

TRAFALGAR

By

Benito Pérez Galdós



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Translated

By

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Benito Pérez Galdós

Benito Pérez Galdós, the greatest literary figure of nineteenth-century Spain and one of the great world novelists, was a native of Las Palmas, Canary Islands, where he was born on May 10, 1843. His first schooling was received in an English institution of the city of his birth, a fact which accounts for his early acquaintance with the English language. He did not enter a Spanish school until the age of thirteen. When nineteen years old, he went to Madrid, where he took up residence and where he began the study of law. However, literature and art had a greater attraction for him and he later renounced his legal studies to devote himself to his preference--letters. In the year 1866 he became a journalist, writing for such prominent periodicals as LA Nacion, El Debate, and El Contemporáneo. His first novelistic effort was La sombra, written in 1866 or 1867 and published in La Revista de España in 1871. This was followed by what is generally regarded as his first novel, "La fontana de oro" (1867-68), a novel of historical and revolutionary character.

In 1873 he began working in earnest upon his Episodios nacionales. He may have conceived the idea of writing the Episodios nacionales before or with Trafalgar, the first novel of his great series. At all events, the enthusiastic reception accorded this youthful effort on its publication in 1873 so encouraged its author that he turned out three more during the same year. The Episodios consist of forty-six

novels grouped in four series of ten novels each, and a fifth and uncompleted series of six novels, ending with Canovas, written in 1912. In these historical novels Galdos took to himself the mission of educating his countrymen in the history of Spain in the nineteenth century, a turbulent period of Spanish history, and one in which his country underwent important changes both physical and spiritual. The first series begins with the battle of Trafalgar and covers the War of Independence, terminating with La batalla de los Arapiles (1875), which has for its principal theme the Capture of Salamanca in July, 1812, by the combined Spanish and English forces. It has been quite well established that Galdos projected further Episodios after the completion of Canovas, the last of the forty-six novels, in 1912; but the affliction of blindness that fell upon him in that year prevented him from making use of the numerous sources that he always employed in the documentation of his historical novels.

While engaged with his Episodios nacionales, Galdos also found time to study the social and intellectual life of Spain. To acquaint himself intimately with Spain and her people he traveled extensively in the Peninsula, visiting and studying every region. The result of this interest was a series of thesis novels dealing with the living social problems of his country and time. With "Dona Perfecta" (1876), "Gloria" (1876-77), and "La familia de Leon Roch" (1879) he attacks religious bigotry and clericalism, which were rife in Spain. The progressive stand taken by these works produced a tremendous effect and won for their author immediate international recognition and fame.

He was made a member of the Spanish Academy in 1897, and was several times elected to the parliament of Spain, where he manifested liberal tendencies in politics. Until 1912 his life was intensively occupied with literary production. In this year he was stricken with complete blindness; but, in spite of this affliction, Galdós worked with the aid of a secretary until his death on January 4, 1920.

CHAPTER I

TRAFALGAR

Before I refer to the great event of which I was a witness, permit me to say a few words about my childhood and to explain the strange way in which Fate led me to be present at the terrible catastrophe of our seacoast.

On speaking of my birth, I shall not imitate the great majority of those, who telling the story of their own lives, begin by naming their parentage, which, they very often say, is noble, or illustrious at least; and sometimes they even admit they are descendants of the emperor of Trebizond himself. In this sense I cannot adorn my book with sonorous family names, and besides my mother whom I knew for only a short time, I do not have any information concerning any of my ancestors except Adam, whose lineage seems unquestionable. I begin my history, then, like Pablos, the buscon of Segovia; fortunately God has wished that we resemble each other only in this one way.

I was born in Cádiz in the famous Vina quarter, which is not today, nor was even then, a training school for fine manners. I cannot remember anything concerning my life before I was six years old; but I remember the date 1797 because I associate it with a naval event, the battle of the Cape of San Vicente, which I heard discussed at that time.

As I look back over the past with the natural curiosity and interest of one who is observing himself, the picture is confusing any hazy. I see myself playing in the cove with other children of

approximately my own age. That was a complete life for me; moreover, it was the normal life of our privileged class; and those who did not live as I seemed to me to be exceptional beings of the human race. In my childish innocence and ignorance of the world, I believed that man had been created for the sea, that Providence had provided swimming as the supreme exercise for his body and had assigned the gathering of shellfish as the constant employment of his spirit. (In this instance Providence combined pleasure and necessity for us, as we sometimes sold them and sometimes kept them for our own enjoyment.)

The society in which I grew up was the rudest, roughest, and vilest that can be imagined. We children were even considered more despicable than those of the Pintales quarter who challenged the elements with industry and courage equal to that of ours. The one band of us used to consider the other as rivals, and sometimes we would weigh our strength in the Puerta de Tierra with great, noisy rock fights which spotted the ground with heroic blood.

When I was old enough to begin to think about my own care and the honest earnings of a few coins, I displayed my mischief on the wharf by introducing to ambassadors the many English, who then as well as now, visited us. The wharf was an Athenian school for plundering; and I was not the least advanced pupil in that vast branch of human knowledge, for I excelled in the marauding of fruit, for which the San Juan de Dios square offered a wide field to our initiative and lofty ventures. But I wish to bring to an end this part of my history, for today I remember with shame such awful debasement, and

I thank God that he soon freed me from it and led me by a more noble road.

Among the impressions that I keep, there is one very fixed in my memory--the enthusiastic pleasure that the warships gave me when they cast anchor at Cadiz or San Fernando. When I saw those fearful, imposing structures so near, I could not satisfy my curiosity, and in my foolish, fantastic way, I imagined they were filled with mysteries.

Anxious to imitate the great things of the adult world, we children used to make our own fleets with rudely carved, little boats to which we attached paper or rag sails, and we manned them with much seriousness and forethought in some pool of the Puntales or Caleta quarters. In order that everything might be complete, when any coin came into our hands by one of our usual industrial routes, we would buy gunpowder at the home of Aunt Coscoja on Torno de Santa María street, and with this ingredient we had a perfect naval celebration. Our fleets rushed forth into an ocean of three rods in width, they fired their reed guns, clashed together, and imitated the bloody boarding of ships, on which imaginary crews were gloriously being demolished. The smoke covered them and hid from view the flags made from the first scrap of color found in the dunghill; and meanwhile on the coast we were joyfully dancing to the thunder of the artillery while we imagined we were the nations to whom those ships belonged. We believed that in the world of men nations would dance in the same way on seeing the victory of their dear fleet. Children see everything in a strange manner.

That was a period of great naval combats, for there was at

least one battle a year and a skirmish each month. I thought that the fleets demolished one another purely and simply for the sake of pleasure or for the object of proving their valor, like two young gallants who make an appointment outside the city gates so as to slash each other with razors. I laugh whenever I recall my foolish ideas in regard to the matters of that period. I used to hear a great deal of talk about Napoleon. And how do you think I pictured him? Well, I thought he was an exact replica of those smugglers from the Gibraltar country who were very frequently seen in the Vina quarter. I imagined him as a gentleman on a horse from Jerez, with his cloak, leggings, felt hat, and blunderbuss. According to my ideas that man, who, followed by other adventurers of similar appearance, and whom everybody painted as an extraordinary personage, was conquering Europe,—that is to say, a great island inside of which were other islands, namely the nations: England, Genoa, London, Gibraltar, India, Russia, Toulon, etc. I had formed this geography as I pleased, according to the most frequent sailing destination of the ships with whose passengers I used to converse. I do not need to add that Spain was the best one of all among these nations or islands, and for this reason the English wanted to snatch it for themselves in the manner of highway robbers. When talking about this and other diplomatic matters, my colleagues of the Caleta and I used to utter a thousand words inspired by the most burning patriotism.

But as I do not wish to tire the reader with details relating to my personal impressions only, I am going to stop talking about

myself. The only human being who compensated for the wretchedness of my existence with an unselfish affection was my mother. The only thing I can remember about her was that she was very beautiful, or, at least, she seemed so to me. From the time she became a widow she supported herself and me by washing and repairing the clothing of some sailors. Her love for me must have been very great. I fell seriously ill with yellow fever which was desolating Andaluca then, and when I recovered she took me to the old cathedral to hear mass; she made me spend more than an hour kneeling on the hard pavement floor; then she placed on the altar-piece, as a votive offering, a little wax boy whom I believed to be my own perfect image.

My mother had a brother, and he was as mean and cruel as she was good. I cannot remember my uncle without feeling a sudden fear; I think, judging from several peculiar incidents that I remember, my uncle must have committed a crime about this time. He was a sailor, and when he landed in Cadiz he would come home drunk as a toper and treat us terribly, calling his sister vile names, and beating me for no reason at all.

My mother must have suffered greatly at the cruelty of her brother, and this treatment, together with her hard, poorly paid work, hastened her death. My memory can scarcely recall this tragedy, but it left an indelible impression on my soul. I remember, as one remembers the dreadful images of a bad dream, that my mother was lying seriously ill with some disease; some women, whose names and positions I do not know, entered the house. I remember hearing sobs

and cries; I felt myself in the arms of my mother, and the touch of her cold, icy hands sent a chill through all my body. I can dimly see some yellow candles, which gave forth an awful light at noonday; I can hear the murmur of prayers, the whispers of some old, gossipy women, and the coarse laughter of a drunken sailor. Then after all these things came the sad realization that I was an orphan, alone, and abandoned in the world; this thought oppressed my poor soul for a long, long time.

I do not know what my uncle did during those sad days. I only know that his cruelty toward me increased so much that I ran away from home to seek my own fortune. I went to San Fernando and from there to Puerta Real. I associated with the most dissolute people of those seacoasts which were abounding with notorious thieves and robbers. I don't know why I stopped with them at Medina-Sidonia, but one day when we were there in a saloon, some marines appeared who were recruiting, and we hurriedly disbanded, each one taking refuge where he could. My good star took me to a certain house whose owners took pity on me,--doubtless because of my tears, my supplications, and the sad story of my life.

That gentleman and his wife took me under their protection, freed me from the danger of being recruited, and I remained in their service. They took me with them to Vejer de la Frontera, the town where they lived, as they were only temporarily in Medina-Sidonia.

My guardian angels were Alonso Gutiérrez de Cisniega, a retired captain of a warship, and his wife; both were advanced in age. They

taught me many things that I did not know, and they treated me with such kindness that in a short time I became Don Alonso's valet. I accompanied him on his daily walk, for he could not move his right arm and only with great difficulty did he move his right leg. I do not know what they found in me to awaken their interest. Doubtless my youth, my orphanage, and the docility with which I obeyed them partly won for me a benevolence for which I have always been profoundly grateful. To these causes of their affection I may add (although perhaps it seems unfitting to do so) that I possessed a certain natural culture and refinement, and after a few years I was able to pass as a wellborn person in spite of my lack of social training.

I had been in their home four years when the event that I am going to tell happened. I hope that the reader will not demand an impossible exactness, for in the decline of my life I am relating events which occurred in my youth; and now I feel the chill of old age as it benumbs the hand that holds the pen, and my weary mind tries to deceive itself as it seeks a transient rejuvenation in the balm of dear, burning memories. Just as some foolish old men try to reawaken their dulled licentiousness by gazing at the pictures of beautiful women, so I shall try to give interest and warmth to the sad musings of my old age by reliving the events of long ago.

And the effect is immediate. How wonderful is the deceptive power of imagination! Like one who reviews the pages of a book read long ago, I gaze back upon the years gone by with curiosity and amazement;—and while I am fascinated by this contemplation, it

seems that a kind spirit comes and relieves me of the weight of the years and lightens the burden of my old age, which is bearing so heavily on my body and soul. This luke-warm and sluggish blood, which today scarcely gives enough life to my frail body, awakens, circulates, rushes, throbs, and boils through my veins. It seems that a great unforeseen light enters my brain and illumines a thousand unknown wonders as the traveler's torch lightens an immense cave and reveals the marvels of geology so suddenly that it appears to create them. At the same time my heart, long dead to great emotions, comes back to life, as if restored like Lazarus, by a divine voice. And this newly awakened heart causes me both joy and grief as it trembles in my bosom.

I am young; time has not fled; I face the important deeds of my youth; I grasp the hands of old friends; the sweet or painful emotions of youth arise again in my soul,--the ardor of triumph, the disappointment of defeat, the great joys and bitter sorrows that one experiences in memory just as in life. But one emotion dominates all the rest, and that one emotion directed always my actions during that disastrous period from 1805 to 1840. Although I am now an old man approaching the grave and consider myself the most useless of men, you still make tears rush to my eyes, blessed love of native land! In return I can dedicate one word to you by cursing the skeptic who denies you and the degenerate philosopher who debases you with one day's interest.

To this sentiment of patriotism I devoted my vigorous manhood, and it shall be the protective spirit and guardian angel of my written

existence just as it was of my actual existence. I am going to tell many things: Trafalgar, Bailen, Madrid, Zaragosa, Arapiles, Gerona; I shall say something about all these if you will not lack patience. My story will not be as beautiful as it should, but I shall do everything possible to make it true.

CHAPTER II

One day in the early part of October of that sad year 1805, my kind master called me to his room, and looking at me with his usual severity (only an apparent trait, for his character was very gentle), he said to me, "Gabriel, are you a brave man?"

At first I didn't know what to answer, because, to tell the truth, in my fourteen years of life, I had never had the opportunity to astonish the world with any heroic deed; but the fact that he called me a man filled me with pride, and as it seemed unbecoming to deny my valor before a person who held it in such high esteem, I answered with childish pride, "Yes, master, I am a brave man."

Then that famous man, who had shed his blood in a hundred glorious battles, without disdaining to treat a loyal servant confidentially, smiled at me, made a sign for me to sit down, raised his big spectacles to his forehead, and was about to tell me some important decision, when his wife, my mistress Dona Francisca, suddenly entered the room to add greater interest to the conference, and began to say excitedly, "No, no, you will not go! You will not join the fleet. You have been retired from service because of old age! Why, Alonso, you are seventy years old, and you are no longer any good for parties!"

It seems that I can still see that honorable as well as wrathful lady with her big cap, her organdy skirt, her white curls, and her hairy mole on the side of her chin. I cite these four dissimilar details, because my memory cannot picture her without them. She was a beautiful lady in old age like the Saint Anas of Murillo, and the

worthy beauty of my mistress would have been flawless, and her comparison with the Virgin Mother, exact, if she had been made as a picture.

Don Alonso, somewhat intimidated by her as usual, answered, "I need to go, Paes. According to the letter that I have just received from Churrucá, the combined fleet either should sail from Cadiz to provoke the combat with the English, or should wait for them in the bay, if they dare to enter. It's going to be an event known far and wide."

"Well, I am glad," replied Doña Francisca. "There are Gravina, Valdés, Cisneros, Churrucá, Alcalá, Galiana, and Alava. Let them crush those English dogs. But you are a worthless, good-for-nothing old man. Why, you still can't move your left arm that they dislocated for you at the Cape of San Vicente!"

My master moved his left arm in a formal military gesture to prove that he had it ready. But Doña Francisca unconvinced by such flimsy argument, continued scolding, "No, no you will not go to the fleet, for they don't need such frights as you there. If you were forty years old, like you were when you went to the Tierra del Fuego Islands and brought me those green necklaces from the Indies...but now... . I know now, that that soft, silly fool of a Marcial has excited your empty head last night and this morning with his foolish talk about battles. It looks to me like that Marcial gentleman and I will have to quarrel. Let him go back to the fleet if he wants to, so that they can take away the other leg that is left! Oh, blessed

Saint José! Oh, if I had known at fifteen what people of the sea are like! What torment! Not a day of rest! A woman marries to live with her husband, and at the best there comes an order from Madrid that in two strokes of a drumstick sends him somewhere--- to Patagonia, to Japan, or to Hell itself! It is a matter of ten or twelve months without seeing him; and finally, if the savages don't eat him up, he returns a wreck, so sick and yellow that one does not know what to do to restore his natural color to him. But an old bird won't stay in a cage, and suddenly there comes another little order from Madrid. Go to Toulon, to Brest, to Naples, here or there, wherever that big cheat of a first consul wishes. Ah, if everybody would do as I say, how soon would that little gentleman, who brings such dissension to the world, get what's coming to him."

My master kept smiling at a bad print fastened to the wall, which an unknown artist had drawn as a stupid likeness of Napoleon: a gentleman on a green charger with his famous cloak smeared in vermilion. Doubtless, after looking at that masterpiece of art for four years, I modified my original impression in regard to that great man's smuggler suit, and in the future I always thought of him as dressed like a cardinal and mounted on a green horse.

"This isn't living," continued Doña Francisca, waving her arms. "God forgive me, but I hate the sea, although I know they say it is one of His best works. I don't know what the Inquisition is for unless it is to burn those devilish warships to ashes. But come and tell me, why do they keep hurling bullets and more bullets without further ado

against men or war vessels, which if they should break would hurl a hundred unfortunate men into the sea! Is not this tempting God? And these men go crazy when they hear a cannon shot. A pretty mercy! My flesh shudders when I hear them, and if everyone thought as I do, there wouldn't be any more wars on the sea, and all the cannons would be made into bells. Look, Alonso," she added, stopping before her husband, "it seems to me you have been defeated enough times. Do you want to be again? Aren't you and those other ones as crazy as you satisfied with the Defeat of the Fourteenth?"

Don Alonso clenched his fists on hearing that sad reminder, but he did not utter a sailor's oath in the presence of his wife for he respected her deeply.

"That rascal Marcial, that devilish sailor, who ought to have been hanged a hundred times, and has been saved a hundred times to torment me--he's the one to blame for this stubbornness of yours. If he wants to go on board again with his wooden leg, his broken arm, one eye missing, and with his fifty wounds, let him go any time, and God grant that he not appear again around here! But you can't go, Alonso. You won't go because you are sick; you have served the King enough, and he certainly hasn't repaid you well. If I were you, I'd throw those captain stripes that you've had for ten years in the face of that honorable commander-in-chief-of-land-and-sea. We should have made you an admiral at least, for you certainly deserved it when you went on that expedition to Africa and brought

back to me those blue beads with which I decorated that urn in the church of Saint Carmon."

"Admiral, or no admiral, I ought to go to the fleet, Paquita," said my master. "I can't miss that combat. I've got a certain delayed debt to collect from those English."

"You're a fine one to collect those debts," said my mistress, "a sick man, half-crippled... ."

"Gabriel will go with me," added Don Alonzo looking at me in a way that inspired courage.

I made a gesture that indicated my agreement to such a heroic project; but I was very careful that Doña Francisca didn't see me, for she would have made me feel the irresistible weight of her hand if she had observed my bellicose tendencies.

