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Miles Wallingford

MILES WALLINGFORD:

Sequel

to

AFLOAT AND ASHORE.

BY J. FENIMORE COOPER.

NY. 1898.

COMPLETE IN ONE VOLUME

NEW EDITION.

NEW YORK:
STRINGER AND TOWNSEND.

1856

MILES WALLINGFORD.

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PREFACE.

THE conclusion of this tale requires but little preface. Many persons may think that there is too much of an old man's despondency in a few of the opinions of this portion of the work; but, after sixty, it is seldom we view the things of this world *en beau*. There are certain political allusions, very few in number, but pretty strong in language, that the signs of the times fully justify, in the editor's judgment; though he does not profess to give his own sentiments in this work, so much as those of the subject of the narrative himself. "The anti-rent combination," for instance, will prove, according to the editor's conjectures, to be one of two things in this community—the commencement of a dire revolution, or the commencement of a return to the sounder notions and juster principles that prevailed among us thirty years since, than certainly prevail to-day. There is one favourable symptom discoverable in the deep-seated disease that pervades the social system: men

dare, and do, deal more honestly and frankly with the condition of society in this country, than was done a few years since. This right, one that ought to be most dear to every freeman, has been recovered only by painful sacrifices and a stern resolution; but recovered it has been, in some measure; and, were the pens of the country true to their owners' privileges, we should soon come to a just view of the sacred nature of private character, as well as the target-like vulnerability of public follies and public vice. It is certain that, for a series of dangerous years, notions just the reverse of this have prevailed among us, gradually rendering the American press equally the vehicle of the most atrocious personal calumny, and the most flatulent national self-adulation. It is under such a state of things that the few evils alluded to in this work have had their rise. Bodies of men, however ignorant or small, have come to consider themselves as integral portions of a community that never errs, and, consequently, entitled to esteem themselves infallible. When in debt, they have fancied it political liberty to pay their debts by the strong hand; a very easy transition for those who believe themselves able to effect all their objects. The disease has already passed out of New York into Pennsylvania; it will spread, like any other epidemic, throughout the country; and there will soon be a severe struggle among us, between the knave and the honest man. Let the class of the latter look to

it. It is to be hoped it is still sufficiently powerful to conquer.

These few remarks are made in explanation of certain opinions of Mr. Wallingford, that have been extorted from him by the events of the day, as he was preparing this work for the press; remarks that might seem out of place, were it not a part of his original plan, which contemplated enlarging far more than he has, indeed, on some of the prominent peculiarities of the state of society in which he has passed the greater part of his days.

It is to be hoped that this little book will be found useful to some extent.

London, 1881.

The author has endeavoured to make this book as simple and as plain as possible, and to give a full and complete account of the subject, in the fewest possible words. It is intended for the use of students, and of those who are desirous of acquiring a general knowledge of the subject. The author has endeavoured to give a full and complete account of the subject, in the fewest possible words. It is intended for the use of students, and of those who are desirous of acquiring a general knowledge of the subject. The author has endeavoured to give a full and complete account of the subject, in the fewest possible words. It is intended for the use of students, and of those who are desirous of acquiring a general knowledge of the subject.

MILES WALLINGFORD.

CHAPTER I.

—“But I’ll not chide thee;
 Let shame come when it will, I do not call it;
 I do not bid the thunder-bearer shoot,
 Nor tell tales of thee to high-judging Jove;
 Mend when thou canst——”

Lear.

It is almost as impossible to describe minutely what occurred on the boat’s reaching the Wallingford, as to describe all the terrific incidents of the struggle between Drewett and myself in the water. I had sufficient perception, however, to see, as I was assisted on board by Mr. Hardinge and Neb, that Lucy was not on deck. She had probably gone to join Grace, with a view to be in readiness for meeting the dire intelligence that was expected. I afterwards learned that she was long on her knees in the after-cabin, engaged in that convulsive prayer which is apt to accompany sudden and extreme distress in those who appeal to God in their agony.

