

NAUGHTY ALICE.

The old days of smuggling went out with protection, and the once capital of fence has diminished into one of comparatively little importance. But it was not so in our grandfathers' days, and in many a sea-coast town, and by many a fisherman's fireside, tales are told of deadly encounters, daring deeds, and crafty schemes in which the old Free-traders, as they were called, and the Custom-house officers, were the chief actors.

"Let her come," replied the young man with a smile; "we're ready for her." "Why, I'm not sure of that; there's that old black Jarvis looking about, and I believe when that fellow was rigged they mounted eyes all round him. Never mind; if he's got many eyes as a seventy-four has teeth, we can close all his port-holes," said Barker, confidently. "You're a fine fellow, Jack; but I'm afraid you're on the wrong tack there."

"Well, well, give her a fair breeze, and I'll shake out her mainsail," was the confident reply. "When d'ye think she'll bring to?" "Some time to night; but there's such a moon that we might as well expect to run the stuff by candlelight!" "Bear a hand with the supper, Mary," said Barker, "as we must be at hands on deck by the second watch; and while Mary is serving out the mess, you come home with me, Alice, and hang out the red pennant. You won't be five minutes rigging, and we shall be back in time."

The old man only smiled as the lovers left the cottage, and his daughter hastened to the supper, and accordingly Mary moved briskly about the apartment making the necessary preparation. In a short time a roguish sparkle in the eye of the old man, and a quiet humor in that of her companion which did not fail to awaken the curiosity of the young hostess. A significant glance from Alice toward the father of her betrothed succeeded in suppressing the question which was rising to her lips, and in almost silence they partook of the simple but substantial fare which was spread on the cottage table.

During the meal Mary, with true feminine quickness, did not fail to remark that she had never seen her friend had been, she had nevertheless found time to rearrange the long, bright curls which clustered round her forehead, and to put them in order. As soon as the supper was over, and the men rose and left the cottage, Barker, as he did so, giving a significant glance from Alice toward the father of her betrothed, said, "I could not invite him to my own house, for as I have no one with me but my sick mother, who can not come out of her room, it would not have been womanly; particularly as he is a lover."

"A lover, Alice?" "Yes, Mary," said the girl, looking down, and blushing, "the truth must be told, no other than Mr. John Jarvis. He is a King's officer, you know, and it may be the means of saving my father many a bale of goods."

"You mean that King's officer, Alice?" said Mary, in a tone which proved she was to the full as indignant as she was surprised; "you never would believe so ill to John Barker?" "Well, Mary," replied her companion, "I'll promise never to bring him here again only don't be angry with me this once."

And so saying to Mary's astonishment, without waiting for a reply, she opened the door in the rear of the house, and after looking for a moment or two, closed the door after her, and sat down beside the fire. In less than half an hour a knock at the door announced the arrival of Jarvis, and Alice uttered a "Come in!" in her most courteous tones; he entered with a smiler of self-gratulation on his lips, and turned his black-luster eyes on Alice; in sooth, however quick their eyes might be in discovering a smuggler, it was evident they were not brilliant enough to witness the heart of a woman so young, elderly, and with red woolen night cap and top-boots; conscious of his importance as a King's officer, and no whit modest on the subject of his personal attractions, he looked at her with amazement at the half-kind, half-coquetish manner in which her hitherto prudent friend and companion at once encouraged and repelled the advances of the ensnared revenue officer. Now she saw a bluish glare on her brow, and now a smile, half-joyous, half-mischievous, settle on her lips. "Prize day, come to go; and in truth, Mary thought it was time for her to get away, and she was more than getting very late, and she heartily wished the corrupt suppressor of contraband to get home; but to her amazement and positive displeasure, he pressed him to stay "a little—only a little longer," so earnestly and so tenderly, that Alice had been much less of a lover than he really was had he not complied.

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