She, on seeing that her husband was determined, swore that if she were ever born again, she wouldn't marry a sailor; she cursed the Emperor, our dear King, the Prince of Peace, and all the signers of the subsidy treaty; and she ended by assuring her husband that God would punish him for his stupid rashness.

During this dialogue, which I have repeated without a guarantee of accuracy, for I base my story on vague memories only, a loud and barking cough sounded in the adjoining room and announced that Marcial, the old sailor, was hearing from very close at hand the ardent declaration of my mistress, who had mentioned his name several times with remarks of little kindness.

Wishing to take part in the conversation, he opened the door and appeared in my master's room. (The familiarity with which he was treated in the house permitted him to do so.)

Before going any further, I wish to give some information concerning my master and his wife of noble birth for the sake of a better understanding of what is going to happen.

CHAPTER III

Don Alonso Gutiérrez de Cisniega belonged to an old family in Vejer. They assigned him to a naval career, and in his youth, as a naval guard, he distinguished himself honorably in the attack which the English made on Havana in 1766. He formed part of the expedition that left from Cartagena against Argel in 1775, and he was also in the attack against Gibraltar made by the Duke of Crillon in 1782. He later set sail on the expedition to the Strait of Magellan in the corvette Santa María de la Cabeza under the command of Antonio de Cordova. Also, he was in the glorious combats that the English-Spanish fleet maintained against the French before Toulon in 1793; and finally he ended his illustrious career in the disastrous encounter of San Vicente, as the commander of the ship named Mojicano, one of those that had to surrender.

Since then, my master, who had not been promoted in due proportion to his long and laborious career, retired from service. As a result of the wounds received on that sad occasion, he fell sick in body and more gravely ill in soul, as a result of grief caused by the defeat. His wife cared for him lovingly, although not without loud words, for cursing was as natural to people of the sea as the sweet names of Jesus and Mary are to a devout one. Meanwhile our hero was sadly exhausting himself in Vejer with worry and meditation concerning one important theme--that is: that if Cordova, the commander of our fleet, had ordered to luff to larboard instead of ordering the rigging to starboard, the ships Mojicano, San José,

San Nicolas, and San Isidro would not have fallen into the power of the English, and the English Admiral Jervis would have been defeated. His wife, Marcial, and even I overstepping my authority, would tell him that he was right just to see if by allowing ourselves to be convinced, the burning ardor of his mania would be moderated. But not so; this unreasonable passion accompanied him to the grave.

Eight years had passed since that disaster, and the news that the combined fleet was going to have a decisive encounter with the English greatly excited him and seemed to renew his youth. He conceived the idea that he must go to the fleet to witness the certain defeat of his mortal enemies. Although his wife tried to dissuade him, as I have said, it was impossible to turn him aside from so wild a scheme. One can understand how strong and violent was his desire by his audacity in opposing the strong will of Dona Francisca; however, he did avoid every dispute. I ought to note, in order that everyone may have an idea of my master's obstinacy, that he wasn't afraid of the English, or the French, or the Algerines, or the savages of Magellan Strait, or the angry sea, or the roaring storm, or heaven, or earth; he wasn't afraid of anything created by God except his sainted wife.

She was an exemplary lady of noble birth, devout and God-fearing, and like all the women of that day, charitable and wise; but she had the most churlish and devilish disposition that I have ever known in all my life. Frankly, I do not consider her irritable temperament inborn, but on the contrary, I think it was caused by vexation and

worry due to her husband's profession. And it is necessary to confess that she didn't complain unreasonably, for that marriage of fifty years which should have given twenty children to the world, had to content itself with only one, the charming and peerless Rosita, of whom I shall speak later. For these and other reasons Doña Francisca prayed to heaven daily for the annihilation of every European fleet.

Let me tell now about the sailor Marcial, the object of the most burning hatred on the part of Doña Francisca, but loved as affectionately as a brother by my master, Don Alonso, with whom he had served.

Marcial, (I never knew his family name), nicknamed Medic-hombre (Half-man) among the sailors, had been boatswain on warships for forty years. At the time of my story the appearance of this hero of the seas was the strangest that can be imagined. His entire face was marred and seamed by a multitude of scars which he had received in encounters with the enemy; his face, like those of all old sailors, was dark and tanned; his voice was hoarse, hollow, indolent, unlike that of any other rational human on earth. I hope you can form some idea of this character whose memory makes me regret my lack of artistic skill, for truly he deserves to be drawn by a master painter. I cannot say whether his appearance provoked laughter or commanded respect.

It can be said that his life was the history of the Spanish naval forces in the last part of the past century and the beginning of the present,--a history on whose pages glorious actions alternate with grievous misfortunes. Marcial had sailed on the Conde de Regla, on the San Joaquín, on the Real Carlos, on the Trinidad, and on other

heroic and unfortunate ships; and when these ships perished in honorable defeat or went down through treachery, the naval power of Spain sank with them. In addition to the campaigns in which Half-man took part with my master, he had also participated in many others, namely: the expedition to Martinique, the Battle of Finisterre, the terrible strait episode on the night of July 12, 1801, and the Battle of Santa Maria on October 5, 1804.

At the age of seventy-six he retired from the service, not because he lacked vigor, but because he was completely unneeded. Since his retirement, he and my master were the best of friends. As the boatswain's daughter, his only child, had married an old servant of Don Alonso, (this union had given him one grandson) Half-man decided to anchor like an old hulk no longer useful for war, and he even made himself believe that he liked peace. Just to see him was enough to make one understand that the most difficult employment that can be given to the blessed rest of a hero is the care of children; and, really, Marcial didn't do anything but take care of his grandson, amuse him, and put him to sleep with his sailor songs seasoned with some fitting oaths.

But on learning that the combined fleet was being prepared for a great combat, he felt a rebirth of enthusiasm, and he even dreamed that he was commanding the ship's crew in the quarterdeck of the prow Santísima Trinidad. Since Don Alonso was experiencing similar symptoms of renewed strength, he was ready to sail with him;

and from then on they spent a great part of the day and night talking to each other about the information received; they voiced their own personal opinions; they reviewed past deeds; they made conjectures concerning the future; they build air castles like two cabin boys who confidentially discussed between themselves the best way to become admirals.

In these retreats, which were greatly alarming to Doña Francisca, was conceived the plan of setting sail with the fleet to witness the next combat. Now you know the opinion of my mistress and the thousand offensive words that she uttered against the sailor impostor. You also know by now that Don Alonso was determined to put a daring idea into execution, accompanied by his page. At this time I must tell you what everyone said when Marcial appeared to defend the war against the disgraceful status quo of Doña Francisca.

CHAPTER IV

"Yes, Mr. Marcial," she said with increased fury. "If you want to go to the fleets to give them your last hand, you can go whenever you wish; but it is a sure thing that he will not go."

"Well," answered the sailor, "the devil take me if I stay here and miss the party."

"We have fifteen warships, and the French have twenty-five vessels. And if they were all ours, we wouldn't need so many! Forty ships and much courage on board every one of them!"

Just as fire spreads from one match to another one nearby, so the enthusiasm that sparkled in the one eye of Marcial inflamed both eyes of my master, now lusterless with age.

"But the 'Little Gentleman' (he meant Nelson) will bring many too. That's why I like battles. There's plenty of timber to shoot bullets into, and a lot of powder smoke to warm the air when it's cold."

I had forgotten to say that Marcial, like all sailors, used a vocabulary formed of the most extravagant terms, for it is customary among sea people of every land to disfigure their native language to the point of burlesque. By observing the majority of the expressions used by sailors, one sees that they are simply corruptions of the most common words and fitting adaptations to their fiery and impassioned temperaments, which are always inclined to shorten every action of life, and especially language. It seems to me sometimes, when I hear them talking, that their tongues are a hindrance to them.

Marcial, as I was saying, changed nouns into verbs and the latter into nouns without consulting the Academy. Likewise, he always had the tendency to compare man to a ship by means of some mysterious similarity between the limbs of the former and the parts of the latter. For example, when speaking of the loss of his eye he would say that he had closed the "starboard gangway", and when referring to the amputation of his arm, he would say he had been left without the "port anchor beam". He called the heart, the seat of valor and heroism, the "powder magazine", and the stomach was the "biscuit storeroom". The sailors, at least, understood these expressions; but there were others, daughters of his own inventive philology, which only he understood and appreciated at their own value. Who could understand what he meant by "patigurbiar Chingria" and other awful names similar to these? I think, although I am not positive, that by the first one he meant "to doubt", and by the second one "sadness". He had a thousand different names for getting drunk, but the most common one of these was "to put on the cassock"; my readers will not understand the meaning of this idiom if I do not explain to them that the English sailors had won the title of "cassocks" from him, doubtless because of their uniform; thus the term "to put on the cassock" for intoxication signified that this condition was very common and general among his enemies. He gave the foreign admirals queer names, sometimes creations of his own, sometimes translations based only on

similarities in sound. He called Nelson the "Little Gentleman," an expression which indicated a certain degree of respect; he named Collingwood "Uncle Cramp," a phrase which he considered an exact translation of the English. He gave to Jervis, as well as all Englishmen, the appellation "Old Fox"; Calder was "Uncle Kettle" because he found a great similarity in sound between "Calder" and a word signifying "Kettle"; according to an entirely different linguistic system, he assigned to Villeneuve, the rear admiral of the combined fleet, the nickname of "Monsieur Cornet", a name taken from a farce that he saw in Cádiz. In order to avoid troublesome explanations of such absurdities as came from his lips, I shall be forced to substitute the usual words for his nonsense when I refer to his conversation which I remember.

Let us continue, now. Doña Francisca, crossing herself said, "Forty ships! That is tempting Divine Providence. Jesus! And they will have at least forty thousand cannon, so that these enemies can kill each other!"

"No, so that Mr. Cornet can have well stocked powder magazine," answered Marcial, pointing to his heart. "Those cassock gentlemen are going to laugh at themselves. This isn't going to be like the Cape of San Vicente."

"One should bear in mind," said my master pleasantly, on hearing his favorite subject mentioned, "that if Admiral Cordova had ordered the ships San José and Mejicana to heave to larboard, the gentleman Mr. Jervis wouldn't have been called Lord Count of San

Vicente. I am sure of this, and I have data to prove that we would have come out victorious with the rigging to larboard."

"Victorious!" exclaimed Doña Francisca scornfully. "These braggarts look like they want to eat up the world, and as soon as they put out to sea, they don't seem to have enough ribs to take the blows of the English."

"No!" said Half-man in a loud voice and with a threatening gesture of his fist. "If it wasn't for their tricks and slyness...We always go against them with a generous heart, hoisted flag, and clean hands. An Englishman is never generous, he always attacks by surprise and waits for bad waters and dark and cloudy weather. That's the way it was at the Battle of the Strait, and they have to pay us for it now. We were sailing along suspecting nothing, for you don't fear treason even from dogs or the heretic Moors, much less from an Englishman who is courteous and Christian-like. But no; he who attacks treacherously is not a Christian, but a highway robber. Imagine, señora," he added, addressing Doña Francisca to obtain her good will. "We left Cádiz to help the French fleet that had taken refuge in Algeiras, pursued by the English. That happened four years ago, and everytime I think of it now, my blood boils. I was on board the Real Carlos with 112 cannon under the command of Ezguerra, and we were leading the San Hermenegildo with 112 cannon, the San Fernando, the Argonauta, the San Agustín, and the frigate Sabina. Together with the French fleet, who had four ships, three frigates and a brig, we left Algeiras for Cádiz about noon, and as the weather was dull,

we were a little this side of Punta Carnero at nightfall. The night was blacker than a barrel of tar, but as the weather was good, we didn't mind sailing in the dark. Almost all the crew was asleep. I remember I was in the forecastle talking with my cousin, Joe Débora, who was telling me about the mean things his mother-in-law did, and from there I saw the lights of the San Hermenegildo, who was sailing to starboard like a shot out of a cannon. The rest of the ships were going in front. What we least believed was that the cassocks had left Gibraltar after us and were chasing us; how were we to see them if they had their lights extinguished and were approaching without our being aware of it? Suddenly it looked to me like—although the night was very dark, I always have had eyesight like a lynx... it looked to me like a ship was passing between us and the San Hermenegildo."

"Joe Débora," I said to my companion, "either I am seeing ghosts or we have an English ship on starboard."

"Joe Debora looked at me and said, 'Let the biggest mast fall from the mast hole and split me in two if there is another boat besides the San Hermenegildo.'"

"Well, in any case," I said, "I am going to the officer on quarterdeck."

"I hadn't finished saying this, when, wham!...we heard the sweet music of every broadside that was stealing in alongside us. The entire crew rose up in one minute...each one at his own position. What a battle, Doña Francisca! I'd be so glad if you had seen it

so that you could know what those things are like. Everybody was swearing like demons and praying God to put a cannon in every finger to answer the attack. Esguerra climbed to quarterdeck and ordered the starboard broadside to fire. Boom! Boom! The starboard battery fired then, and in a little while they answered us. But we didn't see in the skirmish that with the first shot they had sneaked in on us some devilish "combestive" stuff that was falling all over our boat like a rain of fire. On seeing that our ship was on fire, our rage doubled, and we attacked their broadside again, again, and again. Ah, Doña Francisca! That was a pretty sight. Our commander ordered to take in the sails off starboard in order to attack the enemy ship on board. Right here I want you to know I was in my glory. In a twinkling of an eye we got the axes and picks for the boarding of the ship. The enemy boat was rushing on us, and this did my old soul good, because now we would snare them sooner. Take in the sails, take in the sails off starboard... what a julep! It was getting daylight. The yardams were kissing each other, the crews were ready when we heard Spanish oaths on board the enemy vessel. Then we were all stiff with fright because we saw the boat we were attacking was the true San Hermenegildo!"

"Indeed, that was a fine mess," said Doña Francisca showing some interest in the story. "And how were you such asses that you ...?"

"I will tell you; we didn't have time to fool with words. The fire spread from Real Carlos to San Hermenegildo and then...Virgin

of Carmen, the powder and cannons! We were lost! 'To the launches!' shouted many. The fire now was even with the Santa Barbara, and this lady wasn't talking any nonsense. We were swearing, shouting, insulting God, the Holy Virgin, and all the other saints, for this seems the best way to let off steam when you are filled with rage clean to the hatchway."

"Jesus, Mary, and Joseph! What a horror!" exclaimed my mistress. "And did you save yourselves?"

"Forty of us saved our lives in a small boat and six or seven who gathered instantly from the San Hermenegildo escaped in a dragnet. Joe Débora anchored himself to a piece of timber and reached the shore of Morocco more dead than alive."

"And the rest?"

"The rest...the sea is large and many people fall in it. Two thousand men put out their fires (died) that day, among them our commander, Ezguerra, and Emparan, the commander of the other vessel."

"May God have mercy on me for saying it, but they deserved it for meddling in those games. If they had been sitting peacefully at home as God commands..."

"Well, the cause of this disaster," said Don Alonso, who liked to interest his wife in such dramatic events, "was as follows: The English, favored by the darkness of the night, commanded their ship Soberio, the lightest one they had, to put out her lights and station herself between our two lovely vessels. She did so, sharply turned her two broadsides, and hastily veered around to free herself from

the contest. The Real Carlos and the Hermenegildo, seeing themselves hopelessly attacked, fired; but they fought each other until dawn; and just as they were on the verge of running foul of each other, they realized with whom they were fighting, and what Marcial has just told you happened."

"Oh, how well they made a game of you!" said the lady. "That was clever, but it certainly wasn't befitting a noble people."

"What do you expect?" added Half-man. "I didn't like them very well then; but since that night... . If they are in heaven, I don't want to go to heaven; just let me be damned for all eternity."

"Well, what about the capture of the four frigates that were coming from the Plata River?" said Don Alonso, encouraging Marcial to continue his stories.

"I was in that, too," answered the sailor, "and they left me there without a leg. They caught us unprepared then, too, and, as it was peace time, we were sailing along peacefully like, counting the hours until we should reach home, when suddenly... . I'll tell you how it was, señora Francisca, so that you can see the cunning of those people. After the battle of the Strait, I set sail on the Fama for Montevideo, and we had been there a long time when the rear admiral received the order to bring back a fortune to Spain from Lima and Buenos Aires. The trip was very fine, and the only mishap we had was a slight fever, which didn't kill so much as one man. We were carrying a lot of money that belonged to the King and private individuals as well; also we had what we call the "soldier box", a name given to the pay of sailors who serve in

America. If I am not mistaken, all this was worth about five million dollars; and besides we had on board wolf hides, vicuña wool, Peruvian bark, bars of tin, copper, and fine woods. Well, sir, after fifty days' sailing, we saw land on the fifth of October, and we were counting on entering Cádiz the following day, when, believe me, we saw four lady frigates appear in the northeast. Although it was peace time, and our Captain Miguel de Zapiain didn't seem to have the least little suspicion, I am an old dog on the sea, and I called Débora and I told him the weather smelled like gunpowder to me... . Well, when the English frigates were near, our commander ordered to make clearing for action; the Fama was going in front, and pretty soon we met a pistol shot from one of the English vessels on the windward.

"Then the English captain talked to us with his horn and told us...notice how I admired his frankness... he told us to station ourselves opposite for he was going to attack us. He asked a thousand questions, but we told him we didn't feel inclined to answer. While all this was going on, the other three enemy frigates had approached to ours in such a way that each one of the English boats had a Spanish one along the leeward side."

"Their position couldn't be better," said my master.

"That's what I say, too," continued Marcial. "The Rear Admiral, Don José Bustamante, was rather clever, but if I had been him... . Well, sir, the English commodon (he meant commodore) sent on board the Medea one of those little, codfish-tailed officers, who said that, although war was not declared, the commodon had orders to

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arrest us. This is what comes of being English. The battle began in a little while. Our frigate received the first ship along the larboard broadside. We answered the greeting; then cannon shots come, and cannon shots go. It's a sure thing that we didn't have those heretics tight in our fists, for the devil himself went and set fire to the Santa Barbara de Mercedes and she went up in smoke. We were so grieved because of this, and we lost heart. We did not lack courage, but that thing they call...morale; that very moment we knew we were lost. Our frigate had more holes in her sails than an old cape; her ropes were broken; there was five feet of water in her hold; the mizzenmast lay stretched out, she had three bullet holes flushed with water, and enough dead and wounded. In spite of this, we continued the party with the English; but when we saw that the Medea and the Clara were not able to stand the scorching and were lowering their flags, we crowded sail and retired, defending ourselves as best we could. The cursed English frigate was faster than ours; we couldn't get away; so we had to lower our sails at three o'clock in the afternoon. They had already killed a lot of us, and I was half dead on the orlop deck because a bullet wanted to take off my leg. They took us to England not as prisoners but as detained ones; a letter goes, a letter comes between London and Madrid. It's a sure thing they kept the money, and I am of the opinion that the King of Spain will see a hair's tip of that million dollars when I give birth to another leg!"

