but merely record its presence; the thought took firm possession of me. Under the circumstances I was too far away to overhear conversation. The shuffling of feet, the rattling of chains, the harsh voices of the guard, made it impossible to distinguish any words passing between the two. I could only watch them, quickly assured that I had likewise attracted the girl's attention, and that her gaze occasionally sought mine. Then the guards came to me, and, with my limbs freed of fetters, I was passed down the steep ladder into the semi-darkness between decks, where we were to be confined. The haunting memory of her face accompanied me below, already so clearly defined as to be unforgettable.

It proved a dismal, crowded hole in which we were quartered like so many cattle, it being merely a small space forward, hastily boxed off by rough lumber, the sides and ends built up into tiers of bunks, the only ventilation and light furnished by the open hatch above. The place was clean enough, being newly fitted for the purpose, but was totally devoid of furnishings, the only concession to comfort visible was a handful of fresh straw in each bunk. The men, herded and driven down the ladder, were crowded into the central space, the majority still on their feet, but a few squatting dejectedly on the deck. In the dim twilight of that

bare interior their faces scarcely appeared natural, and they conversed in undertones. Most of the fellows were sober and silent, not a bad lot to my judgment, with only here and there a countenance exhibiting viciousness, or a tongue given to ribaldry. I could remember seeing but few of them before, yet as I observed them more closely now, realized that these were not criminals being punished for crime, but men caught, as I had been, and condemned without fair trial, through the lies of paid informers. I could even read in their actions and words the simple stories of their former lives—the farm laborer, the sailor, the store-keeper, now all on one common level of misfortune and misery—condemned alike to exile, to servitude in a strange land, beyond seas.

The ticket given me called by number for a certain berth, and I sought until I found this, throwing within the small bundle I bore, and then finding a chance to sit down on the deck beneath. The last of the bunch of prisoners dribbled down the ladder, each in turn noisily greeted by those already huddled below. I began to recognize the increasing foulness of air, and to distinguish words of conversation from the groups about me. There was but little profanity but some rough horse-play, and a marked effort to pretend indifference. I could make out gray-beards and mere boys mingling together, and occasionally a man in some semblance of uniform. A few bore wounds, and the clothes of several were in rags; all alike exhibited marks of suffering and hardship. The butcher from Harwich, and the white-faced lad who had marched beside me down the wharf, were not to be seen from where I sat, although beyond

doubt they were somewhere in the crowd. The hatch was not lowered, and gazing up through the square opening, I obtained glimpse of two soldiers on guard, the sunlight glinting on their guns. Almost immediately there was the sound of tramping feet on the deck above, and the creaking of blocks. Then a sudden movement of the hull told all we were under way. This was recognized by a roar of voices.

CHAPTER II

THE PRISON SHIP

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The greater portion of that voyage I would blot entirely from memory if possible. I cannot hope to describe it in any detail—the foul smells, the discomfort, the ceaseless horror of food, the close companionship of men turned into mere animals by suffering and distress, the wearisome days, the black, sleepless nights, the poisonous air, and the brutality of guards. I can never forget these things, for they have scarred my soul, yet surely I need not dwell upon them now, except as they may bear some direct reference to this tale I seek to tell. As such those weeks cannot be wholly ignored, for they form a part of the events to follow—events which might not be clearly understood without their proper picturing.

We were fifty-three days at sea, driven once so far to the southward by a severe storm, which struck us the second day out, as to sight the north coast of Africa before we were able to resume our westward course. To those of us who were tightly shut into those miserable quarters below these facts came only as floating rumors, yet the intense suffering involved was all real enough. For forty-two hours we were battened down in darkness, flung desperately about by every mad plunge of the vessel, stifled by poisoned air and noxious odors, and all that time without a particle of food. If I suffered less than some others it was simply because I was

more accustomed to the sea. I was not nauseated by the motion, nor unduly frightened by the wild pitching of the brig. Lying quietly in my berth, braced to prevent being thrown out, amid a darkness so intense as to seem a weight, every sound from the deck above, every lift of the vessel, brought to my mind a sea message, convincing me of two things—that the *Romping Betsy* was a staunch craft, and well handled. Terrific as the gale became I only grew more confident that she would safely weather it.

Yet God knows it was horrible enough even to lie there and listen, to feel the hurling plunges downward, the dizzy upsweeping of the hull; to hear the cries, groans and prayers of frightened men, unseen and helpless in the darkness, the creaking timbers, the resounding blows of the waves against the sides, the horrid retching of the sick, the snarling, angry voices as the struggling mass was flung back and forth, the curses hurled madly into the darkness. They were no longer men, but infuriated brutes, so steeped in agony and fear as to have lost all human instincts. They snarled and snapped like so many beasts, their voices unrecognizable, the stronger treading the weaker to the deck. I could not see, I could only hear, yet I lay there, staring blindly about, conscious of every horror, and so weak and unnerved as to tremble like a child.

