

**WILLIAM HENRY
GILES KINGSTON**

**THE PRIME
MINISTER**



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

W.H.G. Kingston

"The Prime Minister"

Volume One—Chapter One.

Volume One—Chapter Two.

Volume One—Chapter Three.

Volume One—Chapter Four.

Volume One—Chapter Five.

Volume One—Chapter Six.

Volume One—Chapter Seven.

Volume One—Chapter Eight.

Volume One—Chapter Nine.

Volume One—Chapter Ten.

Volume One—Chapter Eleven.

Volume One—Chapter Twelve.

Volume Two—Chapter One.

Volume Two—Chapter Two.

Volume Two—Chapter Three.

Volume Two—Chapter Four.

Volume Two—Chapter Five.

Volume Two—Chapter Six.

Volume Two—Chapter Seven.

Volume Two—Chapter Eight.

Volume Two—Chapter Nine.

Volume Two—Chapter Ten.

Volume Two—Chapter Eleven.

Volume Two—Chapter Twelve.

[Volume Two—Chapter Thirteen.](#)

[Volume Two—Chapter Fourteen.](#)

[Volume Two—Chapter Fifteen.](#)

[Volume Two—Chapter Sixteen.](#)

[Volume Two—Chapter Seventeen.](#)

[Volume Two—Chapter Eighteen.](#)

[Volume Two—Chapter Nineteen.](#)

[Volume Two—Chapter Twenty.](#)

[Volume Two—Chapter Twenty One.](#)

[Volume Three—Chapter One.](#)

[Volume Three—Chapter Two.](#)

[Volume Three—Chapter Three.](#)

[Volume Three—Chapter Four.](#)

[Volume Three—Chapter Five.](#)

[Volume Three—Chapter Six.](#)

[Volume Three—Chapter Seven.](#)

[Volume Three—Chapter Eight.](#)

[Volume Three—Chapter Nine.](#)

[Volume Three—Chapter Ten.](#)

[Volume Three—Chapter Eleven.](#)

[Volume Three—Chapter Twelve.](#)

[Volume Three—Chapter Thirteen.](#)

[Volume Three—Chapter Fourteen.](#)

[Volume Three—Chapter Fifteen.](#)

[Volume Three—Chapter Sixteen.](#)

[Volume Three—Chapter Seventeen.](#)

[Volume Three—Chapter Eighteen.](#)

[Volume Three—Chapter Nineteen.](#)

[Volume Three—Chapter Twenty.](#)

Volume Three—Chapter Twenty One.

Volume Three—Chapter Twenty Two.

W.H.G. Kingston

"The Prime Minister"

[Table of Contents](#)

Having resolved to employ myself, during a prolonged residence in Portugal, in writing some work of fiction on that country, it struck me that the Times of the Marquis of Pombal would afford a good subject, untouched, as it is, by any other author. For a considerable time I delayed commencing my undertaking, almost in despair of finding the necessary materials. I wrote frequently to Lisbon to procure information, and mentioned my purpose to several Portuguese friends, who, at length, put at my disposal all the documents they possess relating to the private history of their families. From them I have composed the following work.

I enjoyed, also, free access to the public Library at Oporto, a magnificent establishment, containing many thousand volumes, in all languages. Nor must I omit to mention the courteous attention I received from Senhor Gandra, the chief Librarian, in aiding me in my search for the works I required. Here I found several valuable volumes, in French and Italian, relating to the administration of the Marquis of Pombal, and the intrigues of the Jesuits; and some, in Portuguese, giving an account of the earthquake.

The Library is established in a large building, formerly the Convent of S. Lazaro, the principal room vying in size and elegance with any of which the first cities in Europe can

boast. There are, also, numerous other apartments, occupying the entire floor of the edifice, now crowded with books, which it will take many years to arrange.

My history commences in the summer of 1755, the year of the great earthquake of Lisbon, some time before which period, the weak, bigoted, and profligate King John the Fifth of Portugal, after allowing his country to sink into a state bordering on ruin, had finished his pernicious reign, and worthless life, being succeeded by his son, Joseph the First.