"So that's the way you lost your leg?" asked Doña Francisca sympathetically.

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SULLY

"Yes, señora; the English, knowing that I wasn't a dancer, thought that one leg would be enough for me. They cared for me well on the crossing; in Plymouth I was in the mudgown six months with the baggage and a warrant to the other world in my pocket. But God didn't want me to sink so soon; an English doctor put this peg leg on me, and it is better than the other, because my own used to ache with the damned govt, and this one, thank God, never hurts although they shower it with a volley of grapeshot. In regard to its solidity, I think it has it although I haven't placed it in front of an English stern to test it."

"You are very brave," said my mistress. "God grant that you not lose the other one. He who seeks danger... ."

When Marcial's story was finished, the dispute concerning whether my master would go to the fleet or not started again. Doña Francisca persisted in the negative, and Don Alonso, who was as gentle as a lamb in the presence of his wife, sought excuses and quoted every kind of argument to convince her.

"But we are only going to see, wife, just to see and nothing more," said the hero with a supplicating glance.

"Let's leave off nonsense," his wife answered. "Both of you are a good pair of absurd old fools."

"The combined fleet will stay in Cádiz, and they will try to force entrance," said Marcial.

"Well, then," added my mistress, "you can see the fight from the wall of Cádiz; but in regard to the boats...I say no, and no,

again. Alas, in the forty years of our married life you have never seen me angry. (He saw her so every day.) But now I swear to you that if you go to the fleet,....realize there is no Paquita for you."

"Wife," exclaimed my master sadly, "must I die without having that pleasure?"

"A fine pleasure, man of God! Look how those crazy men kill one another. If the King of Spain would obey me, he would send those Englishmen about their business and would say to them, 'My dear subjects are not here for you to amuse yourselves with them. Have a battle with each other if you want to play'. What do you think? Although I am a fool, I well know what the trouble is; that first consul, emperor, sultan, or whatever he is, wants to attack the English; and, as he doesn't have any courageous men of his own, he wants to trick our good King into lending him his; the truth is, he is bothering us with his maritime wars. Tell me, what is Spain going to get out of all this? Why must there be cannon shot after cannon shot every day and all for the sake of foolishness? What harm had those English done us before those devilish deeds that Marcial has just told us? Ah, if they would listen to what I say, Mr. Bonaparte would man the war alone, and if he wouldn't, he wouldn't fight it!"

"It is true," said my master, "that the alliance with France is causing us a lot of trouble; for if there is any advantage, it is for our ally while all the disasters are for us."

"Then, hopeless fools, why can those birds in this war get you so excited?"

"The honor of our nation is at stake," answered Don Alonso, "and once mixed up in this dance, it would be a disgrace to turn back. Last month when I was in Cadiz at the christening of my cousin's daughter, Churruca said to me, 'This alliance with France, the damn treaty of San Idelfonso, which has been converted into a subsidy treaty through the cleverness of Bonaparte and the weakness of Godoy, will be our ruin, will be the ruin of our fleet, and therefore the ruin of our colonies and commerce in America if God doesn't prevent it. But in spite of everything, we must go on.'"

"Well, I say," added Doña Francisca, "that that Prince of Peace is meddling in things he doesn't understand. Look at him! An uneducated man! My brother, the archdeacon, who is a follower of Prince Ferdinand, says that Mr. Godoy is the soul of a wine pitcher, that he has never studied Latin or theology, and his entire knowledge consists in playing the guitar and dancing the gavot in twenty-two different ways. It looks to me like he has been made prime minister on the graces of his pretty face. This is the way the affairs of Spain are going; soon hunger and more hunger, everything so high, yellow fever devastating Andalusia... . This is a pretty picture! Yes, sir! And you two are to blame for it," she continued, raising her voice and turning very red. "Yes, sir, you are offending God by killing so many people; if you would go to church and pray your rosaries instead of meddling with those wicked ships, the Devil wouldn't be walking loose through Spain doing his mischief."

"You can go to Cadiz too," said Don Alonso, anxious to arouse some enthusiasm in his wife, "you can go to Flora's house, and from the bay window you can watch the battle, the smoke, the powder flashes, the flags... . That is very pretty."

"Thank you, thank you so much! I would fall dead from fright. We are quiet and peaceful here; he who seeks danger perishes in it."

Thus ended that conversation, the details of which I have kept in my memory in spite of the passing of time. It often happens that the very remote experiences of our childhood remain ingraved in our imagination with greater steadfastness than those which occurred in our maturity when reason dominates our mental powers.

That night Don Alonso and Marcial continued talking during those short intervals in which Doña Francisca left them alone. When she went to the parish to attend the novena in accordance with her devout custom, both sailors breathed a sigh of relief like two mischievous school boys out of their teacher's sight. They shut themselves up in the office, took out some maps and were examining them attentively; then they read certain papers on which were recorded the names of many English vessels with the number of their cannons and crew. During their heated conference in which very excited comments alternated with the reading, I noticed that they were devising the plan of a naval combat.

Marcial was imitating with gestures of his arm and a half the advance of the squadrons and the explosion of the broadsides; with his head, the rocking of the struggling ships; with his body, the fall of the sinking ship's side; with his hand, the raising and

lowering of signal flags; with a light whistle he mimicked the boatswain's order; with the blows of his peg leg against the floor, the roar of a cannon; with his stammering tongue, the oaths and strange shouts of the battle. As my master was aiding him with the greatest of gravity, I, aroused by his example, also wished to add my bit and thereby give expression to my intense need of noise making, which is an absolute necessity in the lives of children.

On seeing the excitement of the two sailors, I, too, was unable to control my feeling, and I began to turn circles through the room. (The intimacy with which my master treated me in his home gave me liberty to behave in such a manner.) With my head and arms I imitated the position of a vessel hauling the wind, and at the same time with a hoarse voice I shouted a resounding boom! boom! to mimic the sound of cannon shots. My worthy master and the crippled sailor, as childlike as I on that occasion, paid no attention to what I was doing, for they were too engrossed in their own thoughts. Now I have laughed on recalling that scene! How true it is (with all due respect to my master) that the enthusiasm of old age makes children of old men and brings again the antics of the cradle to the very edge of the grave!

They were very involved in their conference when they heard the footsteps of Doña Francisca returning from the novena.

"She is coming!" exclaimed Marcial with terror.

With feigned composure they instantly put away their plans and started talking of trivial matters. But as juvenile blood cannot

be calmed as suddenly, I didn't observe the entrance of my mistress soon enough, and I continued my pert shouts, "The rampart to starboard! Luff! The broadside from leeward! Fire! Boom, boom!" She came at me furiously, and without any warning the broadside of her right hand struck me on the stern with such good aim I saw stars.

"You, too!" she exclaimed, flogging me pitilessly. "Now, you see," she added, darting a fiery glance at her husband, "you are teaching him to lose respect for me," and turning to me she stormed, "Do you think you are still in the Caleta, busybody?"

The dispute ended in the following manner. Making no attempt to defend myself against such a superior enemy, I lowered the flag of my dignity and tearfully and shamefully retired to the kitchen; Doña Francisca pursued me with a shower of repeated blows. I anchored in the kitchen and began to cry as I sadly meditated over the unfortunate outcome of the naval combat.

CHAPTER V

In her opposition to the foolish determination of her husband, Doña Francisca did not rely only on her arguments previously expressed; besides those she had another very powerful one, which she was too wise to use in the preceding conversation.

But the reader does not know it, and I am going to explain it now. I think I have written that my master and mistress had one daughter. Her name was Rosita; she had just passed her fifteenth birthday and was just a bit older than I. Her marriage to a young artillery officer, named Malespina, was already arranged. He was a member of a family in Medina-Sidonia and distantly related to my mistress. The wedding had been set for the last of October, and one can see that the absence of the bride's father on such a solemn occasion would have been inadvisable.

I am going to tell something about my señorita, her sweetheart, their love affair, and their approaching wedding. Ah! here my memories become melancholy and evoke strange, persistent images which seem to have come from another world; I do not know if the emotions awakened in my tired heart bring me joy or pain. These burning memories which seem to glow today in my brain, like tropical flowers transplanted from the frozen North, sometimes make me laugh and yet often make me wonder... . But let us tell them for the reader may tire of annoying reflections which are of interest to only one mortal.

Rosita was very pretty. I remember her beauty perfectly, but it would be very difficult to describe her features. I can see her

now smiling before me. The singular expression of her face, different from that of any other, comes to me with the clearness of these earliest ideas which we seem to have acquired in the cradle or to have brought with us from another world. Nevertheless, I am not going to describe her, for her reality has become something indefinite, something indefinable, and nothing escapes appreciation more than the description of one's dearest ideal.

The first time I saw Rosita I thought she belonged to a superior order of creatures. I shall explain my idea so that you can marvel at my simplicity. When we were children and a new baby came into the world, the older people would tell us it was brought from France, Paris, or England. I, deceived like all the others concerning such a strange way of perpetuating the humankind, believed that babies came by request, wrapped up in a little box like bundle of hardware. Well then, when I looked upon Rosita for the first time, I inferred that such a beautiful person couldn't have come from the same factory all of us came from...that is to say...from Paris or England, and I was convinced that there existed some enchanted region where divine artisans knew how to design such beautiful specimens of humanity.

As we were children, although of different social class, soon we treated each other with the trust common to childhood. My greatest happiness was to play with her and endure her impertinencias, which were many, for not even in games was the disparity of our position overlooked; she was always señorita and I was always servant; thus I had the lower role, and if there were blows, it isn't necessary to say who received them.

I used to go wait for her to leave the school building and accompany her home. This task was my supreme joy; and when I was busy with some unexpected work, and this happy assignment was given to another, I thought I was suffering the bitterest disappointment that fate would ever force me to bear. My greatest delight was to climb the orange tree in the patio and gather the blossoms on the highest branches for her; I wouldn't have traded this position for that of a king on a golden throne. I can remember no happiness greater than that I used to feel as I chased her in that immortal game of hide-and-seek. If she ran like a gazelle, I flew like a bird to catch her sooner and seized her by any part of her body that I could grasp. When the roles were reversed and she became the pursuer and I the sought one, the innocent pleasures of that sublime game were repeated; and the darkest and ugliest corner, where I hid with a fearful and trembling heart to await the touch of her eager arms, was a true paradise for me. I shall add that I never had one thought or emotion on these occasions that did not emanate from the innocent purity of childhood.

And what shall I say of her song? From early childhood she sang the "ols" and "cans" (Andalucian songs) with the skill and beauty of the nightingale whose perfect artistry is unlearned and unpracticed. Everyone praised her talent, and they used to gather in little groups to listen to her; but their applauses offended me, and I would have preferred that she be silent in the presence of others. The melancholy trill of her song was even more softened by the innocence of her young voice. The reverberating notes were

lost in the crescendo and died away as it flowed downward again in a low murmur. Her music seemed to come from the throat of a bird that had soared to the very doors of heaven and returned to sing for mortal ears. My soul, following the sound of her voice, seemed to expand with the swell of the music, hang suspended on the vibrating tones, and contract as the melody died away. Her voice affected me so strangely, especially in the presence of others, that I suffered actual physical pain.

As I have said, we were almost the same age, for she was only eight or nine months older than I. But I was small and frail while she developed vigorously; consequently at the end of my three years' residence in their home, she looked much older than I. These three years passed without our suspecting that we were growing up, and our games were never interrupted. As she was more mischievous than I, her mother scolded her and tried to make her work but with very little success.

At the end of three years I noticed that my adored señorita was growing larger, and her beauty was maturing; her face was livelier, fuller, warmer; her large eyes, more expressive; her glance, firmer and steadier. I do not know whether her movements were lighter or not; but they were certainly changed, although I could not then, nor can I now determine how they were different. But none of these changes bewildered me so much as the transformation of her voice which acquired a certain clear gravity very different from the frolicsome, happy screech with which she used to call me, and which possessed the power of upsetting my judgment and forcing me to forget my duties for

her game. The bud became a rose, and the pupa a butterfly.

One very dismal day my little mistress appeared before me in a long dress. That transfiguration affected me so that I did not speak a single word the entire day...I was as serious as a man who had been vilely deceived, and my resentment against her was so great that in my musings I convinced myself that the rapid growth of my little mistress was a crime. There awakened in me a burning secret fever, and I argued passionately with myself on that subject in the silence of my sleeplessness. The thing that disturbed me most was the complete change in character which a few yards of cloth had produced. That wretched day she spoke to me in a formal tone and gravely ordered me (even showing displeasure) to do the things I least liked to do; and she, who so many times had been an accomplice and a shield in my idleness now reproached me for being lazy. And in all these things there was not one smile, or leap, or antic; there was no race, no dancing of the ole; never did she hide from me for me to seek her; never did she pretend to be angry just to laugh afterwards; there was no little quarrel, not even a tiny slap from her little hand. Terrible crisis of life! She had changed into a woman, and I continued to be a child.

I do not need to say that the frolics and games ended. No longer did I climb the orange tree, and the blossoms now grew tranquilly, free from my enamored grasp; its leaves developed vigorously and its tempting perfume luxuriously filled the air. No longer did we run through the patio; no longer did I accompany her from school as proud of my commission as if I had defended her from an entire army intent on taking her from me. From that time on Rosita walked with the utmost

poise and gravity; several times I noticed that she took pains not to show even an inch above her beautiful ankle; and this system of artful concealment was an offense to the dignity of one who had seen much higher. I laugh now when I consider how my heart used to almost break from those things.

But still more terrible misfortunes were to occur. One day during this year of her transformation, Aunt Martina, Rosario the Cook, Marcial, and other persons among the servants were busily talking about some serious matter. I applied my diligent ear and I learned that alarming rumors were abroad; the señorita was going to be married. The thing was unheard of, for I didn't even know she had a sweetheart. But at that time all the parents arranged the marriages, and it is a wonder more didn't turn out badly.

Well, a young man from a great family asked for her hand, and my master and mistress granted his request. This young man came to their house, accompanied by his parents who held the title of some count or marquis. The suitor was wearing a marine uniform as he belonged to the marines, but in spite of such elegant dress, he had a rather displeasing appearance. He must have seemed so to my little mistress, for from the first she showed a repugnance toward that wedding. Her mother tried to convince her, but in vain; she reminded her of her sweetheart's good talents, his lofty lineage, and his great wealth. The girl was not convinced, and she met these inducements with other very sensible arguments.

But the little rascal was silent on the main point and the main point was that she had another sweetheart whom she truly loved.

This other one was an artillery officer named Rafael Malespina, of very nice appearance and handsome build. My little mistress had met him in church and this treacherous love had seized her while she was praying; for the temple, because of its poetic and mysterious surroundings, has always been a suitable place for the awakening of love in one's heart. Several times I noticed that Malespina was hovering about the house, and this love affair was discussed so much in Vejer that the other suitor heard about it, and they challenged each other to a duel. My master and mistress learned everything when the news reached the house that Malespina had mortally wounded his rival.

The scandal was terrible. The intense religious feelings of my master and mistress were so outraged by that deed that they could not hide the anger, and Rosita was the chief victim. But as the months passed, the wound healed; and as Malespina was also a wellborn and wealthy man, there arose a certain favorable conjecture that he might become a member of the household. The parents of the wounded man broke the engagement, and in turn the father of the victor appeared at the home to ask for the hand of my little mistress for his son. After some delay, his request was granted.

I remember when the elder Malespina was there. He was a very thin and drawn old man with a waistcoat of thirty colors, many watch fobs, an immense jacket, and a long sharp nose with which he appeared to snuff those who were conversing with him. He talked with his elbows and he wouldn't let the others put in a single word. He did all the talking and he allowed nothing to be praised for he always ended by saying he had something else better. From the very first,

I considered him a vain and untruthful man, and later, I saw him clearly as such. My master and mistress received him as well as his son who came with him, with consideration. From then on the sweetheart continued coming to the house every day alone or in the company of his father.

There was a new change in my little mistress. Her indifference was so marked as to touch upon contempt. Then for the first time I realized the humbleness of my position, and I cursed it. I tried to make myself understand that those who were really superior had the right to this superiority; and with anguish I would ask myself if it was fair for others to be noble, rich, and wise while my lineage was the Galea, and my only possession my body and my bare ability to read. Seeing the reward that my burning affection received, I decided that I could aspire to nothing in the world, and only later did I learn that the firm conviction of a great and constant effort would give me perhaps everything that I did not possess.

In view of the coolness with which she treated me, I lost confidence, and I did not dare to open my lips in her presence, and I felt a much deeper awe of her than of her parents. Meanwhile I attentively observed the indications of love which were mastering her. When he was late, I saw her impatient and sad; at the slightest noise which might indicate the approach of someone, her beautiful face glowed, and her black eyes glistened with anxiety and hope. If he entered at last, it was impossible for her to hide her joy, and then they would talk to each other hours and hours, ...always in the presence of Doña Francisca for she would not allow my *señorita* to

talk to him alone or at the window grating.

Also there was a long correspondence, and the worst thing about it was I was the messenger boy for the two lovers. That made me so angry. According to the countorsign, I would go out into the plaza, and there I would meet soñerito Malespina as punctual as a clock, and he would give me a message for my señořita. I carried out this mission and she would give me another letter to take to him. How often I felt the temptation to burn those letters and not deliver them to their destination. But happily I had enough self-control to withstand this ugly suggestion.

I don't need to say that I hated Malespina. As soon as I saw him enter the house, my blood boiled, and whenever he ordered me to do something, I would do it in the worst way possible so as to show my deep dislike for him. This indifference, which to them seemed bad breeding and to me a sudden impulse of integrity common only to exalted spirits, brought me some reprimands, and especially caused my señořita to utter some words which pierced my heart like painful thorns. One time she said, "This little boy is so spoiled that it will be necessary to send him out of the house." Finally the day was set for the wedding, and all the events that I have told took place before this appointed day, . . . including the plan of my master. For this reason, one will easily understand that Doña Francisca had powerful reasons, besides the poor health of her husband, for preventing him from going to the fleet.

