

In Sheep's Clothing.



CHAPTER I.
ALL AT SEA.

"A sail on the larboard bow!" shouted the lookout, clinging to the fore-gallant stays of the armed cruiser Sea Hawk.

"Can you make her out?" called up Captain Ralph Denham, a tall, well-built, handsome young man, in the undress naval uniform peculiar to Colonial officers in the service of England. This was in the year 1696, when the ties between the motherland and the American Colonies were strong; outside foes were to unite for mutual protection, and causing them to overlook the differences that were yet to rend them asunder.

In reply to the Captain's question, "Can you make her out?" the lookout took a longer and more careful view of the strange craft that had attracted his attention; then he called out:

"She lies low down, sir. Seems to have rakish masts, and is heading towards Montauk."

As the reader knows, Montauk is the extreme southeastern peninsula of Long Island, where the cliffs rise boldly up from the sea, and where, even at this early date, fires were kept burning at night for the guidance of ships sailing into the Sound, or seeking from Atlantic storms the protection of the Great Bay to the north.

Captain Denham turned to the sailor who stood yarning according near, and in a voice in which authority and courtesy were blended said:

"Lieutenant Dayton, take a glass, go aloft, and see if you can make out the stranger."

"Aye, aye, sir!" replied the handsome youth, and taking a telescope from the stand at the head of the companion-way, he sprang into the mizzen-mast shrouds and went up easily and swiftly till he stood on the topgallant yard, with one arm thrown lightly around the stay.

There was a soft, warm breeze blowing from the south. It scarcely ruffled the surface of the sea, but it filled the upper sails of the tapering masts, causing the stately vessel to glide with a wonderfully graceful motion, as if propelled by some invisible power.

"Well, Dayton," called up the Captain, who was now standing impatiently by the man at the wheel; "what is she?" "A war ship, sir," replied the young officer.

"Her flag?"

"She flies none. Every stitch of canvas is spread, and she comes from the south."

"And is making for Montauk?"

"Yes, sir."

"That is very strange," muttered the Captain.

He took a turn on the quarter-deck, then picking up a telescope he looked in the direction of the stranger, now visible to the unaided eye as a white speck on the far-off horizon, where the blue sky and the blue ocean met.

After an eager survey of some minutes the Captain called out to Lieutenant Dayton again:

"Did you ever see the Adventure Galley?"

"Yes, sir," was the response.

"Where?"

"In New York." The Lieutenant looked again at the stranger and added, with some excitement: "And that is the Adventure Galley or her ghost."

"All right, Mr. Dayton," said the Captain. "Come down."

The young officer descended with a speed that to a landsman would have seemed downright recklessness.

But there were no landsmen on the Sea Hawk.

Her crew, one hundred and thirty in number, were all in the prime of life. Stalwart, bearded and bronzed, yet neat in their attire as if ready for inspection.

The uniformity of their dress would have told the stranger that they were not mere sailors. But even the unpracticed eye could see this was not a merchant ship.

Every pin was polished; every brass article shone like a mirror; every rope was taut and in place. The decks were as clean and white as a good housewife's kitchen floor, and such parts as were painted, looked as if they had just been under the brush.

About the masts, in well-oiled racks, were boarding pikes ranged ready to hand, and beneath them, with grappling hooks attached, were neatly coiled ropes.

On either side there were ten port holes, through which—now that the ports were open—twenty great guns looked out.

Buoyed formidable weapons were carried by a long brass swivel gun a deck high, which would have been a particular pet of the sailors for its exposed surface shone like a mass of gold.

Briefly, the Sea Hawk was a cruiser, fitted out under the directions of Colonel Richard Livingstone—then in command of the New York Colonial fleet—and intended to destroy the pirates, who at that time were plundering the neighboring seas, and even making marauding expeditions into the peaceful bays and harbors on the coast.

Two years prior to the date of our story, Colonel Livingstone had commissioned Captain William Kidd to protect the commerce of the Colonies from piracy, but as that gentleman sailed away and was never seen again, the general belief was that Captain William Kidd had gone to the bottom in some storm, or, still more sad, may have fallen a victim to his pirates who were sent out to suppress.