Though in the character of Joseph there appears to have been, in some respects, but a slight improvement over that of his father, he was certainly less superstitious; while he possessed the valuable quality of appreciating the talents of others, which caused him to select as his adviser, Sebastião Joseph de Carvalho, afterwards created Marquis of Pombal, one of the most energetic men his country has ever produced. Carvalho was now at the head of the administration, and had begun that system of reform, (which ended but with his fall from power,) although he had not then succeeded in gaining that implicit confidence of his sovereign which he afterwards possessed. For the particulars of the history and state of the country antecedent to the time I speak of, I refer my readers to the introduction to the "Memoirs of Pombal," lately published, written by the Secretary to the Marquis of Saldanha, Mr Smith, though in many points I differ from that gentleman in the view he takes of the great Minister's character and actions.

The Marquis of Saldanha is a descendant of Pombal; and his Secretary has naturally been biassed in favour of his

patron's ancestor. The only book he appears to have consulted, besides the documents in the State Paper Office, is that above-mentioned, which I have before me, in Portuguese, though written originally in French, by an admirer of the Minister. Mr Smith's work did not reach me at Oporto, until my own manuscript had been forwarded to England; which circumstance I mention, to exonerate myself from any appearance of ingratitude in speaking thus of a person of whose labours I might be supposed to have taken advantage. When any similarity appears, we have drawn from the same source.

To excuse the barbarous executions of some of the first nobility in Portugal, Mr Smith says, that some of equal cruelty have taken place in France and Germany. To show that the complaints made by the victims of the Minister's iron policy, who crowded the prisons, were unjust, he cites a memoir, in manuscript, written in prison, by the unfortunate Marquis d'Alorna, who, he says, makes querulous complaints of not having his linen changed sufficiently often, though he had frequent intercourse with his family.

I have perused an exact copy of the MS. Mr Smith has seen, if not the identical one. In it, the unhappy Marquis speaks indignantly of the dark, narrow, and damp cell which was his abode in the Junguiera prison for many years, he being scarcely supplied with the common necessaries of life, while the Marchioness was confined in some other equally wretched place, separated from her children, who were distributed in different convents. The husband states that he received one letter from his wife, written with her left hand, she having lost the use of her right side from a rheumatic

complaint, brought on by the dampness of her lodging. A year or so afterwards another reached him, written by holding the pen in her mouth, she having then lost the use of both her hands. This was the sort of free intercourse the Minister allowed, and, it must be remembered, neither were found guilty of any crime. The Marquis mentions the history of many of his fellow-prisoners, several of whom died in prison; and, he states, after some years' confinement, by means of bribes, they were able to obtain some communication with their friends from without. In the body of the work will be found many details from the MSS. I have spoken of.

Mr Smith does not inform his readers, when mentioning the outbreak at Oporto, in consequence of the formation of the obnoxious Wine Company, that not only the wine-sellers rose up in arms, but that the wine-growers, who, it was pretended, were to be benefited, marched into Oporto, and demanded its abolition; nor that, when the troops arrived from Lisbon to quell the revolt, the city was given up to their unbridled license, the chief magistrate and sixteen principal citizens having been executed, while the prisons were crowded with others.

Once established, with its blood-stained charter, a post in the Company was considered one of the most valuable rewards the Minister could bestow for services performed for him, his own immense fortune having been acquired, indirectly, through that very Company. Mr Smith affirms that the wealth to which the Minister's eldest son succeeded was left him by various members of his family; but, as his family were universally known to be poor, such it is difficult to

believe was the case. Mr Beckford, in his Diary in Portugal, laughs at the young Count, for having endeavoured, during the whole course of a morning visit, to persuade him that his father had never attempted to amass a fortune. Pombal, on retiring from office, left the treasury rich; but that is no proof that he had not taken care to supply his own chests by any means which he considered justifiable. One can scarcely wonder at his acting as was so generally the custom.

The aim of these Memoirs of Pombal is to throw a halo of glory over his life and actions, of which he was undeserving. The Minister is compared in them, as he was fond of comparing himself, to Sully. I do not make these observations unjustly to depreciate this work; but that I may not be accused of unfairly portraying a man whose really great qualities I duly appreciate; nor have I described him as performing one action that is not well authenticated. I am not a greater friend to the system of the Jesuits than is Mr Smith; but do not wish to abuse them for the sake of exhibiting the Minister in brighter colours.

Pombal, like Napoleon, was never prevented from doing what he considered necessary to forward his own views either political or private, by any laws, human or divine. His motto was, *Quid volo quid jubeo*.