CHAPTER VI

On the day following the licks Doña Francisca, incited by the show of my irreverence and her profound hate for maritime warfare, applied to me, I accompanied my master on his noonday walk. I was holding his arm and Marcial was walking at his side. We were going along slowly in accordance with the feeble tread of Don Alonso, and the poor skill of the sailor's artificial leg. This procession resembled that of an unstable palanquin in which a group of old and moth-eaten saints threaten to fall to the ground as soon as the pace of those who are carrying them is quickened. The two old men possessed nothing quick and thrifty except their hearts, which functioned like machines fresh from the factory. These hearts were like magnetic needles, which in spite of their strong power and exact movement, could not successfully navigate the old and damaged hull in which they were embarked.

During their walk my master first declared with his usual self-assurance that if Admiral Cordova had commanded to heave to larboard instead of starboard, the Battle of the Fourteenth would not have been lost; then he began talking about his aforesaid plan. Although they did not speak clearly, since I was in front, I learned through some of their disconnected words that they were going to attempt to put their plan into execution on the sly by neatly leaving the house one morning without Doña Francisca's knowledge.

We returned home and there very different matters were discussed. My master, who was always extremely agreeable with his wife, was even more than ever so that day. He applauded everything Doña Francisca

said, however insignificant, with untimely laughter. As well as I remember, he even gave her some foolish trinkets, and his every act seemed designed to make her happy. Doubtless because of this same diligent pleasantness, my mistress was more ungovernable and quarrelsome than I had ever seen her. No honorable settlement was possible. For some useless reason or other she quarrelled with Marcial and showed him the nearest door; she said terrible things to her husband, too; and during the meal, although he praised every dish with unusual warmth, the implacable dame did not stop grumbling.

When the hour for praying the rosary arrived, a very solemn act which took place in the dining room with all the household in attendance, my master, who was accustomed to fall asleep lazily murmuring the Lord's Prayer, that night was very vigilant and prayed persistently, making his voice heard above all the others.

Another thing happened that I remember very clearly. The walls of the house were adorned with two kinds of objects...prints of saints and maps...the celestial court on one side and all the sea charts of Europe and America on the other. After eating, my master was on the porch looking at a navigation map and tracing with his trembling finger the lines when Doña Francisca, who had a tiny suspicion of their plans for escape, (she would shout to high heaven whenever she caught him in the very act of his nautical enthusiasm) came up from behind him and raising her arms cried out, "Man of God! Indeed you are looking for me! But I swear if you are looking for me, you will find me!"

"But woman," said my master trembling, "I was here looking at the sea chart of Alcalá Galiano and Valdés on the schooners Sutil

and Mejicano when they went to inspect the Fuca strait. It was a very pretty voyage. I think I have told you about it."

"Well, I say I'm going to burn all those silly papers," added Doña Francisca. "Curses on voyages and the Jew dog who invented them. You'd better be thinking on Godly things, for you certainly are no child! What a man, blessed God, what a man!"

She didn't stop with this. I was also walking nearby, but I don't remember whether my mistress vented her rage on my humble person or not by demonstrating the elasticity of my ears and the agility of her hands. These caresses occurred so frequently that I don't remember whether I received any on that occasion or not; but I do remember that my señor in spite of having redoubled his affability did not succeed in soothing his mate.

I haven't said anything about my little mistress. Well, you may know that she was very sad because señor Malespina hadn't appeared that day or written any letter and all my little inquiries for him in the plaza were in vain. Night came, and with it came sadness to the heart of Rosita, for now there was no hope of seeing him until the following day. But suddenly, after orders had already been given for supper, strong knocks sounded on the door and I went running to open it; it was he. Even before I opened the door, the hatred I felt for him gave me the premonition of his presence. It seems that I can still see him as he stood before me, shaking his cape wet by the rain. Whenever I think of the man, I always recall him as he looked on that occasion. Speaking impartially, I shall say that he was a truly hand-

some young man, of fine physique, genteel breeding, and pleasant countenance, with that grave and somewhat proud courtesy of the nobility of long ago. That night he was wearing a riding coat, short breeches with boots, a Portuguese hat, a very handsome cape of fine scarlet cloth lined with silk, which at that time was the most elegant garment among the young men.

As soon as he entered, I knew something was wrong. He went straight to the dining room and all were greatly surprised to see him at that hour, for he had never before been there at night. My little mistress quickly realized that such an unexpected visit was due to unpleasant news.

"I come to take leave of you," said Malespina. Everyone was speechless with astonishment, and Rosita turned whiter than the paper on which I am writing, then red as a berry, and then pale again as death.

"What is the matter? Where are you going, Don Rafael?" my mistress asked.

I should have said that Malespina was an artillery officer on leave in Vejer although he was garrisoned in Cádiz.

"As the fleet lacks personnel," he added, "they have ordered us to set sail to do service there. It is believed that the combat is inevitable, and the majority of the ships lack artillerymen."

"Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!" exclaimed Doña Francisca, more dead than alive. "And so they are taking you away too! Well, I like that! But you are on land duty, my friend. Tell them to understand

that; if they don't have men, let them look for them. Well, that surely is a good joke."

"But, woman," said Don Alonso timidly, "don't you see that it is necessary?"

He could not continue, because Doña Francisca, losing complete control of her temper, addressed all the earthly powers, adding, "Everything seems fine to you, provided it has anything to do with these warships. But who, but who is the hellish devil that has ordered the land officers to go on board? Don't tell me; that's the business of Mr. Bonaparte. No one else could have devised such deviltry. It couldn't be any other. But you go and tell them that you are going to get married. Let's see," she added, addressing her husband, "you write to Gravina and tell him that this young man can't go."

And when she saw her husband shrug his shoulders to indicate that the matter was extremely grave, she continued, "You aren't good for anything! Jesus! If I wore trousers, I would go myself to Cadiz and get you out of this scrape."

Rosita wasn't saying a word. I, who was watching her attentively, noticed her great agitation. She never took her eyes off her sweetheart and only her courteous breeding and training prevented bitter tears which might aid in alleviating the pain of her troubled heart.

"Soldiers," said Don Alonso, "are slaves to their duty, and our native country demands this young man to set sail to defend her. In the next combat you will attain much glory and you will make your name famous by some deed that will go down in history as an example for

future generations."

"Yes, sure, sure," said Doña Francisca, mimicking the grandiloquent tone with which my master had spoken these last words. "Yes, and all for what? Because it is the crazy whim of those dullards for Madrid. Let them come and shoot the cannons and fight the war. When are you leaving?"

"Tomorrow. They have revoked my leave and ordered me to appear immediately in Cádiz."

It is impossible for me to paint with words or writing what I saw in my poor señorita's face when she heard those words. The two sweethearts looked at each other a long time and a sad silence followed the announcement of the approaching departure.

"This can't be endured," said Doña Francisca. "Soon they will be carrying off the civilians, and then the women, if they take a notion. Father," she continued, looking to heaven with an expression of piety, "I do not mean to offend Thee if I say damned be the sea on which they sail, and more damned be he who made the first cannon to give those gun reports that drive poor women crazy and kill so many dear ones who haven't done any wrong."

Don Alonso looked at Malespina, hoping to find in his face an expression of protest against the insults directed at the worthy artillery. Afterwards he said, "The ships probably lack good material also, and it would be pitiful..."

Marcial, who heard the conversation from the door, could not restrain himself and he entered saying, "What do we need?"

"The Trinidad has 140 cannon, 32 are thirty-six millimeters; 34, twenty-four millimeters; 36 are twelve millimeters; 18, eight; and 10 shell guns of twenty-four millimeters. The Principe de Asturias has 118 cannon; the Santa Ana, 120; the Rayo, 100; the Kepomuceno, the San..."

"Who told you to tend to this business, señor Marcial?" exclaimed Doña Francisca, "what does it matter to us if they have fifty or eighty?"

Marcial continued, in spite of her harangue, his loyal enumeration; but he lowered his voice and addressed only my master, who did not dare to express his approval.

She continued talking thus, "But, Don Rafael, don't go, for God's sake. Say that you belong on land, that you are going to be married. If Napoleon wants war, let him fight it alone; let him come and say, 'Here I am. Kill me, English gentlemen, or give up killing for my sake.' Why must Spain be subject to the silly fancies of this gentleman?"

"Really," said Malespina, "our alliance with France has been disastrous so far."

"Well, why did they make it? They speak the truth who say that Godoy is an ignorant man. I guess he believes he can govern a nation by playing a guitar."

"After the Peace of Basel," continued the young man, "we were forced to become enemies of the English for they demolished our fleet off the Cape of San Vicente."

"Halt, there," shouted Don Alonso, striking the table with his fist. "If Admiral Cordova had ordered the ships to heave to larboard,

as the most simple laws of strategy demand, victory would have been ours. I have proved that a sufficient number of times, and I made my opinion evident at the time of the combat. Let each one stay at his own post."

"It is certainly true that the battle was lost," added Malespina. "This disaster would not have been of great consequences if the Court of Spain hadn't approved of the Treaty of Idelfonso with the French Republic, for that put us at the mercy of the First Consul and forced us to lend him aid in wars which were of an interest only to him and his vain ambition. The Peace of Amiens was only a truce. England and France declared war again, and then Napoleon demanded our help. We wanted to be neutral, for that treaty did not obligate us in any way for a second war; but he sollicitated our assistance so persistently that the King, in order to satisfy him, had to agree to give France a subsidy of fifty thousand dollars which was equivalent to buying neutrality with its weight in gold. But we did not even buy it then. In spite of such great sacrifice, we were hurled into war. England forced us into it by inopportunoely seizing four frigates coming from America loaded with wealth. After that piratical act the only recourse left to the Court of Madrid was to throw itself into the arms of Napoleon who wanted this very thing. Our navy was at the whain of the First Consul, now an emperor, who, aspiring to conquer the English through deceit, ordered the combined fleet to leave Martinique with the idea of drawing the British sailors from Europe. By this strategy he intended to accomplish a coveted landing on this island; but such

a fine plan served only to reveal the lack of skill and cowardice of the French admiral, who on returning to Europe, did not wish to share the glory of the Battle of Finisterre with our ships. Now, according to the orders of the emperor, the combined fleet should be in Brest. It is said that Napoleon is furious with his admiral and intends to relieve him immediately."

"But according to what they say," replied Marcial, adding his bit again, "Mr. Corneta wants to run it, and he's looking for an act of war to make us forget his faults. I am glad, for in that way it will be seen soon who can and who can't."

"It is certain," continued Malespina, "that the English fleet is approaching, and for the purpose of blockading Cadiz. The Spanish sailors are of the opinion that our fleet ought not to leave the bay where there are possibilities that we may conquer. But the Frenchman seems determined to leave."

"We shall see," said my master. "It will be a glorious combat in every way."

"Glorious, yes," answered Malespina. "But who can be sure that its outcome will be fortunate? You sailors have many dreams, and perhaps, because you view the situation too close at hand, you do not realize the inferiority of our equipment in comparison with that of the English. They, in addition to a superb artillery, have everything necessary to replace their losses quickly. Let's not say anything in regard to personnel; that of our enemy is unsurpassed, composed entirely of experienced and expert men, while many of the Spanish

ships are manned mostly by a body of frivolous, lazy men who scarcely know their duty. Nor is our infantry division a model, for the vacant positions have been filled with land forces, very brave, doubtless, but easily made seasick."

"Well," said my master, "within a few days we shall know the outcome of all this."

"I already know what the outcome will be," observed Doña Francisca. "Without fail, those gentlemen will say they have attained much glory and will return home with broken heads."

"Woman, what do you mean by that?" asked Don Alonso, without being able to control a sudden fit of anger that lasted only an instant.

"More than you!" she quickly answered. "But perhaps God will wish to save you, Rafael, to return safe and sound."

This conversation took place during supper, which, needless to say, was a very sad meal; and after the last remarks, the four persons did not say a word. After supper the very tender farewell took place, and as a special favor befitting that unhappy occasion, the kind parents left the sweethearts alone to take leave of each other so that no reticence might force them to omit some word capable of partly assuaging their deep sorrow. As I was unable to be present at this scene, I am unaware of much that happened there; however, it can easily be presumed that there were all the endearments imaginable for each other.

When Malospina left the room, he was as pale as a dead man. He took leave of my master and mistress, who embraced him affectionately, and he went away. When we went to our little mistress, we found her

in a sea of tears. So great was her grief that the consoling words of her kind parents could not comfort her, nor did the cordial which I hurriedly brought from the drug store soothe her nerves. I confess that I was sincerely grieved on seeing the unhappiness of the poor lovers, and deep within my heart I was ashamed of the hatred I had felt for Malespina. The heart of a child forgives easily; and mine was not one of those least disposed to sweet and kind sentiments.

CHAPTER VII

On the following morning a great surprise was being prepared for me, and the greatest rage of her life was in store for my mistress. When I awoke Don Alonso was in an excellent state of humor, and his wife was more irritable than usual. When she went to mass with Rosita, I noticed my master hurriedly thrust some shirts, other articles of clothing, and his uniform into a valise. I helped him, and it all smelled like a flight to me, although I was surprised at not seeing Marcial around anywhere. However, I didn't stop to question his absence, for Don Alonso, having arranged his baggage, seemed very impatient until finally the old sailor arrived. "There is the coach. Let's go before she comes."

I carried the valise, and in the twinkling of an eye Don Alonso, Marcial, and I went out through the corral gate so as not to be seen by anybody; we climbed into the chaise, and it started off as fast as the weakness of the nag and the roughness of the road permitted, for the road was bad for horseback riders and terrible for coaches. But in spite of the big bumps and ridges we quickened our pace, and our poor bodies were not relieved of the trying discomfort until the town was lost from sight.

That journey pleased me very much, because every novelty easily excites the minds of children. Marcial could hardly contain himself for joy, and my master, who at first manifested almost as much gaiety, seemed rather sad when he could no longer see the town. From time to time he would say, "And she is so utterly unaware of all this! What

will she say when she reaches home and doesn't find us?"

My heart swelled within me at the sight of the landscape and the joy and freshness of the morning. I was thrilled with delight at the prospect of seeing Cádiz soon, with its incomparable bay filled with ships; with its noisy, merry street; with its Caleta, to me the symbol of freedom in the most beautiful time of my life; its plaza; its wharf, and other places were very dear to me. We hadn't gone three leagues when we saw two gentlemen riding fine sorrels coming behind us, and soon they joined us. We immediately recognized them as Malespina and his father, that tall, stiff, talkative, old gentleman whom I have mentioned before. Both were surprised to see Don Alonso, and much more so, when he told them he was going to Cádiz to set sail. The son received the news sadly, but the father, who (as even then I could see) was an unredeemable old blusterer, pompously congratulated my master on his determination and called him the flower of seamen, the inspiration of sailors, and the honor of our native land.

We stopped to eat at an inn in Conil. They gave the gentlemen what they had, and Marcial and me what there was left which certainly wasn't much. As I waited table I could hear the conversation, and then I learned the character of the old man Malespina better; if at first he appeared a vain hypocrite, he now seemed the most accomplished liar that I ever heard in my life.

The future father-in-law of my little mistress, José María Malespina, who was not related to the famous seaman of the same name, was a retired artillery colonel, and he prided himself on his perfect

knowledge of that method of warfare and his peerless management of it. As he discussed this subject, his imagination became more and more vivid,...and his expertness in lying more and more apparent.

"Artillerymen," he would say, without pausing in the gulping of his food, "are needed on board. What is a boat without artillery? But where one sees the effects of this admirable invention of human intelligence is on land, señor Alenso. When the War of Rosellon... now you know that I took part in that campaign and that all the triumphs were due to my dexterity in the management of the artillery. The battle of Masden,...why do you think that was won? General Ricardos placed me on a hill with four guns and ordered me not to fire until he commanded me to do so. But I saw things in a different manner; I was very quiet until a French column came and stationed itself in front of me in such a position that my shots could pierce it from one end to the other. The French formed a perfect line. I took good aim with one of the guns, and directed my glance at the head of the first soldier. Do you understand? As the line was so perfect, I fired, and bang! The bullet carried away one hundred and forty-two heads, and more didn't fall because the end of the line moved a little. That produced great consternation in the enemy, but as they didn't understand my strategy and couldn't see me in the location I was in, they sent another column to attack the troops on my right, and that column had the same luck, and another, and another, and another, until the battle was won."

"Man, that is marvelous," said my master, who although realizing the magnitude of the falsehood, did not wish to call his friend a liar.

"But in the second campaign, at the order of the Count of the Union, I beautifully inflicted punishment on the republicans. We didn't come out so well in the defense of Boulon because our ammunition gave out. I, nevertheless, made one great effort and loaded a gun with the keys of the church; but I didn't have many of these, so as a last resort I thrust into the bore of the cannon my keys, my watch, my money, all the trinkets I found in my pockets, even my crosses. The strange thing was one of these crosses lodged in the breast of a French general, and there it remained without causing him any trouble; and when he went to Paris, the Convention condemned him to death (or exile, one) for having received decorations from an enemy government."

"What devilry!" said my master, amused at such funny inventions.

"When I was in England," continued old Malespina, "you know that the English government ordered me to be summoned to perfect the artillery of that country.... Every day I used to eat with Pitt, Burke, Lord North, General Cornwallis and other eminent personages who called me the 'witty Spaniard'. I remember one time when I was in the palace they begged me to show them what a bull fight was like, and I had to challenge a chair with the cloak, prick it with the goad, and then kill it. All the court enjoyed this immensely, especially George III, who was a very good friend of mine; and he would always tell me to send him some fine olives from my country.... Oh! he had much confidence in me. He was very determined that I should teach him Spanish words, and especially those of our charming Andalusia. But he never learned anything but 'otro toro' and 'vengan esos cinco'.

a phrase with which he used to greet me every day when I lunched with him on codfish and white sherry."

"Did he eat that for lunch?"

"That is what he ate and liked it. I used to take him bottled codfish from Cadiz, and it was well preserved with a specific treatment of my own invention, the recipe of which I have at home."

"That is wonderful. And did you reform the English artillery?" asked my master, urging him to continue for his own entertainment.

"Completely. There I invented a cannon which was not ever fired because all London, including the court and ministers, came and begged me not to test it for fear that many houses would fall to the ground from the terrific shock of the report."

"And so such a great invention has been destined to oblivion?"

"The Emperor of Russia wanted to buy it, but it was impossible to move it from its original position."

"Well, you could save us from destruction by inventing a cannon to destroy the English fleet with one shot."

"Oh," answered Malespina, "I am thinking about that, and I believe that I shall be able to realize my ambition. I shall show you the plans I have made, not only to increase to a fabulous degree the caliber of the artillery guns, but also to construct resistance plates to defend the ships and castles. It is the dream of my life."