One thing was certain, the depredations on the seas still continued, and, as a consequence, the Sea Hawk was fitted out and placed under the command of the gallant young sailor, Captain Ralph Denham, of Sag Harbor, Long Island.

At that time New York was comparatively of much less commercial importance than at present, and the bays of eastern Long Island were more frequently visited by ships than the beautiful harbor into which the Hudson empties.

The Sea Hawk was now on her return from a cruise to the West Indies; and as the decked and best of the crew were from what are still called "The Islands" on Long Island, they had with delight the first glimpse of the bold blue headland of Montauk, that told them they were near the loved ones and the delightful land of their birth.

Under Captain Denham's directions, the Colonial flag of New York was run up to the foremast head, and from the mizzen gaff the royal ensign of England fluttered in the breeze.

By this time the strange ship—head-

ing and her going. And though she often set the idle tongues of the gossips to wagging at what they considered her mad freaks, she was beloved for her nobility of heart as much as she was admired for the rare beauty of her person.

It might be added that Lea Hedges—thanks to the teaching of her father, who was thought to be a prodigy of learning, was thought to be a young lady of phenomenal acquirements, but at that time education was not considered essential to the gentler sex, there being a very general impression that "schooling" tended to give women airs undulating the subordinate place Heaven intended them to occupy.

The moment the Sea Hawk was sighted, the men in and about Sag Harbor forsook their work; the women sped out of their houses, and the children stopped their games and ran down to the white shore.

While the anchors were being dropped, the old sexton rang the bell on the white steeple, and over every building of importance a flag was raised to show the joy of the villagers.

A flag of pure silk was run up from the steeple in front of Squire Condit's manor, the old gentleman performing the work with his own hands.

"And she isn't ashamed of them, my boy, any more than we are. See; there goes the Union Jack to the peak. Ah, I feel easier to know she is a friend," said Mr. Hedges.

"If she were a fool she would hoist a black flag," responded Capt. Denham, with a light laugh, "and she would prefer to flaunt it in the face of a fat merchantman rather than in the peak of the Sea Hawk."

The men not on duty eagerly watched the stately stranger, and they saw in her what delighted the sailor's heart more than the most exquisite form can be the eye of an artist.

To make amends for his tardiness in showing his colors, the stranger, by way of salute, dipped his flag three times, and the Sea Hawk speedily responded to the courtesy.

It is customary for ships at sea to learn each other's names, the ports from which they sailed and their destinations, by means of flags used as signals, but as the headland of Montauk loomed up from the sea, and both ships were making for its eastern extremity, with the chances of their soon anchoring side by side, this formality was dispensed with.

The sun was setting as both ships, now not a half a mile apart, headed down the bay.

The wind was barely sufficient to force them through the mirror-like water at a four knot speed.

The scenes on either hand were inexpressibly beautiful and attractive.

The islands, rising in dark emerald masses from the lighter green of the Sound; the shores, wooded down to the water's edge; and the forests crowned hills mirrored in the placid expanse were of indescribable loveliness.

Over the forests the blue lines of smoke marked the peaceful settlements. Here and there a white house could be seen near the shore, with a rose or chard in the background, for the season was spring, the last week of May, when Nature in our zone is in her loveliest attire.

Now did the two stately ships, with their clouds of snowy sail, alone add animation to the bay.

Photographing Flying Bullets.

An English photographic journal has an interesting account of the manner in which photographs have been obtained of rifle bullets traveling at the rate of two thousand feet in a second. The source of illumination was the electric spark such as that given by the discharge of a Leyden jar. The camera and lens were dispensed with, and the gelatine plate impressed direct with the shadow of the missile as it traversed the intervening space between the plate and the light source. One problem was the discovery of the best means of causing the bullet to turn on the electricity for its own portraiture. At first two copper wires were placed in the path of the projectile, the notion being that the bullet itself would make the necessary metallic bridge between them. But the wires were shot away without doing what was expected of them.

Now were the smaller crafts of the white settlers.