March, 1845.

Volume One—Chapter One.

[Table of Contents](#)

Joyous and sparkling waves were leaping up from the deep blue expanse of the vast Atlantic, as if to welcome a

gallant vessel, which glided rapidly onward in all the pride of beauty. Her broad spread of white canvass, extended aloft and aloft, shining brightly in the sunbeams; she looked like a graceful swan, a being of life and instinct, floating on the waste of waters, her head turned towards the coast of fair Lusitania; her bourne, from which she was as yet far distant, being the majestic Tagus. A fresh summer breeze filled her swelling sails, now favouring her like friendship in prosperity, but which would, probably, when the sun sank beneath the ocean, fall away, as friends too often do from those whose sun has set in adversity. A broad white flag emblazoned with the arms of Portugal, floating from her peak, and the long pendants which fluttered from her mastheads, showed that she belonged to the royal navy of that country; and, by the number of guns she carried, she appeared to be a well-armed vessel of her class; but the abundance of gilding and bright paint with which she was in every part decorated, betokened her to be intended more for show or pleasure, than for the rough work of actual service. She was a ship very similar to what we now call a corvette, having a single battery of long heavy guns, and a high-raised deck at the aftermost part, on which was placed an armament of small brass pieces and swivel-guns, with a few pieces of the same calibre on her topgallant-forecastle; so that, although her purposes might in general have been peaceful, she was, if properly manoeuvred, fully able to make a stout resistance against any vessel under the class of a large frigate.

Several persons were walking the deck, one of whom, by the air of undisputed authority which sat well upon him, as

he paced the starboard side, was evidently the commander; and near him appeared a young and handsome man in the costume of a civilian; while the rest of the party, who kept respectfully on the opposite side of the ship, were composed of the lieutenants and other officers belonging to her.

The young man had for some time been standing on the break of the poop, leaning over the rail, and eagerly looking out in the direction towards which the ship was bending her course; his thoughts, perhaps, far outstripping his own tardy progress, and rejoicing in the happiness of again meeting parents, kindred, or friends; or it may have been, that some feelings yet more tender occupied his bosom. He was aroused from his reveries, whatever might have been their tenour, by a no very gentle touch on the back; and, turning round, he beheld the captain of the ship. "What, my young friend!" said the latter, in a clear, cheerful tone of voice, "not yet tired of gazing on the dark blue line of the horizon, as if you expected to see the shores of Lusitania leap out of the water by magic, and would fain not miss the first view of our loved home? Well! well! Such is youth, always eager and enthusiastic, fancying itself near its object, though as yet far distant, and, like a young puppy, or a baby, unable to measure distances, till, by constant practice, and by many a fall, it has learned to discover the true situations of objects."

The speaker was a man who had somewhat passed the meridian of life, his hair already turning grey, and his good-natured, well-formed features considerably furrowed and bronzed by exposure to hot climes and stormy weather.

"What, Senhor Pinto, shall we not see the land to-day?" inquired the youth, in a tone of disappointment. "I thought

we were close to it, and have been looking out for it all the morning.”

“So I have observed,” answered the Captain, “but was unwilling to break down unnecessarily all those castles in the air which I saw you so busily occupied in building; however, I must now tell you that, from the thick weather and fogs which have for so many days attended us, we are rather out of our reckoning; and it was early this morning we discovered, by an observation, that we are yet considerably to the northward of our latitude.”

“How tantalising!” returned the youth. “I had hoped that by this hour to-morrow we should have been safely moored in the Tagus.”

“Hope! Ah, ’tis a feeling in which youth may sometimes indulge with advantage, as it oft carries him through difficulties and disappointments, on his first setting out on the voyage of life, which might otherwise have made him turn back into harbour; but it often, too, proves a sad *ignis fatuus*, and, like a false light to the mariner, leads him on to quicksands and rocks, where it leaves him in the lurch. Now, an old sailor like myself is not to be deceived; and it is long since I gave up hoping; consequently, I am never led astray by such false lights. I find the surest way of being contented is, never to expect anything, and I then can never be disappointed, but receive as a Godsend, and be thankful for, each piece of luck that falls in my way. That is what I call philosophy.”