By this time they had finished eating. Marcial and I hurriedly downed the left-overs in a twinkling of an eye, and we continued our journey, they on horseback and we as before in our dilapidated coach. The meal and the frequent drinks excited even more the inventive vein

of old man Malespina, who all the way kept springing his silly nonsense on us. The conversation turned to the theme with which it began... the War of Resellon; and as Don José hastened to refer to new accomplishments, my master, tired of hearing so much lying, wished to turn him away from that subject, said, "Disastrous and unwise war." It would have been better for us not to have undertaken it!"

"Oh!" exclaimed Malespina. "The Count of Aranda, as you know, condemned from the first this wretched war with the republic. How many times we have discussed this question...for we have been friends from infancy... . When I was in Aragon, we spent several months together hunting near Moncayo. I had a strange shotgun made for him... ."

"Yes. Aranda always opposed...," said my master, interrupting him on the dangerous theme of ballistics.

"Really," continued the liar, "and if that famous man defended peace so warmly with the republicans, it was because I advised him in it and convinced him of the foolishness of the war. But Godoy, who even then was influential, was determined to continue in it, only to vex me as I afterwards learned. The funniest thing was that this same Godoy was forced to end the war in the summer of 95 when he understood what it was, and then the resounding title of Prince of Peace was given to him."

"What we need, friend José María," said my master, "is a good man of high rank in this crisis, a man who will not thrust us into useless wars and will keep unblemished the dignity of the crown!"

"Well, when I was in Madrid last year," said the porvaricator, "they proposed to me that I fill the office of Secretary of State. The Queen was determined that I do so, and the King didn't say any-

thing, as I used to accompany him everyday to the Pardo to shoot a pair of bulls. Even Godoy himself would have agreed, knowing my superiority; but if he hadn't, there would have been a little castle to have locked him up, in case he should give me any trouble. But I refused and preferred to live peacefully in my own town and left the public business in the hands of Godoy. Now there is a man whose father was a mule keeper in a pasture my father-in-law had in Extremadura."

"I didn't know," said Don Alonso. "Although the Prince of Peace was an obscure man, I thought that he was from a poor but excellent family of good lineage."

Thus the dialogue continued with Malespina uttering lies as big as temples and my master listening to them with saintly calm, sometimes angered and other times amused at such absurdities. If I remember correctly, José María also said that he had suggested the daring deed of the Eighteenth to Napoleon.

With these and other things we reached Chiclana, and my master, bruised and fatigued from the movement of the treacherous chaise, stopped in this town, while the others, wishing to reach Cádiz that night continued their journey after supper. While they were eating, Malespina sprung new lies on us, and then I noticed that his son was listening to him sadly as if he was greatly embarrassed to have the biggest liar the world had ever produced for a father. They left and we rested until early morning of the next day when we again resumed our way. As this road from Chiclana to Cádiz was better and more comfortable than the one just traveled, we came to the end of our journey safe and happy about eleven o'clock that morning.

CHAPTER VIII

I cannot explain the enthusiasm that the return to Cadiz awakened in my soul. As soon as my master was safe in the house of his cousin and I could be free for a little while, I ran outside, and intoxicated by the atmosphere of my dear city, I aimlessly ran through the streets.

After such a long absence, the scenes that I had seen so many times now seemed strange and extremely beautiful. I saw a friendly face in all the persons that I met in the street. Everything was nice and amiable...the men, women, old people, children, and dogs. Even in the houses my childish imagination saw something personal and alive; they seemed to be participating in the general happiness caused by my arrival, for their windows and balconies resembled the features of a radiant countenance. My spirit saw its own joy reflected in every exterior thing.

I ran through the streets with great anxiety as if I wished to see them all in one minute. In the plaza of San Juan de Dios I bought some sweetmeats, not so much for the pleasure of eating them, as for the satisfaction of appearing regenerated in the eyes of the vendor women whom I greeted as old friends, recognizing some as favorites in my former wretchedness, and others as victims, who still resented my innocent inclination to maraud. Most of them did not remember me; but some of them, recalling the pranks of my childhood received me with such blows and made such witty comments on my changed appearance, that I had to withdraw hurriedly, but not without my decorum being wounded by fruit peelings expertly hurled against my new suit. However,

due to an acquired consciousness of superiority, this reception caused me more pride than pain.

Then I ran down to the wharf and counted all the anchored ships in sight. I talked with all the sailors I met and told them I, too, was going with the fleet and in a very important voice asked them if Nelson's fleet had reached land. Then I told them that Mr. Corneta was a coward and the next encounter would be favorable.

Finally I came to the Caleta, and there my joy knew no bounds. I went down to the beach, and taking off my shoes, I leaped from crag to crag. I looked for my old friends of both sexes, but I found only a few; some were now men and had followed better careers; some had been recruited for naval service; and those who remained scarcely recognized me. The waving surface of the water awakened delightful sensations in my breast. I was moved by the mysterious attraction of the sea whose eloquent murmur has always seemed to me like a soft voice that sweetly entreats in fair weather, and angrily summons in the storm; and unable to resist the temptation, I took off my clothes hurriedly and leaped into the water as one who hurls himself into the arms of a beloved one.

I swam for more than an hour and experienced an indescribable pleasure. Then I dressed and continued my walk toward the Vina quarter, in whose edifying saloons I met some of the most renowned profligates of my time. Like the worthy man that I was, I shrugged my shoulders at them and spent the few coins that I had for their entertainment. I asked them about my uncle, but they gave me no news concerning his lordship. After I had talked to them a little while in

a very important manner, they had me drink a goblet of rum, and I immediately measured my length on the floor.

I think that those rascals derived sufficient amusement from my drunkenness, but as soon as I sobered up enough, I left the saloon with much embarrassment. Although I was walking with difficulty, I wanted to see my old home; and as I passed by the doorway, I saw an old rugged woman frying blood and tripe. The sight of my birth-place affected me so that I could not help crying, and when the heartless old woman saw my tears she imagined I was tricking her in order to get her frying. Consequently I had to seek safety in flight and leave the expression of my sentiments for a more fitting occasion.

I went by to see the old cathedral the sight of which brought back to me one of the tenderest memories of my childhood; I went inside; its surroundings enchanted me; never have I felt a deeper veneration in any temple than I experienced in that old cathedral. I wanted to pray, and I did so, kneeling down at the altar where my mother had placed a votive offering for my salvation. The wax form that I believed to be my exact image was there, gravely occupying its place among the other sacred things; but it resembled me as an egg a chestnut. That grotesque little figure which symbolized devoutness and maternal devotion filled me, nevertheless, with the deepest reverence. I prayed a while on my knees and recalled the sufferings and death of my good mother, who now was with God in Heaven. But due to that accursed rum my head was not clear, and on rising, I fell down; a hard-hearted priest put me neatly into the street. In a jiffy I crossed to Tideo Street where my master

and I were staying. When I entered the house, my master scolded me for my long absence. If I had done such a thing in the presence of Doña Francisca, she would have given me a good beating; but my master was tolerant, and never punished me, perhaps because he realized he, too, was once a child like me.

We had gone to live in the home of my master's cousin, and I shall describe her at length, as she was a type that certainly deserves it. Doña Flora de Cisniega was an old woman who pretended to be young; she was more than fifty years old, but she practiced all the artifices imaginable to deceive the world and claimed to be about half her age. To tell all that science and art in mutual harmony invented in order to attain such an object is no undertaking for my futile efforts. To enumerate the curls, hair ribbons, ornaments, clothes, pomades, rouges, perfumes, and other strange things which made up the great work of her monumental restoration would fatigue the most skillful imagination. Let all this, then, be reserved for the pens of novelists, for history, seeking after great things, is not appropriate for such. In regard to her appearance, the most outstanding impression I have is her facial make-up, in which all the rosy pencils of the San Fernando Academy must have had a part. I also remember that when talking, she made a grimace with her lips...a sort of folding...the object of which was either to gracefully diminish her enormous mouth or to hide the ravages that every succeeding year made on her teeth; but that supreme strategy was so little successful that it detracted from her appearance rather than improving it.

She dressed extravagantly and in her hairdress she used powder by the quart. As she didn't have a bad figure, (judging by what her low necks proclaimed and her transparent laces revealed) she was very anxious to show those parts most sensitive to the harmful action of the weather; and her art in doing so was truly marvelous.

Doña Flora was especially fond of the past, very religious, although not with the saintly devotion of Doña Francisca, and in every way was the exact opposite of my mistress. Just as Doña Francisca despised naval glory, Doña Flora was enthusiastic over all war men in general and sailors in particular. Now in the maturity of life, she could no longer aspire to the warmth of another love; and for this lack she substituted a national love. Since she was extremely proud as a woman and as a Spanish lady, she measured her patriotic sentiment according to the roaring of the cannon, and she believed that greatness of towns was judged by their pounds of powder. As she had no children, the main interest of her life was the neighborhood quarrels which she discussed with two or three silly old women of her small circle; she always amused herself by her habitual fondness for discussion of public affairs. There were no newspapers then, and political ideas, just as the news, circulated by the living voice, and they were more distorted than now, because the spoken word was always less truthful than the press.

In all the great cities, and especially in Cádiz, the most cultured one, there were many idle persons who were the depositories of news from Madrid and Paris; and they carried it like faithful vehicles, taking great pride in a task which gave them great importance.

Some of these people in the manner of living newspapers gathered at the home of Doña Flora in the afternoon, and this group, in addition to the good chocolate and better cakes, attracted others who were eager to know what was going on. Doña Flora who no longer could inspire a genuine passion nor remove the heavy affliction of her fifty years, would not have exchanged that role for any other, for the general center of news in that day was equivalent to the majesty of a throne.

Doña Flora and Doña Francisca were exact opposites and neither could endure the other; this disparity can be understood easily when one considers the exaggerated pacifism of the one and the exalted militarism of the other. On the day of our arrival the old woman was talking to her cousin.

"If you had always listened to that wife of yours, you would still be a sea guard. What a character! If I were a man and married to such a woman, I would blow up like a bomb. You have acted wisely in not following her advice and in coming to the fleet. You are still young, Alonso; you can still attain the rank of brigadier, which you would surely have now if Paca hadn't cooped you up like chickens in a corral!"

Then when my master curiously asked her the news, she said to him, "The main thing is that all the sailors from here are very dissatisfied with the French admiral, for he has proved his inability on the voyage to Martinique and in the Finisterre combat. He is so weak and afraid of the English that when the combined squadron arrived here last August, he did not dare to attack three English

errisers under the command of Collingwood. Our entire body of officers resents being forced to obey the orders of such a man. Gravina could foresee great disaster if a more competent man was not placed at the head of the fleet and he went to Madrid and told Godoy so; but the minister answered something or other, because he didn't dare to do anything. Bonaparte is in Germany engaged with the Austrians while this French admiral won't make up his mind... . They say that Napoleon is very discontented with Villeneuve and that he is determined to remove him, but meanwhile... . Ah, if Napoleon would entrust the command of the fleet to some Spaniard, to you, for example, Alfonso, and raise you three ranks, for truly you deserve it,... ."

"Oh, I am not equal to that," said my master with his usual modesty.

"Or to Gravina or Churrucá, who they say is a good seaman. If not, I'm afraid this business is going to turn out badly. They won't even look at the French here. Why, imagine! When the Villeneuve ships reached here, they lacked provisions and munitions, and they didn't want to give them to them at the arsenal. They went in complaint to Madrid; and since Godoy does only as the French Ambassador, M. de Bernouville, wishes, he ordered that they hand over everything our allies needed. But even that didn't do any good. The commandant of the navy yard and the artillery major say that they will give nothing as long as Villeneuve does not pay in ready cash. That was well spoken. The only thing we need now is for those gentlemen with their clean hands to come and carry off the little that we have! Fine are the times! Now, it's costing a pretty penny! Yellow fever

on one side and bad times on the other have put Andalusia in such a state that she isn't worth the price of a mop; and then add to this the disaster of war. It is true that national honor is of first importance, and it is necessary to continue to avenge the injuries received. I don't want to remember the defeat of Finisterre, where, due to the cowardice of our allies we lost the Firme and the Rafael, two ships as fine as the sun; neither do I wish to recall the blasting of Real Carlos, which was too treacherous an act for the barbaric Moors; nor do I like to remember the plunder of the four frigates or the defeat of... ."

"That was due to, ...it is necessary for each one to remain in his own place," said my master interrupting her eagerly. "If Admiral Cordova had ordered to veer to... ."

"Yes, yes, I know it," said Doña Flora, who had heard my master say this same thing many times. "It is necessary to give them a great beating and you will give it to them. I believe you are going to cover yourself with glory. We will make Paca furious."

"I am not any good for the combat," said my master sadly. "I come only to witness it out of pure love and enthusiasm which our dear flag arouses in me."

On the day following our arrival my master received a visit from a navy officer, and old friend of his whose face I shall never forget, in spite of having seen it only that one time. He was a man about forty-five years old; his face was handsome, friendly, and so sad that it was impossible to see him without feeling an irresistible impulse to love him. He wore no wig and his thick blond hair, which had not

been tortured by the pliers of the hairdresser to take the form of a pigeon, was gathered carelessly into a big eye and was powdered with less art than the conceit common to the period demanded. He had large blue eyes, very delicate nose, perfectly formed and a little long; however, the length rather increased than detracted from the nobility of his countenance. His carefully trimmed beard was somewhat pointed, thus increasing the melancholy whole of his oval face, which revealed more delicacy than power. The nobility of his person was due to a certain politeness, breeding, and grave courtesy which you cannot visualize because of the stiff vanity of the great seigniors of the day or the fickle vanity of our gilded youth. His small body was delicate and frail; he resembled a student more than a warrior, and his forehead which doubtless enclosed high and sensitive thoughts, did not seem very fitting to face the horrors of battle. His weak constitution, which surely contained an exceptional spirit looked as if it would perish in the first skirmish. And nevertheless, as I afterwards learned, that man had as much courage as intelligence. He was Churrucá.

His uniform was not frayed or old, but it showed several years of honorable service. Afterwards, when I heard him say in an uncomplaining way that the government owed him nine salary payments, I understood that impairment. My master asked him about his wife, and from his answer I judged that he had been married only a short time before, and I felt great pity for him and thought it terrible that he should be ordered to battle at such a happy time. He spoke then of his ship the San Juan Nepomuceno, which he seemed to regard

as affectionately as his wife; he then said that as a special privilege he had planned and arranged it and that it was now one of the finest ships of the Spanish Armada.

Then they discussed whether the fleet would leave or not....a common topic of conversation in those days, and the sailor expressed himself at length with these words, the gist of which I remember still, and which later I was able to reconstruct exactly with the aid of historical dates and notes.

"The French Admiral," said Churruga, "not knowing what resolution to make, and wishing to do something to detract from his mistakes has proved himself an adherent to the plan of setting sail in pursuit of the English. The eighth of October he wrote to Gravina and told him he was in favor of a council of war on board the Bucentauro in order to decide on the best policy to employ. In fact Gravina was in sympathy with the suggestion, and he took Lieutenant-General Alava, Rear-Admirals Escano and Cisneros, Brigadier Galiano, and me. From the French fleet were Admirals Dumanoir and Bagon, and the navy captains Cosmao, Laistral, Villiegris and Frigny.

"Villeneuve wished to leave port with the ships and all we Spaniards opposed him. The discussion was very lively and intense, and Alcalá Galiano exchanged several cross words with Admiral Bagon which might have caused a duel if we had not established peace between them. Our opposition displeased Villeneuve and he, too, in the heat of the talk spoke several insolent words which Gravina answered in a more forceful manner. The determination of these gentlemen to set out to

sea in pursuit of a powerful enemy is curious, for they abandoned us in the Battle of Finisterre when we had a good chance of winning the fight if they had helped us in time. Besides there are other reasons which I explained in the meeting and they are: the season is advancing; the most advantageous position for us is to remain in the bay and force them to a blockade which they can't resist very long in the worst weather of the year, and especially if they are blockading Talon and Cartagena, too. Sadly we must confess the superiority of the English navy due to the perfection of armaments, the excellent equipment of their ships, and especially the unity with which their squadrons operate. We, with imperfect arms, and under the command of a chief with whom every one is discontented, would be able, nevertheless, to fight a defensive war in the bay. But it will be necessary to obey, according to the blind submission of the Court of Madrid, and to place boats and sailors at the mercy of Bonaparte, who has given us in exchange for this servitude a leader worthy of such sacrifices. We shall leave if Villeneuve is set on it; but if the results are disastrous, our opposition which we have made to the absurd plan of the Rear-Admiral of the combined squadron will be our exoneration. Villeneuve has surrendered to desperation; his master has said hard things to him, and the news that he is going to be replaced induces him to commit the greatest follies, hoping to recapture in one day his lost reputation through victory or through death."

Thus my master's friend expressed himself. His words made a great impression on me, for as a child I was deeply interested in those affairs;

and later, by reading a history of the same event of which I was a witness, I have supplemented my memory with authentic dates and can relate the story with sufficient accuracy.

When Churrueca went away, Doña Flora and my master praised him warmly and especially acclaimed his South American expedition made for the purpose of mapping those seas. I heard them say that the merits of Churrueca as a wise man and seaman were such that Napoleon gave him a costly gift and showered him with attentions. But let's leave the sailor and return to Doña Flora.

After we had been there two days, I noticed a phenomenon which displeased me beyond measure, and it was that my master's cousin began to be fond of me, . . . that is to say she decided I was worthy to be her page. She never stopped showing me every kind of consideration and affection; and when she learned I was going to the fleet, she grieved about it and declared it would be a pity for me to lose an arm, leg, or some other part of my body, if not my life. That disloyal compassion angered me, and I still believe I spoke some indignant words to show I was aroused to warlike ardor. My bravado amused the old woman, and she gave me a thousand dainties to get me out of my bad humor.

The next morning she had me clean the cage of her parrot, a discreet bird who spoke like a theologian and awoke us every morning by shouting "English dog, English dog!" Then she took me with her to mass and made me care for her foot-stool; in the church she never stopped turning her head to see if I was there. Later she made me

assist at her toilet, the sight of which frightened me when I saw the scaffold of ringlets and topknots that the wigmaker set on her head. She noticed the indiscreet amazement with which I viewed the skill of the master, a true architect of heads, and she laughed a great deal and told me I ought to stay with her to be her page instead of going to the fleet; she added that I should learn to comb her, and with the occupation of a skilled wigmaker, I could earn a good living and be a real person. Such suggestions did not seduce me, and I told her rather rudely that I'd rather be a soldier than a wigmaker. Since she was as fond of military and patriotic matters as she was of her hairdress, this reply pleased her and she redoubled her affection toward me. In spite of the fact that Dona Flora petted and caressed me, I confess that annoyed me to the utmost, and I preferred the rude blows of the wrathful Dona Francisca to her sugary kindness.