During the brief moments, and they were but mere particles of time, if one can use such an expression, in which my senses could catch anything beyond the horrid scene in which I was so closely engaged, I had heard shrill screams from the lungs of Chloe; but Lucy’s voice had not mingled in the outcry. Even now, as we were raised, or aided, to the deck, the former stood, with her face glistening with tears, half convulsed with terror and half expanding with delight, uncertain whether to laugh or to weep, looking first at her master and then at her own admirer, until her feelings found a vent in the old exclamation of “*der feller!*”

It was fortunate for Andrew Drewett that a man of Post's experience and steadiness was with us. No sooner was the seemingly lifeless body on board, than Mr. Hardinge ordered the water-cask to be got out; and he and Marble would have soon been rolling the poor fellow with all their might, or holding him up by the heels, under the notion that the water he had swallowed must be got out of him, before he could again breathe; but the authority of one so high in the profession soon put a stop to this. Drewett's wet clothes were immediately removed, blankets were warmed at the galley, and the most judicious means were resorted to, in order to restore the circulation. The physician soon detected signs of life, and, ordering all but one or two assistants to leave the spot, in ten minutes Drewett was placed in a warm bed, and might be considered out of danger.

The terrific scene enacted so directly before his eyes, produced an effect on the *Albony* man, who consented to haul aft his main-sheet, lower his studding-sail and top-sail, come by the wind, stand across to the Wallingford, heave-to, and lower a boat. This occurred just as Drewett was taken below; and, a minute later, old Mrs. Drewett and her two daughters, Helen and Caroline, were brought alongside of us. The fears of these tender relatives were allayed by my report; for, by this time, I could both talk and walk; and Post raised no objection to their being permitted to go below. I seized that opportunity to jump down into the sloop's hold, where Neb brought me some dry clothes; and I was soon in a warm, delightful glow, that contributed in no small degree to my comfort. So desperate had been my struggles, however, that it took a good night's rest completely to restore the tone of my nerves and all my strength. My arrangements were barely completed, when I was summoned to the cabin.

Grace met me with extended arms. She wept on my bosom for many minutes. She was dreadfully agitated as it was; though happily she knew nothing of the cause of Chloe's screams, and of the confusion on deck, until I was known to be safe. Then Lucy communicated all the facts to her in as considerate a manner as her own kind and gentle nature could dictate. I was sent for, as just stated, and caressed like any other precious thing that its owner had

supposed itself about to lose. We were still in an agitated state, when Mr. Hardinge appeared at the door of the cabin, with a prayer-book in his hand. He demanded our attention, all kneeling in both cabins, while the good, simple-minded old man read some of the collects, the Lord's Prayer, and concluded with the thanksgiving for "a safe return from sea"! He would have given us the marriage ceremony itself, before he would have gone out of the prayer-book for any united worship whatever.

It was impossible not to smile at this last act of pious simplicity, while it was equally impossible not to be touched with such an evidence of sincere devotion. The offering had a soothing influence on all our feelings, and most especially on those of the excited females. As I came out into the main-cabin, after this act of devotion, the excellent divine took me in his arms, kissed me just as he had been used to do when a boy, and blessed me aloud. I confess I was obliged to rush on deck to conceal my emotion.

In a few minutes I became sufficiently composed to order sail made on our course, when we followed the Orpheus up the river, soon passing her, and taking care to give her a wide berth; a precaution I long regretted not having used at first. As Mrs. Drewett and her two daughters refused to quit Andrew, we had the whole family added to our party, as it might be, per force. I confess to having been sufficiently selfish to complain a little, to myself only, however, at always finding these people in my way, during the brief intervals I now enjoyed of being near Lucy. As there was no help, after seeing all the canvass spread, I took a seat in one of the chairs that stood on the main-deck, and began, for the first time, coolly to ponder on all that had just passed. While thus occupied, Marble drew a chair to my side, gave me a cordial squeeze of the hand, and began to converse. At this moment, neatly tricked out in dry clothes, stood Neb on the fore-castle, with his arms folded, sailor-fashion, as calm as if he had never felt the wind blow; occasionally giving in, however, under the influence of Chloe's smiles and unsophisticated admiration. In these moments of weakness the black would bow his head, give vent to a short laugh, when, suddenly recovering himself, he would endeavour to

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