“But, my dear sir!” returned the other, with animation, “you thus stifle one of the most noble, the most glorious principles of our nature, the very mainspring of our actions,

without which we should weakly yield to the first blast of misfortune which assailed us; it supports the lover in his long absence from his mistress, the prisoner in his dungeon, the mother watching o'er her child, the sick man on his bed of suffering: 'twas hope which a kind Heaven bestowed on man when sin and death were introduced into the world, to prevent his sinking into abject dejection. Take all else from me, but teach me not to cease to hope."

"Nay, nay, my dear Don Luis, you misunderstand me; I would not deprive you of that which you so warmly cherish on any account," returned Captain Pinto; "I wish merely to warn you that the object of your hopes may be like one of those beautiful islands we used to hear of, covered with glittering temples and palaces of crystal, but with which no cruiser ever came up, though some have sailed half round the globe, thinking each day they must drop an anchor in one of their tempting harbours. I've seen such sights in my time, but I never altered my course for them, and never intend to do so."

"Ah, you can never, then, have experienced the glowing, eager sensation of hope almost accomplished," exclaimed Don Luis earnestly, "when a few more days or hours will place the longed-for object within your power."

"Pardon me, but I have though," interrupted Captain Pinto; "but that was years ago, and I then found that the picture I had conjured up always far surpassed the reality. You forget that I too was once young, and experienced all the sensations in which you now rejoice; but it is age which has taught me how fallacious they are, and I can no more be deceived by them. Now, I dare say you, in your heart, think

me a sullen old fellow, who delights in conjuring up in the horizon dark clouds, to overcast the bright blue sky under which you bask; but you must remember I am an old seaman, who have spent the best half of a century on the troubled ocean in all seas and climes, and that, like a good master, I would teach you to be prepared for the tempests and rough seas you must encounter, and to avoid the hidden rocks and sandbanks which lie in your course."

"Thanks, thanks, my good sir; I understand your motives," answered Don Luis; "but I confess that I would rather you should not now darken my horizon with either false or real clouds: it is too temptingly bright and beautiful not to wish it so to remain."

"Well, I will give you no more lessons to-day," answered Captain Pinto; "you have had as much as you can bear at one time; for I fear that you are no very apt scholar. But to show you the advantage of not hoping and fretting yourself to death for what there is little chance of obtaining, here am I, upwards of fifty, a hale hearty fellow, though I have only just now got the command of this little toy of a nutshell, with which I am as contented as if I was captain of a line-of-battle ship, and think myself very fortunate to have her; for if that great man Sebastião José de Carvalho had not become one of the King's ministers, I should still have been an humble second lieutenant, and might have continued so to the end of my days. How, indeed, could I expect to rise in times of peace, with no friends at Court, no money to bribe, and though I am noble," the old man drew himself up proudly as he spoke,— "for otherwise I should not presume to be on such intimate terms with you, Senhor Don Luis,—

yet, I am not, I confess, of the Puritano families, who have hitherto monopolised everything, but Carvalho is biassed by no such considerations; he is no friend to the Puritanos; he selects men for their merit alone, and some of that he may, I flatter myself, have discovered in me; at all events, I may boast he knew I would serve my country faithfully."

"Of that I have no doubt, my friend," answered Don Luis, who had been listening to the old officer's long speech with some impatience, which, however, he endeavoured to conceal. "But can you tell me *how* soon we shall reach the Tagus?"

"Ah, there again, ever anxious for the morrow? Ha, ha! there is some greater magnetic attraction drawing your soul towards Lisbon, beyond the mere natural wish of embracing your parents, brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts, a whole host of cousins, and other relations and friends; for people don't mind deferring that pleasure for a few days. Come, come, there is some fair lady in the case. I know it. Confess, confess I have hit it. Donna Theresa d'Alorna, for instance; the beauty of Portugal; the pride of the province; the toast of Lisbon; at whose feet kneel daily all the gay and gallant youths of the country to do homage to her charms? 'Tis said that even the king himself has become captive to her beauty, though that is only whispered; but the lady is scornful, it seems, and treats all alike with cruelty and disdain. There is no calculating the mischief she has committed: half-a-score of duels have been fought about her; one youth drowned himself in the Tagus, but was fished up before he was quite dead, the water having cooled his love; another was going to hang himself, but prudently

informed a venerable aunt of his intention, who prevented him; and a third put a pistol to his head, but the weapon, like his skull, having no contents, he escaped destruction. I do not know what you will do when you have gazed on her charms; but I trust that if she treats you as she has other admirers, you will bring some of your hope into play, and seek a kinder mistress."