It was natural; her inopportune fondness, her affection, the insistence with which she sought my company, her declaration that my conversation and appearance were charming...all these things prevented me from following my master on board the ship. His cousin's servant was escorting him on such sweet business, while I, without the opportunity of running through the streets of Cadiz, was bored in the house, in company of the parrot and Dona Flora and those gentlemen who came there every afternoon to discuss whether the fleet would leave or not and other more foolish and trivial matters.

My displeasure reached desperation when I learned that Marcial was coming to the house and my master was leaving with him to go aboard the ship although not definitely to embark.

When this happened and when my troubled soul still cherished a weak hope of forming part of that expedition, Doña Flora felt obliged to take me for a walk along the public stroll and then to the Church of Carmen to say evening vespers.

This was unbearable to me, especially as I was planning to put into execution a certain little daring project on my own responsibility, which consisted in going to visit one of the ships which was piloted by a sailor acquaintance of mine whom I was hoping to meet on the wharf. I left with the old woman, and on passing along the wharf, I stopped to look at the ships, but it was impossible to surrender myself to the intellectual delights of that spectacle, for I had to answer the thousand questions of Doña Flora who now had no seasick. During the walk some youths and older men, who greeted her with great respect, joined us. They seemed very presumptuous, and as I learned afterwards, they were the fashionable people of Cádiz...all exceedingly wise and elegant. One of them was a poet,...or better said, all of them made rather bad verses, and it seems to me I heard them speak of a certain academy where they gathered to skirmish with their stanzas, an amusement which harmed nobody.

As I observed everything, the peculiar appearance of those men attracted my attention; their faces were feminine and their dress looked very freakish to me. There weren't many persons in Cádiz who dressed in that manner; and afterwards, thinking how different was the dress of the people I had always seen, I realized that the contrast was due to the fact that they dressed in Spanish style while Doña Flora's

friends dressed according to Madrid and Paris fashions. I first noticed their walking canes which were twisted sticks with very heavy joints; their chins were hidden from view because of their big ties, a sort of shawl, which, wrapped several times around the neck as far as the lips, formed a kind of basket, or tray, or rather a shaving cup in which the face rested; the artful carelessness of their hairdress seemed to have been achieved with a broom instead of a comb; the tips of their hats touched their shoulders; their very long dress coats almost swept the ground with their tails; their boots ended in points; from their vest pockets dangled a multitude of charms and fobs; their striped hose were tied at the knee with an enormous bow; and to make their grotesqueness complete, they all carried a monocle, which during the conversation they repeatedly placed at their right eye, closing the left although both eyes had very good sight.

Their conversation concerned the departure of the fleet, alternating with the report of some dance or celebration of great importance, and one of them was the object of great praise because of the excellent manner in which he executed the gavot.

After having talked a long time they entered the Church of Carmen with Doña Flora and there, each one taking his rosary, they prayed and applied themselves for quite a while; one of them neatly dealt me a blow on the crown because instead of praying as devotedly as they, I was paying too much attention to two flies that were revolving around the topmost curl of Doña Flora's hair. We left, after hearing a story sermon which they praised as a masterpiece; we went for another walk;

the lively conversation continued because some dames dressed in the same style joined us; and there arose among them such a noisy din of compliments and cunning remarks mingled with silly verses, that I can not remember them.

And meanwhile Marcial and my dear master were trying to fix the day and hour definitely to go on board! And I was in danger of having to stay on land, subject to the whims of that old woman who was always embarrassing me with her repulsive affection. Will you believe me when I say she assured me that she loved me a great deal, and as proof gave me some affectionate embraces and kisses, ordering me not to tell anybody. Horrible contradiction of fate! I used to think how happy I would have been if my little mistress had treated me in that manner. I was deeply worried and told her I wanted to go to the fleet, and when I returned, she could love me as much as she wanted to; but that if she didn't let me have my wish, I would hate her as much as this, and I stretched out my arms to express an immense amount of abhorrence. Then my master entered unexpectedly and I decided that now was the proper time to obtain my wish; so with a passionate outburst of oratory which I had taken pains to prepare, I hurled myself on my knees before him and told him in the most pathetic tone that if he didn't carry me on board with him, I would hurl myself into the sea.

My master laughed at me; his cousin made certain little grimaces with her mouth and pretended a feeling of hilarity increasing the ugliness of her ill-smelling face. But she consented finally and gave me countless sweets to eat on board; she warned me to flee from the

dangerous places and didn't say another word contrary to my embarking,
which took place the following morning very early.

CHAPTER IX

It was the eighteenth of October. I have no doubt concerning this date, because on the following day the fleet left. We arose very early and went to the wharf where a boat conducted us on board.

Imagine my surprise, ... I say surprise! Imagine my enthusiasm, my rapture when I came near the Santísima Trinidad, the greatest ship in the world, that wooden castle which seen from a distance resembled a marvellous, supernatural factory...the only monster worthy of the majesty of the seas. When our boat passed close to a ship I would examine it with awe and reverence and wonder how such great hulls could appear so little from the wharf. At other times they seemed even smaller than my imagination had conceived them. The restless exuberance which possessed me caused me to fall into the water while I with ecstatic rapture was gazing at a big figure of a prow, an object which fascinated me more than any other.

Finally we reached the Trinidad; as we approached, the dimensions of that colossus increased. When the launch came up to the side of the ship, darkened by the fearful black mass which the shadow of the ship formed, when I saw the motionless black hull submerged in the gloomy water beating softly against its sides, when I raised my eyes and saw the three rows of cannon, their threatening mouths peering out the portholes, my enthusiasm changed to fear, I turned pale, and stood still, hanging to my master's arm.

But as soon as we went on board and I found myself on deck, my heart swelled within me. The airy and lofty masts and spars, the

excitement on quarterdeck, the view of the sky and bay, the admirable order of all the objects on deck, from the cots placed in a row on the upper works to the capstans, bombs, wind sails, hatchways, the variety of uniforms, ...everything so astonished me that I gazed at the ship totally oblivious of everything else in existence except that beautiful imposing structure.

You cannot conceive those magnificent vessels, much less the *Santisima Trinidad* because of the bad prints which you have seen. Neither do they resemble in any way the warships of today: long, black, monotonous, covered with heavy iron armor the unbroken expanse of which reminds me of an immense floating coffin. The latter are creations of a practical period and adequate representatives of the nautical-military science of these times. They have replaced the riggings with steam; they have entrusted the outcome of combat to the power and enterprise of the ship; they are simply war machines while those of our day were the warrior himself, armed with every type of offense and defense weapon, but relying chiefly on their own skill and valor.

I observe everything that I see and have always had the habit of associating to the extreme ideas with images, things with persons, although they may not have the slightest relation to each other. Later I saw the Gothic cathedrals and those of Flanders, and I noticed the imposing majesty, the complicated and cunning structure of modern buildings erected for useful purposes such as banks, hospitals, dwellings; nevertheless these later contributions of the age have not detracted from the memory of every type of ship I've seen in my long life and I've always compared those ancient ones to Gothic cathedrals. Their

lofty forms extending into the heavens, the predominance of vertical lines over horizontal ones...these resemblances together with a certain inexplicable idealism, both historic and religious, the complication of lines, the color combinations made by the capricious play of the sun have formed this odd association which I explain as a trace of the childhood romanticism.

The Santísima Trinidad was a four decked ship. The largest ones in the world had only three decks. That colossus, constructed in Havana in 1769 counted thirty-six years of honorable service. She was 220 feet in length, that is to say from stern to prow, 58 feet in width, and 28 feet in height from keel to deck,...extraordinary dimensions which no other ship in the world had at that time. Her powerful frame, resembling a real forest supported four floors. 116 portholes opened from the strong wooden walls of her sides; later in 1796 this number was increased to 130; she was equipped again in 1805, and when I saw her, she boasted 140 firearms in cannon and shorter artillery guns. The interior was marvellous in the distribution of various compartments: there were decks for the artillery, quarters for the crew, storehouses for provisions, cabins for the admirals, kitchens, an infirmary, and other services. I ran in amazement through the corridors and hiding places of this Escorial of the sea. The cabins situated on the stern were small palaces inside and resembled fantastic fortresses on the outside; the balconies and pavilions of the stern corners, like the lights of an arched castle, were similar to immense cages open to the sea from which could be seen three-fourths of the horizon.

There was nothing more magnificent than the masts and spars, those gigantic trees, reaching skyward as a challenge to the tempest. It seemed that the wind didn't have to have strength to move the topsails. The vision made one seasick and confused in the contemplation of the immense mass that the shrouds, stays, rails, cords, halyards, and the ropes which moved and supported the sails formed in the masts and spars.

I was completely engrossed in the sight of such a wonder when I felt a hard blow on the nape of my neck. I thought that the largest beam had fallen on me. I turned around with surprise and uttered an exclamation of horror; a man was pulling me by the ears as if he wished to raise me from the ground. He was my uncle.

"What are you looking for here, earthworm?" he said to me in that usual oily tone of his. "Do you want to learn the trade? Listen, Juan," he added, addressing a ferocious sailor, "put this tortoise up on that yard for me to see if he can walk along it."

I eluded as I could the embarrassment of walking along the yard, and I courteously explained to him that I was in the service of Alonso Gutierrez de Cisniega and had come on board in his company. Three or four sailors, friends of my nice uncle, wished to mistreat me; but I resolved to get away from such distinguished society, and I ran to the cabin in search of my master. The officers were making their toilet, no less complicated on board than on land, and when I saw the pages occupied in powdering the heads of the heroes whom they served, I asked myself if that operation wasn't the least fitting

on board a boat where every second was precious and everything not absolutely essential for service was an obstruction.

But style was then as tyrannical as now, and even in the age imposed its ridiculous vexations in the most pressing way. Even the soldier had to use precious time in making his own jacket. Poor man! I saw them placed in a row; one behind the other, each one adjusting the jacket of the one in front of him and miraculously finishing the operation in a short time. Then they clapped on their leather hats of heavy weight, the object of which I could never explain, went to their positions if they were on guard, or walked through the open spaces if they were off duty. The sailors didn't wear that ridiculous headdress, and their simple uniform hasn't undergone much change since that time.

In the cabin my master was talking in an excited manner with the commander of the ship, Francisco Javier de Triarte, and the Rear Admiral, Baltasar Hidalgo de Cisneros. According to the little bit I heard, there was no doubt that the French general had given an order to leave the following morning.

This order gladdened Marcial, who in company with other old sailors in the fore-castle, was discussing the next combat with great verbosity. Such association was more pleasing to me than that of my interesting uncle, for the colleagues of Half-man did not allow jokes at my expense. This one difference alone reveals the dissimilarity of the crews, for while one was composed of pure-bred sailors whose presence there was due to voluntary enlistment, the other was

made up of frivolous, lazy, discontented men of evil habits and little knowledge of duty.

I preferred the first group to the second and attended all the conferences of Marcial. If I were not fearful of tiring the reader, I would tell the explanation that he gave concerning the diplomatic and political causes of the war, paraphrasing in the most comical way what I had heard from the lips of Malespina in the home of my master; through him I learned that the sweetheart of my mistress had set sail on the *Nepomuceno*.

All the conferences ended on one subject, ...the next combat. The fleet ought to leave the following day. What a pleasure! To sail in that gigantic ship, the biggest in the world! To witness a battle! How the cannon would fire! How the enemy ships would be captured! What a beautiful fiesta! And then to return to Cadiz wreathed in glory! To tell everybody who wanted to listen to me, "I was with the fleet; I saw everything!" To tell my little mistress, picturing to her the magnificent scene and exciting her attention, her curiosity, her interest; to tell her, too, "I was in the places of greatest danger and didn't tremble a bit!" To see her swell with pride, grow pale and frightened as she listened to my tale of the horrors of combat; and then to stare disdainfully at all who might say, "Gabriel, tell about that tremendous event...!" Oh, all this was more than my imagination needed to run wild. I frankly say that on that day I would not have traded places with Nelson.

The nineteenth, a very happy day for me damned, and before daylight I was in the fore-castle with my master who wanted to witness the working of the ship. After the washing of the decks, the operation of setting sail began. The great topsails were hoisted, and the heavy drum of the capstan, whirling with its sharp creaking, drew the mighty anchor from the bottom of the bay. The sailors were running along the yards, others were measuring the fathoms promptly obeying the orders of the boatswains. All the sounds of the ship formerly mute now filled the air with their frightoning jargon; the whistle, the prow bell, the discordant array of a thousand human voices mingled with the grinding of the motors, the creaking of ropes, the canvas of the sails flapping against the masts before being filled by the wind; all these different sounds accompanied the first steps of the colossal ship.

Small waves caressed her sides, and the majestic mass began to slide through the bay without making the least pitch, without any sway of her sides, with a grave solemn advance which cannot be fully appreciated by those who have observed only the imaginary movement of an anchored merchant vessel or have watched a sailing ship only on the distant landscape.

As one glanced about, what a spectacle met his eyes! My heavens! Thirty-two ships, five frigates, and two brigs, ...Spanish and French vessels in front of us, behind us, on our side, ...were covered with sails and moved along carried by the light wind. I have never seen

a more beautiful morning! The sun was flooding that magnificent bay with light. A pale purplish tinge dyed the surface of the waters toward the east. The chain of hills and mountains bordering the edge of the horizon on the side of the port were still inflamed with the burning lights of dawn; the sky, hardly clear at this hour, had some red and golden clouds in the east; the blue sea was tranquil, and on this sea and beneath that sky the forty ships launched their course, ...the most picturesque fleet that human eyes can ever witness.

All were not sailing with the same speed; some moved forward, others were slow in advancing; some passed close to us, while others remained behind. The solemnity of their movement; the loftiness of the canvas-covered riggings; a certain mysterious harmony that my childish ears imagined to flow from the glorious hulls (doubtless the song was ringing in my own heart); the clearness of the day; the freshness of the atmosphere; the beauty of the sea, which beyond the bay seemed to stir with genuine merriment at the approach of the fleet... together all these things formed the most imposing picture that can be imagined.

Meanwhile, Cadiz was a revolving panorama as we watched the distinct facets of her vast circuit appear in their successive order. The sun shining down on her countless windows splashed her with streaks of gold. Her white mass appeared so clean and pure above the waters that she seemed to have been created at that moment or to have been taken from the sea like the fantastic city of San Gerano. I saw the unfolding of the wall from the wharf to the Santa Catalina castle, I recognized

the bastion of Orejón, the bastion of Bonete, the Galeta, and I filled with pride on considering my humble beginning and my present position.

At the same time there came to my ears like a mystic music the sounds of bells in the half-awakened city as they tolled for mass. Now they seemed to express joy like the greeting of a good old man, and I listened to those sounds as if they were human voices bidding me farewell; now their tones were sad and melancholy as if announcing some misfortune, and while we glided forward the music faded, completely dying away into immense space.

The fleet was leaving slowly; some ships were many hours in reaching sea. Marcial kept making comments on each vessel observing her progress, calling them offensive names if they were slow, encouraging them with fatherly advice if they were swift and sailing fast.

"How slow Don Federica is!" he said watching the Príncipe of Asturias under the command of Gravina. "There goes Mr. Corneta," he claimed looking at the Bucentauro, the flagship... . May he do well who tacked the name Rayo on you," he said ironically, gazing at the ship of this name, the slowest in the entire squadron. "Fire for papa Ignacio's sake," he added addressing the Santa Ana under the control of Alava. "Raise the whole top sail, poor fish," he said watching Dumanair's ship, "this little French dude has a wigmaker to curl the sails and load them with curling irons."

The sky became cloudy in the afternoon, and at nightfall from a great distance we saw Cádiz lost from view in the fog and her last

outlines faded in the darkness. The fleet turned her course southward.

With my master sitting comfortably in his cabin, I did not part company with Marcial. Surrounded by two colleagues and friends, he explained to them Villeneuve's policy in the following manner. "Mr. Corneta has divided the fleet into four parts. The vanguard, commanded by Alava, has seven ships, the center has seven under the control of Mr. Corneta in person. The rear guard, also with seven, is commanded by Dumanoir, and the reserve body composed of twelve ships is under the direction of Don Federico. I don't think this is a bad idea. Of course the Spanish vessels are mixed with those French dudes so they won't leave us in the bull's horns like they did at Finisterre.

"As Alonso has told me, the Frenchman has said that if the enemy appears under the lee, we will form a battle line and fall on them. This sounds very good in the cabin. But, now...is the Señorito going to be such an ox that he will appear under the lee? Sure, his lordship has little enough sense to stop and fish... . Let's see if we understand what that Frenchman is waiting for... . If the enemy appears on our windward and attacks us we ought to wait for them in a battle line; and as they will have to separate to attack us, if they don't get to break our line, it will be easy to defeat them. Everything seems easy to that gentleman. (His listeners whisper.) Also he says he will not make signals and tells us to wait for everything from each captain. We are going to see what I have been predicting ever since that damned subsidy treaty was signed; and that is.... Well, it's better to keep silent. May God grant...I've already said

that Mr. Corneta doesn't know what he has in his hands, and fifty ships aren't going to fall on their heads for him. Beware of an admiral that calls his captains the day before a battle and tells them to do as each one wishes. (Great demonstrations of applause.) Well, we shall see... . But come here and tell me; if we Spaniards want to sink all those English ships together, aren't we enough and more than enough for it? But why do we have to join up with these Frenchmen who won't let us do what something inside us tells us to do, but makes us toe the line of their lordships? We always gave when we went with them; we always gave when we left fleeced. God and the Virgin be with us and free us from those French friends forever and ever, Amen." (Great applause.)

All agreed with him. Their conference elevated from the naval rank to that of diplomatic relations and lasted until a late hour. The night was serene, and we were sailing with a fresh wind. If I may be permitted, I shall say "we" when speaking of the fleet. I was so proud to find myself on board the Santísima Trinidad, that I soon came to the conclusion that I was to play some important role in such a sublime event, and I truly conducted myself in a graceful manner in the presence of the sailors so as to prove to them that my assistance there was a necessity.

CHAPTER X

On the dawn of the twentieth there was a strong wind, and consequently the ships were quite a distance from one another. But about noon the wind calmed, and the flagship gave signals to form five columns, the vanguard, center, rearguard, and two reserve bodies.