Yet the complete knowledge of what had actually occurred in that frightful hole was only revealed when the violence of the storm finally ceased, and the guards above again lifted the hatch. The gray light of dawn faintly illumined the inferno below, and the sweet breath of morning air swept down among us. Then I saw the haggard,

uplifted faces, the arms tossed aloft, and heard the wild yell as the stronger charged forward struggling for the foot of the ladder. The place was a foul, reeking shambles, so filthy as to be positively sickening, with motionless bodies stretched here and there along the deck. Sailors and guards fought their way down among us, driving back the unarmed wretches who sought to oppose their progress, while others bore to the deck above those who were too helpless to rise. There were five dead among them, and twice as many more who had lost consciousness. These were all removed first and then, feeling helpless to resist the rush, the others were permitted to clamber up the ladder. Surging out upon the deck, we were hurdled against the lee rail, menaced by leveled guns, and thus finally fed, while the filthy quarters below were hastily cleansed.

It was a dark, lowering morning, the desolate sea still threateningly rough, the heavy clouds hanging low. The *Romping Betsy* was hove to, under bare poles, a bit of the jib alone showing, with decks and spars exhibiting evidence of the terrific struggle to keep afloat. I never witnessed wilder pitching on any vessel, but the fresh air brought new life to the wretches about me, and a species of cheerfulness was quickly manifested. Bad as the food was we ate it gladly, nor did the memory of the dead, already laid out on the main deck, long depress us. Why should we mourn for them? We scarcely knew any among them by name, and, facing the uncertainty of our own fate, each man secretly felt that these had possibly found the easier way. Our own misery was now greater than theirs. So we hung on to whatever would help us to keep erect, and ate the food

given us like famished animals. Rough and threatening as the surroundings still were, I was seaman enough to realize that the backbone of the storm had broken, and so rejoiced when the skipper ordered sail set. In a few moments the brig was once again headed on a westerly course, and riding the heavy seas much more steadily.

We were permitted to remain on deck scarcely more than an hour, and during that time only a very few passengers made their appearance aft. Although watching eagerly I perceived no flutter of a skirt in the wind, but the Spanish looking man emerged from below, and clung to the rail for several minutes before we were ordered from deck. He spoke with the Captain, pointing and gesticulating, and the few detached words blown to me on the wind were sufficient to convince me that the fellow knew ships and the sea. I had thought him a mere dandy, but now saw in him harder stuff, even getting close enough to learn that he had visited America before, and possessed knowledge of its shores and currents. Ay, and he spoke English well, with never pause for a word, even to terms of seamanship a bit obscure.

The next few days, while uneventful, sufficed to make our discipline complete, obedience being roughly enforced by blows and oaths. At first a spirit of resistance flamed high, but the truly desperate among us were few, and without leadership, while the majority were already thoroughly cowed by months of imprisonment. Left to themselves the more reckless and criminal were soon obliged to yield to force, so that nothing more serious resulted than loud talk and threats. The hatch above remained open, but carefully guarded night and day, while

we were permitted on deck for air and exercise only in squads of ten, two hours out of every twenty-four. This alone served to break the dread monotony of the voyage, for while we almost constantly encountered baffling head winds, no other storm of any magnitude obstructed our passage. The brig carried heavy canvas, and the skipper loaded her with all she could bear, but at that she was a slow sailor, dipping so deeply in a seaway as to ship considerable water even in quiet weather. From our exercise on deck we generally returned below drenched to the skin, but glad to even pay that price for two hours of fresh air, and an opportunity to gaze about at sea and sky. There was little else to witness, for in all the long voyage we encountered but one vessel in that desolate ocean, a French armed corvette, fairly bristling with guns, which ran in close enough to hail us, but seemed satisfied to permit us to pass unvisited. I clung to the rail and watched its white sails disappear until they resembled the wings of gulls, feeling more than ever conscious of our helplessness. There were few among the prisoners I had any desire to companion with—only two, as I recall now—a law clerk from Sussex, a rather bright young fellow, but full of strange notions, and an older man, who had seen service in Flanders. We messed together, and pledged mutual friendship in the new land, a pledge not destined to be fulfilled, as I never again saw nor heard of the former after we went ashore, and the last glimpse I had of the older man was as he was being loaded into a cart bound for some interior plantation. God grant they both lived, and became again free men.