While Captain Pinto was speaking, the countenance of the youth alternately betrayed anxiety, fear, and anger; but as no expression had been uttered at which he could possibly cavil, he was obliged to listen in silence to a discourse, every word of which was, to his sensitive feelings, like vinegar poured on a wound. His torturer kept his eye fixed on him all the time, watching each movement of his features as a skilful surgeon feels the pulse of his patient during a painful operation. "Yes, your unconquerable hope will stand you in good stead," he proceeded to say. "And yet the love of Donna Theresa were, by all accounts, a proud thing to boast of—more valued from the difficulty of obtaining it."

"How know you that I love her?" exclaimed Don Luis, suddenly: "I thought that secret hidden within my own bosom."

"Think you that you could have sailed so many days with me, Jozé Pinto, and I not discover the inmost secrets of your soul? Why, every scrap of paper with which the cabin has been strewed, covered with rhymes, has had her name inscribed on it; in your dreams, as you swung in your cot, even during the fiercest gale, you spoke but of her. I have heard it whispered in the calm night breeze which brought

back your sighs, and I'll wager 'tis graven indelibly on every mast of my ship."

"You treat me severely, Captain Pinto," answered Don Luis. "Although I may in my sleep have uttered that name so dear to me, which I have always held sacred, for I will not deny my affection; and though I may have written it on some paper which has escaped from my portfolio, yet I have not converted your masts into shrines sacred to love: they are not honoured by being marked with that name."

"Well, then, I will confess I was but trying you," answered Captain Pinto; "I will acquit you of ever allowing even a scrap of paper with Donna Theresa's name on it to escape from your portfolio, or of ever having uttered it, to my knowledge, in your dreams, for I am not addicted to remaining awake when once I turn into my cot; indeed I knew not the lady of your affections till this minute, when I, by hazard, mentioned her name, and you owned your secret, though I long ago discovered your heart was not as free as I could wish it; but, seriously speaking, my young friend, I would have you think earnestly of what I have said, though my words sounded jokingly, and it may prove a valuable lesson to you. I will not breathe a word against Donna Theresa in particular; but remember numbers surround her, offering up daily incense of sighs and flattery, so that it were madness to confide too much in her constancy, or that of any woman so situated, and two years work great changes in the feelings of all. Come now, try to suppose her heartless and inconstant: 'tis better than being too sanguine; and I should grieve to see your heart breaking through disappointed love."

“To believe her heartless is impossible,” exclaimed Don Luis. “Though, on my word, you seem anxious to shake my confidence in her sex in general.”

“O, no,” answered the Captain, laughing, or rather, it might be said, chuckling: “some are perfect angels—till you know them.”

Don Luis did not answer, though he could scarce avoid being angry with his friend for his preventive cauterisation, although the wound did not smart the less severely for its being well intended; and at that moment some necessary duty of the ship called Captain Pinto from his side, who, as he left him, muttered, “Poor youth, poor youth, if he persist in trusting to the love of such an one as Donna Theresa, he will be sadly disappointed!” Don Luis was left to pursue undisturbed the no very pleasant meditations to which his late conversation had given rise.

That our readers may no longer be in suspense as to whence the ship we have described came, we may inform them that she was a man-of-war, belonging to the crown of Portugal, though fitted up as a yacht; that she was now returning from the shores of England, whither she had conveyed an ambassador from His Most Faithful Majesty to the Court of London, and that the young Don Luis d’Almeida, who had, for some time past, been travelling in that country, after having made the tour of Europe, had taken advantage of the opportunity of returning in her to his native land.

The father of Don Luis, the Conde d’Almeida, was a noble of the purest blood, and one of the most ancient families of Portugal; but their fortune had been much reduced through

the improvidence of some of the latter possessors of the title, their honour preventing them from employing any of those unjust, or at best doubtful means which others of their rank did not scruple to use to increase their wealth, and their pride forbidding them to engage in any mercantile speculations, a prejudice less general in the present day than at that time, and one above which even the Conde d'Almeida could not be expected to rise.