It delighted me to watch these huge bulks making the formation with such ease, and, although due to the dissimilarity of their sailing conditions their manoeuvres were not very rapid and the line formation imperfect, that drill always aroused my keenest admiration. According to Marcial, the wind was blowing from the southwest as he had prophesied that morning, and the fleet, with the wind to starboard, advanced in the direction of the strait. That night we saw some lights and at dawn of the twenty-first we saw twenty-seven ships to the windward among which Marcial pointed out seven three-deckers. At about eight o'clock the thirty-three ships of the enemy squadron came into view drawn up into a two-column formation. Our fleet formed one very long line, and from all appearances the two columns of Nelson in the shape of a cradle were advancing as if they wished to cut our line through the center and rearguard.

Such was the position of both sides, when the Bucentaure made the signal to veer about. Perhaps you will not understand this, but I mean that ships shifted their course diametrically, ...that is to say that the ships, driven by the wind on the starboard, by this manoeuvre now had the wind on the larboard, in such a way that we were going in the direction almost opposite to the one we were holding.

The prows pointed toward the north, and this movement, the object of which was to have Cádiz under the wind so as to reach it in case of distress, was much criticized aboard the Trinidad and especially by Marcial who said, "That battle line was bad enough before, and now she's spread her legs apart and is worse."

Really, the vanguard became the rearguard, and the reserve squadron, which was the best according to what I heard was left at the end of the line. Since the wind was slack, the ships of different speed, and the crews not too skillful, the new line could not be rapidly or precisely formed. Some ships forged ahead rapidly and took the lead; others fell behind or turned out of the row, leaving a big gap in the line, thus saving the enemy the trouble of making it.

The command was given to re-establish the former order; however obedient a good ship may be, it is not as easy to manage as a horse. Thus Half-man, watching the movements of the near-by ships said, "The line is longer than the road to Santiago. If the Señorito cuts it, good-by, my flag. He couldn't even move forward, even if every hair on our heads were turned into cannons. Señors, they're going to make julep of us through the center. How can the San Juan and the Bahama, who are at the tail, or the Septimo or the Rayo, who are at the head of the line, come to help us? (Murmurs of approval) Besides we are under the lee, and the cassocks can select the point they wish to attack us. We will have enough to do defending ourselves as best we can. All I can say is, may God bring us out well and free us from the French forever, amen, Jesus."

The sun was advancing toward the zenith and was now overhead the enemy.

"Don't you think that this is the hour to begin a battle? Twelve o'clock noon!" he exclaimed angrily, although he didn't dare to make too public a demonstration, nor did these conferences pass from the small circle, within which, I, led by my insatiable curiosity, introduced myself.

I don't know why, but I seemed to notice in all their countenances expressions of displeasure. The officers on quarterdeck, the sailors and boatswains on the prow were watching the ships under the lee and out of line, among which there were four belonging to the center group.

I had forgotten to mention a preliminary operation of the battle in which I took part. When the clearing for action had been made, and everything pertaining to the guns and workings of the ship had been put in readiness, I heard them say, "The sand,...spread the sand."

Marcial pulled my ear, and leading me to a hatchway had me get in line with some drafted sailors, cabinboys, and others of little importance. Some sailors had formed a stairway between decks from the hatchway to the bottom of the hold, and in this way the sacks of sand were moved. One handed it to the man next to him, and this one passed it on to the following man, and in this way all that was needed was removed rapidly and without any trouble. Passing from hand to hand, a great number of the sacks came up from the hold, and great was my surprise when I saw that they were emptying them on the deck, the quarterdeck, the forecastles and even spreading it over the entire

surface of the beams. They were doing the same thing between decks. To satisfy my curiosity I asked the cabinboy next to me the reason for all this.

"It is for the blood," he answered me indifferently.

"For the blood!" I repeated, unable to repress a shudder of horror.

I stared at the sand, I looked at the loud and noisy sailors busy at their task, and for an instant I felt cowardly and afraid. However imagination, my complete master at that time, soon banished every terror from my soul, and I thought only of triumphs and pleasant surprises.

The cannons were ready, and I noticed that munitions, also, were passing from the storerooms to between decks by means of a human chain similar to that one which had removed the sand from the hold of the vessel.

The English advanced to attack us in two groups. One was coming towards us with a ship bearing the admiral pennant in the lead or in the vortex of the cradle. Later I learned it was the Victory under the command of Nelson. The Royal Sovereign under Collingwood was at the head of the other group.

Since then I have studied all these names as well as the strategic details of the encounter.

My memory, very clear in everything picturesque and matter-of-fact, is of little assistance in relating operations which I did not understand at the time. I was able to understand the formation of our fleet from what I heard Marcial say together with information I gathered later; so that you may understand it well, I shall give you a list of our ships indicating those out of line by leaving a gap, their nationality, and

Neptune-Sp.
 Scipion-Fr.
 Rayo-Sp.
 Formidable-Fr. Vanguard
 ...Duguay-Fr.
 Mont-Blanc-Fr.
 Asis-Sp.

First Group
 commanded by
 Nelson
 Victory

Augustin-Sp.
 Heros-Fr.
 Trinidad-Sp.
 Bucentaure-Fr.
 ...Neptun-Fr. Center
 Redoubtable-Fr.
 Intrepide-Fr.
 ...Leandro-Sp.

Second Group
 commanded by Collingwood

Royal Sovereign

...Justo-Sp.
 ...Indomptable-Fr.
 Santa Ana-Sp.
 Fougueux-Fr. Rearguard
 Monarca-Sp.
 Pluton-Fr.

Bahama-Sp.
 ...Aigle-Fr.
 Montañes-Sp.
 Algeciras-Sp.
 Argonauta-Sp.
 Swift Sure-Fr. Reserve
 ...Argonaute-Fr.
 Ildefonso-Sp.
 ...Achilles-Fr.
 Principe de Asturias-Sp.
 Berwick-Fr.
 Neponceno-Sp.

the form in which we were attacked.

It was a quarter until two. The terrible moment was approaching. Anxiety was widespread and I do not say this as a result of my own feelings, for I was watching closely the movements of the ship they said Nelson was on, and for quite a while I didn't realize what was happening around me.

Suddenly our commander shouted an order in a terrible voice. The boatswains repeated it. The sailors ran toward the ropes, the pulleys shrieked, the sails of the foremast fluttered outward. "About face! About face," yelled Marcial uttering a terrible oath. "That damned man wants to throw us through the stern."

Instantly I understood that the advance of the Trinidad had been commanded to halt in order to place it opposite the Bucentaure who was coming in the rear, because the Victory seemed determined to cut the line between these two ships.

As I watched the manoeuvring of our ship I could see that a great part of the crew did not have the usual grace and ease of experienced sailors who, like Marcial, had been trained in wars and storms. I saw some who were seasick and were grasping the shrouds to keep from falling. It is true there were some determined, resolute men, especially in the volunteer class; but generally, most of them were drafted ones who obeyed orders unwillingly and I am sure they didn't have the least sentiment of patriotism; it (patriotism) did not make them worthy of the combat, but the combat itself did, as I found out afterwards. In spite of the fact that each one of those men possessed a varying degree

of moral and religious consciousness, I am sure that in those solemn moments preceding the firing of the first shot, the idea of God was uppermost in all their minds.

It seemed to me that all my life I had experienced such sensations as those I felt at that moment. In spite of my few years I was capable of realizing the seriousness of the occasion, and for the first time lofty conceptions and generous thoughts stirred my heart. The certainty of victory was so fixed in my mind that I felt a certain pity for the English, and I admired them so eagerly seeking sure death.

For the first time, then, I perceived clearly the idea of fatherland, and strange spontaneous emotions awakened in my soul. Until then I had always thought of my native land in terms of the persons who governed the nation, such as the king and his celebrated minister who surely were not regarded with the same respect. Since my only knowledge of history was that acquired in the Calista, I thought the law demanded that one should become enthusiastic on hearing that the Spaniards had first killed a great number of Moors and then quite a few Englishmen and Frenchmen. I pictured my country as a valiant hero, but my conception of valor resembled barbarism as much as one egg does another; consequently with such ideas as these, patriotism was to me only pride in belonging to that race of Moor killers.

But in the moment preceding the battle I understood everything that divine word signified, and the perception of nationality gained entrance to my soul, revealing infinite marvels to me like the sun which scatters the night and removes the darkness from a lovely land-

scape. Now I thought of my native country as an immense land populated with men all of whom were united by the common bond of brotherhood; society was divided into families in which there were wives to support, children to educate, estates to preserve, honor to defend; I considered the pact established among so many beings to help and defend one another against an outside attack, and I realized that these ships had been made by all of them to defend their native land; the soil in which they they placed their plants; the furrow sprinkled with their sweat; the home where their old parents lived; the garden where their children played; the colony discovered and conquered by their ancestors; the port where they tied their small boat, tired after the day's journey; the shop where they stored their earthly possessions; the church, the tomb of their elders, the abode of their saints, the ark of their faith; the plaza, the gathering-place of their happy leisure hours; the house whose old furniture becomes the symbol of the perpetuity of nations; the kitchen on whose smoked walls is never extinguished the echo of the stories the grandmothers told to soothe the mischief and unrest of the children; the street where so many dear friendly faces are seen going by; the country, the sea, the sky; everything from birth that is associated with our existence, from the stable of a cherished animal to the throne of patriarchal kings; every object in which our very souls seem to dwell as if our bodies were not enough.

I also believed that the disputes Spain had with France or with England were always due to the fact that these nations wanted to take

something away from us, ... an idea in which I was not wholly mistaken. In my mind defense was as legitimate as aggression was brutal, and since I had heard it said that justice always triumphs, I did not question our victory. As I looked at our red and yellow flags, the combined colors of which represented fire, I felt my bosom swell within me. I could not hold back the tears; I remembered Cadiz, Vejer, and all the Spaniards whom I imagined were peering out to a great flat roof, anxiously watching us. All these ideas and emotions reminded me of God, and I said a prayer; it wasn't the Lord's Prayer or an Ave-Maria, but something new which has never occurred to me since. A sudden loud noise shook me from my blissful trance and I shuddered violently. The first cannon shot had sounded.

CHAPTER XI

The first shot was fired by a ship of the rearguard at the Royal Sovereign commanded by Collingwood. While the Santa Ana was beginning battle with this one, the Victory came against us. Everyone on the Trinidad was anxious to start firing; but our commander was waiting for a more favorable moment. The firing spread from the Santa Ana to both ends of the line as if the ships were linked by a common fuse and one set off the spark almost simultaneously in the rest.

The Victory first attacked the French Redoubtable, and having been driven back, she took her position opposite our windward side. The awful moment had arrived; one hundred voices shouted, "Fire!" repeating like an infernal echo the order of the commander, and the broadside showered fifty missiles upon the English ship. For an instant the smoke hid from view the sight of the enemy. But blind with rage the enemy ship came upon us, the wind abaft. On reaching musket-fire range, she luffed and emptied her broadside on us. Between shots the crew had been able to see the harm done to the enemy and it redoubled its enthusiasm. The cannons were performing promptly; however there was some delay as a result of the little practice of some cannon corporals. Marcial would gladly have taken charge of one of the guns; but his disfigured body was not capable of responding to the retiring heroism of his soul. He contented himself with watching the work in the cartridge storeroom, and with words and gestures he encouraged those at the guns.

The Busentaura at our stern was firing on the Victory and the Temerary, another powerful English vessel. It looked like Nelson's

ship was going to fall into our power because the artillery of the Trinidad had destroyed the tackle and rigging and we saw with pride that she had lost her mizzenmast.

In the ardor of that first encounter, I scarcely noticed that some of our sailors were falling wounded or dead. I, in a place where I thought I would be less troublesome, never stopped watching the commander who was giving orders from the quarterdeck with heroic calmness, and I was surprised to see my master with less serenity but with more enthusiasm urging on the officers and sailors with his hoarse little voice.

"Ah," I said to myself, "if Doña Francisca could see him now!"

I shall confess that I had moments of terrible fright, in which I would have hidden in the very bottom of the hull, and other moments of delirious boldness in which I risked my life to view that great spectacle from the most dangerous places. But I shall leave my humble person and tell of the most terrifying part of our battle with the Victory. The Trinidad was shattering her with much success, when the Temerary, executing a very skillful manoeuvre placed herself between the two combatants and protected her companion from our bullets. Immediately she began to cut our line through the Trinidad stern, and, as the Encantada during the fire had moved up so closely to the Trinidad that their yards touched each other, a big gap appeared in the line, and the Temerary, veering suddenly so as to place herself on our larboard, fired on this side of us which until that time had been unscathed. At the same instant the Neptune, another strong

English ship, moved up to the position formerly occupied by the Victory, who now fell to the leeward, so that in one moment the Trinidad was surrounded by enemies, piercing her like a sieve on all sides.

In the face of my master, in the sublime rage of Triarte, in the oaths of the sailor friends of Marcial, I could see that we were lost, and the thought of defeat filled my soul with anguish. The line of the combined fleet was broken in several places, and the most terrible disorder resulted where the ships were thrown out of line by the command to veer about. We were surrounded by the enemy whose artillery was hurling a rain of bullets and shot upon our ship as well as upon the Bucentaura. The Agustin, the Heras and the Leandro were fighting not far from us in a rather uncrowded position, while the Trinidad and the flag ship, unable to free themselves, were caught in a terrible skirmish by the genius of the great Nelson; they were fighting heroically, no longer striving for victory, but determined to die honorably.

The white hairs of my head still rise as I recall those awful hours, especially from two to four in the afternoon. I can see the ships, . . . not as blind war machines obedient to the will of man, but as true giants, living, monstrous beings, striving at their own will as they put into action their sails and their agile limbs, the powerful artillery of their sides. As I watched them, I could not help thinking of them as persons, and even now it seems that I can see them approach each other, challenge, luff forcefully to clear their sails, rush forward in a provoking manner as if to go on board, withdraw

with burning anger in order to gain more speed, scoff and chide the enemy; I can see them suffering from their wounds or dying nobly like the gladiator mindful of honor even in the agony of death; I can hear the murmurs of the crew, like the sad voice of a troubled heart, shout now with encouragement or moan in desperation, at one moment a forerunner of destruction, at another a jubilant hymn of victory; a mad clamorous din arises, fades into space, and dies away in the terrible, shameful silence of defeat.

The interior of the Santissima was one of an inferno. The tackles had been abandoned because the ship was not moving nor was it able to move. The most important task was manning the artillery guns with the greatest possible haste, thus returning the havoc that the enemy guns were making. The English bullets, like great, invisible claws, were tearing the sails to shreds. The fragments of gunwale, chunks of wood, heavy shrouds cut down from the masthead, fallen pulleys, the remnants of sails, tools, ropes, and other debris, hurled from its place by the enemy cannon, filled the deck so completely that there was scarcely space for one to move. Every minute living men in great numbers were falling to the floor or into the sea, and in the meantime the oaths of the combatants mingled with the cries of the wounded, in such a way that it was impossible to distinguish if those who were dying were cursing God or those who were fighting were calling on him in their anguish.

I had to lend my aid to a very sad task, that of carrying the wounded to the hold where the infirmary was located. Some died before

they reached it, and others had to suffer painful operations before their tired bodies knew a moment's rest. I also had the inexpressible satisfaction of helping the carpenters, who hurriedly plugged the holes made in the hull; but I am afraid my assistance was not as effective as I would have desired.

The blood was running in abundance over the deck and the bridges, and in spite of the sand, the movement of the ship was carrying it here and there, forming prophetic drawings. The cannon balls fired at close range were slaughtering with horrible mutilation; frequently I saw a head, completely severed from its body, roll around the deck when the violence of the bullet did not dash its victim into the sea where he would have met an almost painless death. Other bullets rebounded against a mast or a gunwale scattering a deluge of splinters which wounded like arrows. The musketry of the lower masts and the shots of the short gun artillery were spreading a slower and more painful death, and rarely did one emerge from such fire unmarked by the lead and iron of our enemies.

Attacked in such a manner and powerless to return the same ruin, the crew, the soul of the vessel, saw that life was hopeless and was dying with desperate courage; and the body of the glorious ship trembled at the blows of the bullets. I could feel her shudder in the awful contest; her frames creaked, her beams burst, the depths of her hold writhed in the manner of limbs inflamed with pain, and the deck vibrated under my feet with a noisy jerk as if the immense body of the ship expressed the anger and grief of her crew. Meanwhile the

water was rushing in through the thousand holes and crevices of the sieve-like hull, and the hold began to sink.

The *Sucentaura*, the flag ship, surrendered before our eyes. Villeneuve had lowered the flag. With the surrender of the leader of the fleet, what hope could remain for the rest of the ships? The French flag disappeared from the stern of that proud vessel, and they ceased firing. El San Agustín and the *Herós* kept defending themselves, and the *Reyo* and the *Neptune*, members of the vanguard, who had come to help us, tried in vain to save us from the enemy vessels besieging us. I could see the part of the battle nearest the *Santísima Trinidad*, but it was impossible to see anything from the rest of the line. The wind seemed to have stopped, and no glance could penetrate the smoke which enveloped us with its thick, white clouds. We could distinguish only the tackle and rigging of some ships far away in the distance, increased in an inexplicable manner by some optical effect or other, that solemn moment made everything look larger.

This dense fog lifted for an instant, but in what a horrible way! A dreadful report, louder than that made by the thousand cannons of the squadron all firing at once, paralyzed everything and produced widespread terror. A vivid brightness accompanied the powerful shock, scattered the veil of smoke, and the entire panorama of the combat appeared instantaneously before our eyes. The terrifying explosion had occurred to the south of us, in the position previously occupied by the rearguard.

"A ship has exploded," said everyone.

Opinions varied, and we were unable to decide whether it was the Santa Ana, the Argonauta, the Ildefonso, or the Bahama. Later it was learned that it was the French Achilles. What a few moments before had been a beautiful ship with seventy-four cannons and a crew of six hundred men was shattered into thousands of pieces through sea and sky.

For a few seconds following the explosion we thought only of ourselves.

When the Bucentaure surrendered, all the enemy fire was directed against our ship, and her loss was now certain. The enthusiasm of the first moments had frozen within me, and my heart was filled with terror, which paralyzed every function of my consciousness except curiosity. This feeling was so strong I could not resist venturing out to places of greater danger. My limited aid was not needed now as they no longer carried the wounded to the hold for there were too many; also the guns demanded the duty of everyone who still had a ounce of strength left. Among this group was Marcial, who with shouts and awkward movements was doing the work of many men; he was boatswain, sailor, artilleryman, carpenter, and everything else that was needed in such desperate moments. I never believed that one who possessed only half a human body was capable of discharging the duties of so many men. A flying splinter had wounded his head, and the blood running down his face gave him a dreadful look. I saw him move his lips, drink that liquid, and then spit it out savagely, as if he would like to wound the enemy with the saliva.