How those sodden hours and days dragged! How long were those black nights, in which I lay sleepless, listening to indescribable noises, and breathing the rank, poisonous air. The short time passed on deck was my only solace, and yet even there I found little to interest, except a continuous new hope. We were herded well forward, a rope dividing us from the main deck, which space the passengers aft used as a promenade. Here, between the foremast and the cabin, someone was strolling idly about most of the time, or lounging along the rail out of the sun. In time I came to recognize them all by sight, and learned, in one way or another, something of their characteristics, and purpose in taking this voyage. They were not an unusual lot, the majority planters from the Colonies homeward bound, with occasionally a new emigrant about to try for fortune beyond seas, together with one or two naval officers. There were only three women aboard, a fat dowager, the young lady I had noticed at embarkation, and her colored maid. Many of the days were pleasant, with quiet sea and bright sunshine, and the younger woman must have passed hours on deck during so long and tedious a voyage. Yet it chanced I saw almost nothing of her. I heard her presence on board discussed several times by others of our company, but it somehow chanced that during my time in the open she was usually below. Indeed I gained but one glimpse of the lady in the first two weeks at sea, and then only as we were being ordered down to our quarters for the night. Just as I was approaching the hatch to descend, she appeared from within the cabin, accompanied by the middle-aged planter, and the two advanced toward the rail. The younger gallant,

who was standing there alone, saw them the moment they emerged, and hastened forward, bowing low, hat in hand. She barely recognized him, her gaze traveling beyond the fellow toward the disappearing line of prisoners. It was an evening promising storm, with some motion to the sea, and a heavy bank of clouds visible off the port quarter, brightened by flashes of zigzag lightning. The brig rolled dizzily, so the cavalier sought to steady her steps, but she only laughed at the effort, waving him aside, as she moved easily forward. Once with hand on the rail, she ignored his presence entirely, looking first at the threatening cloud, and then permitting her gaze to rest once more upon the line of men descending through the hatch.

It had become my turn to go down, yet in that instant our eyes met fairly, and I instantly knew she saw and recognized me. For a single second our glances clung, as though some mysterious influence held us to each other—then the angry guard struck me with the stock of his piece.

"What er ye standin' thar fer?" he demanded savagely. "Go on down—lively now."

I saw her clasping fingers convulsively grip the rail, and, even at that distance, marked a sudden flame of color in her cheeks. That was all her message to me, yet quite enough. Although we had never spoken, although our names were yet unknown, I was no criminal to her mind, no unrecognized prisoner beneath contempt, but a human being in whom she already felt a personal interest, and to whom she extended thought and sympathy. The blow of the gun-stock bruised my back, yet it was with a smile and a light heart that I descended the ladder, deeply conscious of

a friend on board—one totally unable to serve me, perhaps, yet nevertheless a friend. Even in our isolation, guarded in those narrow quarters, much of the ship gossip managed in some way to reach our ears. How it drifted in was often a mystery, yet there was little going on aboard we failed to hear. Much of it came to us through those detailed to serve food, while guards and sailors were not always averse to being talked with. We always knew the ship's course, and I managed to keep in my mind a very dear idea of how the voyage progressed. Not a great deal of this gossip, however, related to the passengers aft, who kept rather exclusively to themselves, nor did I feel inclined to question those who might have the information. I had no wish to reveal my interest to others, and so continued entirely ignorant of the identity of the young woman. She remained in my memory, in my thoughts nameless, a dream rather than a reality. I did learn quite by accident that the gay gallant was a wealthy Spaniard, supposedly of high birth, by name Sanchez, and at one time in the naval service, and likewise ascertained that the rotund planter, so evidently in the party, was a certain Roger Fairfax, of Saint Mary's in Maryland, homeward bound after a successful sale of his tobacco crop in London. It was during his visit to the great city that he had met Sanchez, and his praise of the Colonies had induced the latter to essay a voyage in his company to America. But strange enough no one so much as mentioned the girl in connection with either man.

Thus it was that the *Romping Betsy* drove steadily on her way into the west, either battered by storm, or idly drifting in calm, while life on board became a tiresome routine. The

dullness and ill treatment led to trouble below, to dissatisfaction and angry outbreaks of temper. The prisoners grew quarrelsome among themselves, and mutinous toward their guards. I took no part in these affairs, which at one time became serious. Two men were shot dead, and twice afterwards bodies were carried up the ladder at dawn, and silently consigned to the sea. No doubt these tales, more or less exaggerated, traveled aft, and reached the eager ears of the passengers. They began to fear us, and consequently I noticed when on deck the promenade once so popular during the earlier days of the voyage, was almost totally deserted during our hours of recreation. So, with mutiny forward, and fear aft, the lumbering old brig, full of tragedy and hopeless hearts, ploughed steadily onward toward the sunset.