The Count had several brothers, who died childless; the youngest, and by far the most talented, having during the former reign been banished, for some political crime it was said, when the ship which conveyed the young and audacious advocate of civil and religious liberty was, with all her crew, overwhelmed by the waves, "a just punishment, doubtless, for his daring and impiety," observed the pious King John's confessor, when the news was brought home: there was also one sister, who had married the Marquis d'Alorna, and, dying young, left her only child without a mother's fostering care and protection, the lovely Donna Theresa, who had, as we have seen, won the early affections of her cousin, Don Luis.

The Count, a man of an enlightened mind, had devoted himself to the education of his only son, who had imbibed from him all his sentiments of honour and virtue, with the same true pride of ancestry which made him incapable of committing any deed derogatory to the dignity of his lofty birth. Such was the young noble we have introduced to our readers, firm in principle, enthusiastic in temperament, eager in pursuit of his aims, with a candour and want of suspicion in his manner which appeared to arise from

ignorance of the world, but was rather the result of the secluded and strict system of education he had undergone, which had kept him unacquainted with the vices of society till his principles had been formed to guard against them, nor had it prevented him from acquiring a clear insight into the characters of men, when once he began his career amongst them. The plan pursued in his education we deem, in most cases, to be a very dangerous one, when a young mind is plunged unprepared to combat with the follies and vices of the world; but he, fortunately, at once became disgusted with them, and learned to dread their glittering temptations, as the mariner does the light sparkling froth which, on the calm blue sea, plays over the hidden sandbank. In person he was of good height, and well-formed; of the most polished and graceful address; his bright dark eye sparkling with animation, or flashing with anger; his voice of rich and clear melody, so that under no disguise could he have appeared otherwise than a gentleman.

Captain Pinto has already, in a few words, given as much of his own history as we are acquainted with, and though his personal appearance had not the stamp of nobility impressed on it, his features betokened a kind disposition, (for we are great physiognomists,) notwithstanding that he had lately given utterance to some observations which sounded rather sour and morose; but he had spoken with the best intentions, thinking that some advice was necessary to check the too ardent hopes of his young friend, and having his reasons perhaps for supposing he might be

deceived. But it is high time that we should return to our narrative.

The sails were now trimmed to meet a slight variation in the wind, which blew less steadily than in the morning, and that duty being completed, the captain resumed his walk by the side of Don Luis, whose feelings of annoyance had by this time completely subsided; indeed, to his generous disposition, it was impossible to continue angry any length of time, with one who evidently took a warm interest in his welfare. "Now, my young friend," observed the worthy commander, after taking several turns in silence, "you will soon be convinced of the advantage of being prepared for disappointment," at the same time pointing to some small dark clouds rising right ahead from the horizon. "Look at those black heralds of strife and tumult, not of the puny strife of men, but of the majestic rage and fury of the elements. A few minutes ago you were felicitating yourself in the fond anticipations of meeting those dear to you before to-morrow has closed, or at the furthest on the following day, and with the fair fresh breeze and smooth sea we were enjoying, you had every reason for your hopes; and now behold how suddenly they may be blasted; for if an old seaman's prognostications are not false, we shall have before long a stiff gale directly in our teeth, and then, farewell to our friends in Lisbon for a week at the shortest calculation! That is no gentle summer gale brewing away to the south-east. See how quickly the clouds gather, and what a thick heavy bank they form, resting like a high land on the sea."

“I should be ungrateful if I were to grumble at the prospect of remaining a week or so longer under your kind care,” returned Don Luis; “but I confess that I did hope to arrive in a much shorter period at Lisbon.”

“I know you did, I know you did,” said the Captain. “Very natural it was for you to do so; and I should think that, long ere this, you must have become heartily tired of the society of an old fellow like myself,—though I have seen something to talk about in my ramblings through the world.”

Don Luis, with sincerity, protested that he had passed the time on board most agreeably.

“Well, I trust you have not found me wanting in hospitality, at all events,” continued the old officer, “though you have full right to complain of our long voyage; but let me tell you, we have had, for this time of the year, most unusual weather; first, the heavy gales we experienced; then the thick heavy fogs, which hung like funereal palls over the face of the deep; next the smooth sea and sudden favourable breeze, which seems, however, inclined to play us a jade’s trick, and leave us in the lurch; and now those threatening clouds away there to the south-east. That is not the quarter from whence gales generally spring up off this coast; but if those clouds don’t hold a very large capful of wind, I am very much mistaken. During the whole course of my life I never met such unnatural weather, and I don’t like the look of it. Depend on it there’s something strange going to happen, though I would not say so to the crew, or to the women, if we had any on board, and thank Heaven we have not.”