Like outspanning graceful yachts these small boats, with their bows rising out of the water of the bay, and as they neared the ships the crews waved their hats and exchanged cheery salutations of welcome and thanks.

At length Shelter Island was passed, and the Sea Hawk and the stranger, which had no name visible on stern or bow, cast anchor a few hundred yards apart.

CHAPTER II. ON SHORE.

Away from Long Island the charming town of Sag Harbor but little known to-day; yet at the time of which we write it aspired to rival New York, was spring, the last week of May, when Nature in our zone is in her loveliest attire.

Its schools and churches had a local celebrity, and its sailors were accounted the most skillful and daring on all the coast.

The residence of the leading man—though in a community where all were ambitious and of a descent equally good, each thought himself a leading man—was just outside the village.

Squire Condit's home was certainly more pretentious than any other building within miles and miles.

It was a cluster of low buildings all joined by covered passage ways. The first log hut built on the site with an outer blockhouse pierced for muskets was now used as a kitchen. The next building was a one-story frame, with a roof and gable gables, and to this structure additions were made to suit the various tastes of the proprietors.

Squire Condit was a rich man. He had lighted acres of hundred of productive acres; he owned four white ships, and was interested in half the vessels sailing on the Sound. He was a justice of the peace, a deacon in the church, and altogether a prosperous and most important personage.

Squire Condit's family consisted of wife then aged forty-five, and fifteen years his junior, and a daughter, Ellen, aged nineteen, a beautiful, well-educated girl, who was the toast of every gallant in the colony to whom wealth in a bride would not be an insufferable objection.

Perhaps Captain Ralph Denham might be considered a member of Squire Condit's family, for though not related by blood he was a son by adoption.

There had been a great deal of mystery about this same Ralph Denham; we say "there had been" for now that Ralph was a man of twenty-six and well known and beloved, the fact that he appeared as a child in charge of a foreign-looking stranger who abandoned him was forgotten, or if alluded to by some old dame it was only to show that genealogy was not always essential to success.

The old squire loved the boy as though he had been his own son, and he educated him to the best of his by no means limited ability—though there were gossips who hinted that Ralph's guardian got money for his support from people beyond the sea.

Between Squire Condit's residence and the village was the fine old home of Doctor Hedges, the brother of the first officer of the Sea Hawk, and the uncle of Valentine Dayton, the second officer of the same ship.

It was often mentioned as something remarkable that Doctor Hedges and Squire Condit, two of the richest men on the island, and certainly among its foremost citizens, should each have only one daughter.

Lea Hedges was a great beauty, and some of the old maid ladies who professed to be very often shocked at the girl's dashing ways, thought it was the greatest of pities that Lea Hedges was not a boy.

She could handle a boat or manage a horse as well as any man on the island. She was thoroughly fearless in her com-

ing and her going. And though she often set the idle tongues of the gossips to wagging at what they considered her mad freaks, she was beloved for her nobility of heart as much as she was admired for the rare beauty of her person.

It might be added that Lea Hedges—thanks to the teaching of her father, who was thought to be a prodigy of learning, was thought to be a young lady of phenomenal acquirements, but at that time education was not considered essential to the gentler sex, there being a very general impression that "schooling" tended to give women airs undulating the subordinate place Heaven intended them to occupy.

The open ports showed fifteen guns on a side, and by the aid of glasses her decks could be seen to swarm with armed men.

"That ship is a stranger in these parts," said Captain Denham, addressing Mr. Hedges, the first officer.

Mr. Hedges was a middle-aged, slow-spoken man, with a bright blue eye and a sturdy figure, such as we always associate with the model sailor.

"She looks to be a stranger," said the first officer, with the judicial deliberation that distinguished all his sayings, "and if she were a fool, I must confess that she'd be about as ugly a customer to take as ever came into the peak of the Sea Hawk."

The moment the Sea Hawk was sighted, the men in and about Sag Harbor forsook their work; the women sped out of their houses, and the children stopped their games and ran down to the white shore.

While the anchors were being dropped, the old sexton rang the bell on the white steeple, and over every building of importance a flag was raised to show the joy of the villagers.

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