CHAPTER III

DOROTHY FAIRFAX

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We were not far from two hundred miles east of the Capes, or at least so one of the mates told me, gruffly answering a question, and it was already growing twilight, the sun having disappeared a half hour before. There was but little air stirring, barely enough to keep the sails taut, while the swell of the sea was sufficient to be uncomfortable, making walking on the deck a task. We were wallowing along amid a waste of waters, the white-crested waves extending in every direction to the far horizons, which were already purpling with the approach of night. I had been closely confined to my bunk for two days with illness, but now, somewhat stronger, had been ordered on deck by the surgeon. The last batch of prisoners, after their short hour of recreation, had been returned to the quarters below, but I was permitted to remain alone undisturbed. I sat there quietly, perched on a coil of rope, with head just high enough to permit an unobstructed view over the side.

The deck aft was almost deserted, the passengers being at supper in the cabin. I could glimpse them through the unshaded windows, seated about a long table, while occasionally the sound of their voices reached me through the open companion-way. The mate was alone on the poop, tramping steadily back and forth, his glance wandering from the sea alongside to the flapping canvas above, but

remained silent, as the brig was on her course. Once he clambered down the side ladder, and walked forward, shouting out some order to a group of sailors under the lee of the forecastle. It was on his return that I ventured to question him, and was gruffly answered. Something I said however, gave him knowledge that I was a seaman, and he paused a moment more civilly before resuming his watch, even pointing out what resembled the gleam of a distant sail far away on our starboard quarter. This was such a dim speck against the darkening horizon that I stood up to see better, shadowing my eyes, and forgetful of all else in aroused interest. Undoubtedly it was a sail, although appearing no larger than a gull's wing, and my imagination took me in spirit across the leagues of water. I was still standing there absorbed, unaware even that the mate had departed, when a voice, soft-spoken and feminine, broke the silence.

"May I speak with you?"

I turned instantly, so thoroughly surprised, my voice faltered as I gazed into the upturned face of the questioner. She stood directly beside me, with only the rope barrier stretched between us, her head uncovered, the contour of her face softened by the twilight. Instantly my cap was off, and I was bowing courteously.

"Most certainly," with a quick side glance toward the guard, "but I am a prisoner."

"Of course I know that," in smiling confidence. "Only you see I am rather a privileged character on board. No one expects me to obey rules. Still that does not apply to you,

does it?" hesitating slightly. "Perhaps you may be punished if you talk with me—is that what you meant?"

"I am more than willing to assume the risk. Punishment is no new experience to me; besides just now I am on sick leave, and privileged. That accounts for my being still on deck."

"And I chanced to find you here alone. You have been ill?"

"Not seriously, but confined to the berth for a couple of days. And now the doctor prescribes fresh air. This meeting with you, I imagine, may prove even of greater benefit than that."

"With me? Oh, you mean as a relief from loneliness."

"Partly—yes. The voyage has certainly proven lonely enough. I have made few friends forward, and am even bold enough to say that I have longed for a word with you ever since I first saw you aboard."

"Why especially with me?"

"Rather a hard question to answer at the very beginning," I smiled back at her. "Yet not so difficult as the one I shall ask you. Except for a fat matron, and a colored maid, you chance to be the only woman on board. Can you consider it unnatural that I should feel an interest? On the other hand I am only one of fifty prisoners, scarcely cleaner or more reputable looking than any of my mates. Yet surely you have not sought speech with these others?"

"No."

"Then why especially with me?" Even in the growing dusk I could mark a red flush mount into the clear cheeks at this insistent question, and for an instant her eyes wavered. But

she possessed the courage of pride, and her hesitancy was short.

"You imagine I cannot answer; indeed that I have no worthy reason," she exclaimed. "Oh, but I have; I know who you are; my uncle pointed you out to me."

"Your uncle—the planter in the gray coat?"

"Yes; I am traveling home with him to Maryland. I am Dorothy Fairfax."

"But even with that explanation I scarcely understand," I insisted rather stubbornly. "You say he pointed me out to you. Really I was not aware that I was a distinguished character of any kind. How did he happen to know me?"

"Because he was present at your trial before Lord Jeffries. He merely chanced to be there when you were first brought up, but became interested in the case, and so returned to hear you sentenced. You are Geoffry Carlyle, in command of the ship that brought Monmouth to England. I heard it all."

"All? What else, pray?"

Her eyes opened widely in sudden surprise and she clasped and unclasped her hands nervously.

"Do you really not know? Have you never been told what happened?"

"Only that I was roughly forbidden to speak, called every foul name the learned Judge could think of, and then sentenced to twenty years penal servitude beyond seas," I answered soberly. "Following that I was dragged from the dock, and flung into a cell. Was there anything else?"

"Why you should have known. Lord Jeffries sentenced you to death; the decree was signed, to be executed immediately. Then influence was brought to bear—some