The officer who had charge of the navigation of the ship, who in the English service is called the master, more correctly denominated by the Portuguese the pilot, at that moment came up to the captain, taking off his hat respectfully, as he pointed out the dark clouds in the horizon. "We shall have a gale before long, Senhor Captain," said the veteran, who was a fine specimen of the sailor of times long, alas! passed by in the annals of Portugal, during her palmy days of naval supremacy. "'Twill be a breeze which will make us look sharp after our sticks. Shall we begin to get in some of our light canvass; for I like not the look of the weather. There is a storm out there, muttering ugly threats, from which 'twere wiser to take warning."

"You are right, Senhor Nunez," answered the Captain. "Those are signs of a gale, or we have been to sea for a century between us to very little purpose; but there is no immediate necessity to shorten sail, so we may as well not lose the advantage of the breeze, while it lasts, to make as much way good in our voyage as we can; for we shall probably, before long, be blown far enough from our course to weary us with beating up to our port once more."

"As you think fit, Senhor, but it will be down on us without much further warning," observed the pilot, as he kept his glance towards the south-east.

The officers continued walking the deck, but their conversation was short and disjointed; their eyes constantly glancing round the horizon in search of further signs of the coming storm; yet, notwithstanding the prognostications of the commander and the pilot, the breeze held tolerably steady, only shifting now and then half a point or so, which

required a corresponding attention in trimming sails, so as not to deviate from their course.

“Ah, Captain Pinto,” exclaimed Don Luis, with a smile on his lips, “I trust that this once, at least, my hopes rather than your forebodings may be realised; see, the breeze is still our friend, nor does it seem inclined to desert us, and perhaps, after all our fears, yonder mass may prove but a fog bank, through which we may quickly cleave our way.”

“Still sanguine, and expecting better fortune than will probably fall to our lot? But, although your hopes are bright, I am not to be deceived by any treacherous appearances. Even while you have been speaking the breeze has fallen; look over the side, and observe the ship makes much less way through the water than she did a few minutes ago; and see her wake, for how short a distance does the foamy line extend ere the waves obliterate all signs of it! Mark me, the breeze, like hollow friends, will soon desert us. Ah! said I not true? The words have scarcely passed my lips ere my predictions are fulfilled.”

As he spoke, the sails gave one loud flap against the mast, though they again bulged out as the last effort of the dying breeze once more filled them. In a moment the commander was all life and animation. “In all studding sails, Senhor Alvez,” he shouted to his first lieutenant. “They are like officious friends, and do us more harm than benefit.”

“All hands, shorten sail,” was echoed through the ship, as the sailors sprung with alacrity on deck.

“Be quick, my men, be quick! There’s no time to lose!—Man your downhauls!—Let fly your gear!” shouted the Captain, through his speaking-trumpet; and in a minute the

light, airy canvass, before extended like wings on each side of the larger sails, was taken into the tops, or hauled down on deck. "Hand the royals, Senhor Alvez," cried the commander again. "Furl topgallant-sails, and down with the royal and topgallant-yards!" he quickly added. "We may as well relieve the craft of all top-hamper: she'll dance all the lighter for it."

These orders were quickly accomplished by a ready and active crew, who sprung aloft with all the activity, and somewhat of the chattering, of monkeys; for, in those times, the strict discipline and regularity of the present day were not observed in any service, and silence was not considered a necessary part of duty. Scarcely had the men returned on deck, when they were again ordered aloft, although it had now fallen a complete calm, the vessel rolling on the long smooth swell which seemed to rise without any impelling power, like the breathing of some vast giant in his sleep. The sun, now sinking rapidly in the ocean, still shone with dazzling brightness, from a dark blue sky yet unclouded in that part of the heavens in which his course lay. The sails flapped lazily against the masts, with a dull sound like a distant cannonade, the timbers creaked, and the water splashed, as she slowly rolled from side to side, the bubbles of foam sparkling brightly around the black and shining wales.

"Hand the courses—brail up the mizen!" suddenly shouted the Captain; for in those days the last-mentioned sail was carried,—a large unwieldy latteen-sail, with a long heavy yard, requiring a strong force of the crew to hand, instead of that which we now call a spanker. After much

hauling and labour, the order was accomplished. "Close reef and furl the topsails!" he added; "we will show naked sticks to yonder blast, and may then laugh at its efforts! There is no use running the chance of having our canvass blown out of the bolt-ropes."

In a few minutes the towering pillar of canvass had disappeared; and the ship, under bare poles, rocked like a cradle on the ocean, without advancing an inch in her course; the helm, too, having lost all its guiding power, her head moved slowly about, as if uncertain of its way. The atmosphere, which in the morning had been so brisk and light, became loaded and oppressive to the feelings; but as yet no breath even of the adverse blast was felt. A thick haze was collecting round the disk of the sun, which had now assumed an angry, fiery hue,—its size many times increased from its ordinary appearance; and, as it sank into the ocean, the fierce glowing blaze of the western sky, tinged with its light the borders of the approaching mass of clouds.

"Seldom have I seen the sun set in so hot a passion," observed the Captain to Don Luis. "He does it in kindness, however, to warn us that we shall be wishing for his light again before he can possibly appear to aid us."

Onward came the frowning mass of clouds, with their light, fiery *avant couriers*; and, as the shades of night were fast throwing a dark mantle over the ocean, suddenly, without a moment's warning, a fierce squall struck the ship, turning her head rapidly round, the water hissing and foaming about her bows. For a few moments again all was calm,—the angry breath, which had blown, seeming but

some sudden ebullition of the spirit of the tempest, and to have passed in forgetfulness away. Yet treachery lurked beneath that tranquil air. Down came the blast with no second notice—strong and furious—driving onward before it the light and buoyant corvette. Away she flew over the milk-white ocean, like a sea-bird in search of its finny prey, now dipping her head into the trough of the fast-rising sea, then again ascending, and shaking it, to free herself from the sheets of spray which dashed around her.

“You see, my friend,” said Captain Pinto, touching Don Luis on the arm, “that my forebodings, as you called them, have turned out truer than your hopes. A few hours ago you were looking out ahead for land, and now how things have changed! There lies the land right over the taffrail, or a little on the larboard-quarter; for this gale has come from the south east, and here are we doomed to beat about, like the Flying Dutchman, before our port, without a chance of reaching it. But patience! it is a fine wind for outward-bound ships, and we must be content to be the sufferers.” He then beckoned the pilot to his side. “What say you, Senhor Nunez, shall we heave the ship to? There is no use running away from our course.”

“We may heave to the ship, if we like,” replied the old seaman; “but I much doubt if we have any canvass on board to keep her there: she would bear it if we made sail; though I suspect the wind would soon take it in for us. If I might advise, we will run on before it while it lasts; for I do not think, by the way it came on, it will hold long; and then there will be less risk of damaging the ship.”

“Let it be so, Senhor Nunez,” answered the Captain. “Such, also, is my opinion. A gale like this is not to be played with, if one would keep one’s gear in condition.”

The waves were not as yet running very high, but were short and broken, tossing up their thin foam-covered crests with sudden, quick, and angry jerks, seeming to excite each other to fury as they vied in their maddening leaps. The sky had become of one dark hue, the thick mist flying rapidly over it; and the sea, when perceived under the frothy sheet which covered it, had assumed a cold, leaden colour. It would have been a sad and dreary prospect to the seamen, with their long night-watch before them, had not custom reconciled them to their hard lot, and caused them to be insensible to the dangers they encountered. Everything was made snug on board; and, steady men being placed at the wheel, the captain, followed by Don Luis, retired unconcernedly to his cabin, desiring to be called, if any change took place. Such was the state of affairs, as the almost impenetrable shades of night fell over the face of the ocean, while onward dashed the ship into the dark unknown expanse, like a man plunging, by his own intent, into the unexplored future of another world.

Volume One—Chapter Two.

[Table of Contents](#)

It was yet some hours before dawn. The gale had rather increased than lessened in fury, the corvette, with all her canvass closely furled, was driving impetuously before it, the wind whistled and howled through the rigging; the