The thing that astonished me most and frightened me somewhat was the fact that Marcial kept up a flow of witty, clever conversation

perhaps for the purpose of cheering his fallen companions or keeping up his own courage.

When the foremast fell and filled the forecastle with its bulk of tackle and rigging, Marcial said, "Boys, bring the axes. Let's put this piece of furniture in the bedroom."

As soon as the ropes were cut, the mast fell into the sea.

And seeing that the firing increased, he shouted to a yeoman who had been converted into a cannon corporal, "Pedro Abad, send wine to those cassocks so that they will leave us in peace."

And to a soldier who was lying as if dead from wounds and seasickness, he said, applying the match staff to his nose, "Smell a little leaf of orange blossom, comrade, so the seasickness will go away. Would you like to take a walk on the boat? Go on. Nelson invites us to sing some little songs."

This happened on the upper deck. I looked toward the forecastle and I saw that General Cisneros had fallen. Hurriedly two sailors brought him down to the cabin. My master never moved from his position, but a great deal of blood was flowing from his left arm. I ran to help him and before I reached him an officer approached intent on urging him to retire to the cabin. He hadn't said two words to him when a bullet carried off half his head, and his blood splattered over my face. Then Don Alonso left, as pale as the corpse of his friends lying mutilated on the quarterdeck floor.

When my master went down, the commander was the only one left aloft. He showed such courage and spirit that I could not resist

watching him in amazement. With uncovered head, pale face, burning glance, energetic movement he remained at his post giving orders with no hope of winning victory now. Such a horrible disaster must take place in an orderly manner, and the commander was the one in authority whose duty it was to direct the heroism. His voice gave orders to the crew in that combat of honor and death.

An officer in command of the first broadside came up to take orders and before speaking fell dead at the feet of his chief; another marine guard at his side also fell badly wounded, and Uriarte at last was all alone on the quarterdeck covered with dead or wounded men. Not even then did he take his eyes from the English ships and our artillerymen; and the imposing appearance of the quarterdeck and roundhouse where his friends and subordinates were dying did not disturb his noble heart nor break his determination to keep up the fire until death stopped him. Ah! Recalling the calmness and stoicism of Francisco Javier Uriarte, I have been able to understand everything that the heroic captains of long ago have told us. At that time I did not understand or know the word "sublimity"; but as I watched the commander of the Trinidad, I knew that in every language there should be a beautiful name to express that magnificence of soul which seemed to me a gift from God rarely bestowed upon wretched man.

Meanwhile, a great part of the cannons had ceased firing because half of the men were no longer in battle. Perhaps I wouldn't have noticed the situation if, led by curiosity, I had not ventured from the cabin and heard a voice calling me in an awful tone, "Gabriel, boy, here!"

Marcial was calling me. I hurried to him and found him firing one of the cannons which had been almost entirely abandoned. A bullet had taken off the end of Half-man's wooden leg and he said, "I still have the other flesh and bone one."

Two dead sailors were lying at his side and a third one, seriously wounded was trying hard to fire the guns.

"Comrade," said Marcial to him, "you can't even light a stub of a cigar, now."

He seized the match staff from the hands of the wounded man and handed it to me saying, "Take it, Gabriel; if you are afraid, you will go into the water."

As he said this, he loaded the cannon as hurriedly as possible aided by a cabin boy who was almost unscathed; they grasped the gunnery; both shouted, "Fire!"; I approached the fuse, and the cannon fired.

The operation was repeated for the second and third time, and the noise of the cannon fired by me re-echoes strangely in my soul. The realization that I was no longer a spectator, but a decisive actor in such a magnificent tragedy, banished all fear for an instant, and I felt brave and strong, or at least I was determined to appear so. On this occasion I learned that heroism generally is nothing more than a point of honor. Marcial and others were watching me; I had to be worthy of their attention.

"Ah," I said to myself proudly, "if my little mistress could see me now... How brave I am firing big cannons like a man! I have at least sent two dozen Englishmen to the other world!"

These noble thoughts occupied my mind for a short time only, because Marcial's strength was failing him. He breathed heavily; the blood, flowing in abundance from his head, had greatly weakened him; he closed his eyes, extended his arms in complete exhaustion, and said, "I can't do any more; the gunpowder is going to my head. Gabriel, bring me some water."

I ran to look for water, and when I brought it to him, he drank it eagerly. He seemed to take new strength; we were going to continue when a great explosion left us motionless. The main mast, broken through the masthole, crashed upon the upper deck and soon afterwards the mizzenmast. The ship was full of rubbish and the disorder was terrifying.

Luckily I was in a vacant place and received only a slight wound on my head, which, although it frightened me at first, did not prevent me from removing the sails and ropes that had fallen upon me. The sailors and soldiers on deck were fighting to dislodge such an enormous mass of useless material, and now only the artillery of the lower broadsides kept up the fire. I freed myself as best I could, looked for Marcial and could not find him. As I searched over the quarterdeck, I noticed that the commander was no longer there. Seriously wounded by a splinter in his head, he had fallen lifeless to the floor, and immediately two sailors came up to carry him to the cabin. I ran toward them and a piece of shot wounded me in the shoulder. I was extremely frightened and was positive that I was mortally wounded and that each breath was my last. In spite of my excitement I reached the

cabin where I almost fainted from loss of blood.

In my semi-consciousness I kept hearing the roar of the cannons on second and third quarterdeck and then a voice say furiously, "Boarders away! The pikes! The axes!"

Afterwards, the confusion was so great I could not distinguish the human voices in such a savage din of noise. In some strange way, I realized, even in that state of lethargy, that everything was considered lost, and that the officers were gathered in the cabin to agree to surrender. I heard a voice on the upper deck (I am sure it was not a dream) which said, "The Trinidad does not surrender." Without a doubt it was the voice of Marcial, if anyone really said such a thing.

I revived and saw my master sitting on one of the cabin sofas with his face in his hands. In his despair he was not even caring for his wound.

I went to him and the whappy old man had no better way of expressing his grief than embracing me in a fatherly way as if we both were near death. I think he at least was almost dying from grief, for his wound was not at all serious. I tried to console him and told him that if the battle hadn't been won, it wasn't because I didn't kill enough Englishmen with my little cannon; I added that we would be more fortunate next time, ...childish words which did not soothe his heavy heart.

When I went outside in search of water for my master, I witnessed the lowering of the flag, which was still floating on the lower sail, one of the few remains of the mast and spars left standing with the

framework of the mizzenmast. That glorious piece of linen, now torn into countless shreds, the symbol of our honor, which held beneath her folds every combatant, descended from the mast to rise no more. The eyes of man can know no better emblem of proud defeat and heroic effort in the face of superior forces than that of a banner lowered as the sun is setting. Just at the moment of surrender the sun ended its course and sank in the evening sky, flooding our flag with its last dying ray; the firing ceased, and the English boarded the conquered vessel.

CHAPTER XII

When the tense excitement of battle had passed and the survivors had time to yield to grief and the cold terror produced by the sight of such awful havoc, for the first time we actually saw the appearance of the ship in all its horrible majesty. Until that moment our minds had possessed only one thought...that of defense, but when the firing stopped one could see the water rushing in through the thousand holes in the hull; we realized the ship was sinking, threatening to bury us all, living and dead, in the bottom of the sea. The English had scarcely boarded when a unanimous cry arose from our sailors, "To the pumps!"

All of us who were able ran to them and worked fiercely; but those defective machines now dislodged considerably less water than was entering the ship. Suddenly a cry, even more terrible than the former one, filled us with terror. I have already said that the wounded had been carried to the last level, since it was below the line of floatage and out of the range of bullets. The water was now rapidly invading that place, and some sailors peered through the hatchway shouting, "The wounded are drowning!"

Most of the crew hesitated, not knowing whether to continue bailing out the water or to go to the assistance of those unfortunate ones; I don't know what would have happened to them if the men from an English ship had not come to our aid. They not only transported the wounded to the third and second decks but they also worked the pumps while their carpenters tried to repair some of the damages to the hull.

As I was overcome with fatigue and thought that perhaps Don Alonso might need me, I went to the cabin. Then I saw some Englishmen placing the British flag on the stern of the Santísima Trinidad. I realize that the kind reader must pardon me for mentioning here my own thoughts, but I shall say this scene made me think a little. The Englishmen had always seemed to me pirates and highwaymen of the sea, an adventurous people who did not comprise a nation but lived by marauding. When I saw the pride and heard the lively exclamations with which they hoisted their flag, when I noticed their joy and satisfaction in having captured the greatest and most glorious ship that had ever graced the seas, I knew that they, too, loved their native land; that she had entrusted her defense to their hands. I began to believe that in that mysterious land they call England there must exist, as in Spain, many honorable people, a fatherly king, mothers, daughters, wives, sisters of brave sailors, who awaiting their return probably were praying to God to grant them victory.

In the cabin I found my master even more silent. The English officers who had entered there treated us politely and I understood they wanted to transfer the wounded to some enemy vessel. One of the officers approached my master as if he wished to recognize him and greeted him in half-correct Spanish, reminding him of a former acquaintance. My master gravely returned his courtesy and afterwards he asked him about the particulars of the combat.

"But what about the reserve? What has Gravina done?" inquired my master.

"Gravina has withdrawn with some ships," answered the Englishman.

"What about the vanguard?...only the Rayo and the Neptuno have come to our aid."

"The four French vessels, the Duguay-Trouin, Mont-Blanc, Scipion, and the Formidable are the only ones who have not entered in action."

"But,...Gravina, Gravina, what about Gravina?" my master insisted.

"He withdrew in the Principe de Asturias, but as he was pursued, I do not know if he has reached Cádiz."

"And the Ildefonso?"

"It has been captured."

"And the Santa Ana?"

"It has also been captured."

"My heavens!" exclaimed my master without being able to hide his anger. "I'll bet the Neponseco has not been taken."

"It too has been taken."

"Oh, are you sure? And Churruca?"

"He is dead," answered the Englishman sadly.

"Oh! He is dead! He is dead!" repeated my master in sorrowful perplexity. "But the Bahama is probably saved, the Bahama has probably returned unharmed to Cádiz."

"It has also been captured."

"That one too! And Galiano? Galiano is a hero and a wise man."

"Yes," answered the Englishman quietly. "But he is dead, too."

"And what about the Montañós? What has happened to Alcedo?"

My master could not hide his deep grief, and as advanced age diminished self-control needed so much in such awful moments, he had

to yield to the indignity of a few tears, a sad courtesy out of respect to his companions. Weeping is not unbecoming in great characters; rather it indicates the fertile union of a sensitive refinement and strength of character. My master, having fulfilled his duty as a sailor, cried like a man; but recovering from his low spirits and seeking some means by which he could return to the Englishman the grief that he had caused him, he said, "But you have probably suffered as much as we. You have perhaps had considerable losses."

"One, especially irreparable," answered the Englishman with as much anguish as that of Don Alonso. "We have lost the foremost of our seamen, the bravest of the brave, the heroic, the divine, the sublime Admiral Nelson."

And with as little firmness as that of my master, the English officer did not try to hide his bitter sorrow; he covered his face with his hands and openly wept with sincere grief for his chief, protector, and friend.

Nelson, mortally wounded in midst of the battle, as I later learned, by a bullet which pierced his breast and lodged in his dorsal spine, said to Captain Hardy, "It is finished. At last they have attained it." His agony lasted until late evening; he lost none of the details of the battle, nor did his military and naval genius wane until the last, fleeting quiver of life faded in his wounded body. Wracked by torturing pain, he never stopped dictating orders and listening to reports of both fleets, and when he was told victory was his, he said, "Blessed be God, I have fulfilled my duty."

A quarter of an hour later the foremost seaman of our century died. Please pardon my digression. The reader will wonder why we did not know the fate of many ships of the combined fleet. Our ignorance was only natural, because of the excessive length of our battle line and the system of partial struggles adopted by the English. Their ships had been mingled with ours, and as the struggle was with gun-fire, the enemy ship attacking us hid from view the rest of the fleet, and besides the very thick smoke prevented our seeing anything except our very nearest surroundings.

At nightfall, although the cannon fire had not ceased, we could distinguish some ships which were passing in the distance like phantoms, some with half masts, others completely unmasted. The fog, the smoke, the very confusion of our minds prevented us from knowing if they were Spanish or English; and when the light of a distant powder flash illuminated intermittently that dreadful panorama, we noticed that the fight was still raging furiously between groups of isolated ships; that others were running in disorder carried along by the storm, and that one of ours was being hauled toward the south by another English vessel.

Night came, and with it the seriousness and the horror of our situation increased. It seemed that Nature must be favorable to us after such great misfortunes; but on the contrary, the elements were raging with fury as if heaven believed that our troubles were not enough. A fresh storm broke out, and wind and water beat and whipped against the boat, which shorn of tackle and rigging, was rocking at the mercy of the waves. The unsteadiness was so great that work was difficult,

and with this swaying and weariness of the crew our danger increased every hour. An English vessel which I later learned was call the Prince tried to tow the Trinidad; but its efforts were futile due to fear of an impact which would have been fatal to both ships.

Meanwhile it was not possible to take any food, and I was dying of hunger because the rest, indifferent to everything except danger, scarcely gave any heed to such an important matter. I didn't dare to ask for a piece of bread for fear of appearing out of place, yet I confess shamelessly that I directed my searching glance everywhere I thought food provisions might be. Finally I was forced to make a visit to the storerooms, and how surprised was I to find Marcial there pouring into his stomach the first thing he found at hand! The old man was slightly wounded, and although a bullet had carried off his right foot, as this was nothing more than the end of his wooden leg, Marcial's body was only a little more crippled by the mishap.

"Take it, Gabriel," he said to me, filling my bosom with hard-tack. "A ship does not sail without food."

He immediately tipped a bottle and drank with delight.

He left the storeroom, and I saw that we were not the only ones visiting the place, for everything indicated that a disorderly pillage had occurred a few minutes before.

With my strength renewed, I could think about working at the pumps or helping the carpenters. With much difficulty some of the damages were mended with the aid of the English, who were watching everything, and as I later learned, never lost sight of our sailors for they were

afraid that the crew might rise in rebellion and recapture the ship. The enemy showed more suspicion than good judgment in this, for an attempt to recapture a vessel in such condition would have been foolish; however they keep peering about everywhere and watching the movements of everyone.

When night came on I was so exhausted with cold I could hardly stand on deck; besides I was running the risk of being dashed away by the sea, and so I went to the cabin. My first intention was to sleep a little; but who could sleep that night?

The same confusion existed in the cabin as on the upperdeck. The uninjured were helping the wounded whose intense suffering, increased by the movements of the ship, was such that they could not get a moment's rest. Their sad plight presented such a gruesome spectacle that it was impossible for anyone to rest. On one side of the cabin were lying the dead officers, covered with the national flag. In the presence of such desolation and suffering one could envy those corpses, for they were the only ones at peace on board the Trinidad; they knew no fatigue, pain, physical suffering, and shame of defeat. The flag which they served provided a glorious shroud that removed them from the sphere of responsibility, of disgrace and hopelessness in which we found ourselves. The danger of the ship affected them not at all, for now the ship was only their casket.

The dead officers were: Don Juan Cisniego, ship lieutenant, who was not related to my master in spite of the same name; Don Joaquín de Salas and Don Juan Matute, also ship lieutenants; Colonel-Lieutenant of the army, Don José Graville; Urias, the lieutenant of the frigate;

and Don Antonio Bobadilla, marine guard. The dead soldiers and sailors, lying in disorder on the broadsides and deck, reached the total of four hundred.

I shall never forget the moment that those bodies were hurled into the sea at the order of the English officer in command of the ship. The sad ceremony occurred at dawn of the twenty-second, the hour when the storm increased apparently just to add to the awe and horror of the scene. The bodies of the officers were removed from deck, the priest hurriedly repeated a short prayer to avoid prolonging the situation, and the solemn act was immediately under way. Wrapped in their flag with a cannonball tied to their feet, they were hurled into the sea; ordinarily this would have produced sadness and consternation in anyone, but our minds had become so inured to tragedy that we were little affected by the presence of death. The obsequies of the sea are sadder than those on land; a body is given to the grave and there it remains; its loved ones know that there is a plot of earth where the remains rest, and they can mark it with a gravestone, a cross, or a rock. But in the sea, . . . the bodies are thrown into that moving immensity and one feels that they cease to exist the instant they fall; imagination can not follow them on their journey to the bottomless abyss, and it is impossible to think of their being in one particular spot. I thought of all these things as I watched disappear the bodies of these renowned warriors, who the day before were the flower of manhood, the glory of their nation, and the delight of their families.

The dead sailors were cast into the sea with less ceremony. The ordinance ruled that they be wrapped in their hammock; but on that occasion there was no time to fulfill the ordinance. Some of them were shrouded according to rule, but the majority were thrown into the sea without any clothing or cannonballs on their feet, for the simple reason that there were not enough for all of them. They numbered four hundred approximately, and in order to complete their burial more quickly, every man on board capable of doing so had to lend a hand. Much to my displeasure I had to offer my aid in such a sad duty, and some bodies were cast overboard by my hand and other more vigorous ones.

Then something happened which caused me much fright. A horribly disfigured corpse was picked up by two sailors; and as they lifted him on high, some of the bystanders made coarse, joking remarks, which would have been unbecoming on any occasion, and at that moment, infamous. I don't know why the body of that unfortunate was the only one that caused them to lose their respect for the dead, but they were saying, "Now he has paid his dues. He will not make any more," and other indignities of the same type. Their words angered me; but my indignation changed to astonishment and an indefinable feeling...a mingling of respect, pain, and fear; for on observing the mutilated features more closely, I recognized the body as that of my uncle... I closed my eyes in terror and didn't open them until the violent splashing of the water indicated that he had disappeared forever from human sight.

That man had been very mean to me and very cruel to his sister; but he was my near kinsman, he was my mother's brother; the blood running

through my veins was his, and that voice within which urges us to forgive the wrongs of our fellow men could not be silenced after the scene that passed before my eyes. At the same time I had been able to recognize in the bloody face of my uncle some of the facial characteristics of my mother, and the resemblance increased my emotion. At that moment I did not remember that this man had been a great criminal; I even forgot the cruelty he showed me in my unhappy childhood. I assure you, and I have no doubt in saying this, although it may seem self praise, that I forgave him with all my heart, and lifted my thoughts to God, pleading that He pardon all his sins.

Afterwards I learned that he had conducted himself heroically in battle; nevertheless, he was unable to win the sympathy of his comrades, who, judging him to be the vilest of men, had not one word of affection or pity for him, not even in the supreme moment when every sin is forgiven, and every criminal is granted an account of his deeds in the presence of God.

Later in the day the Principe tried again to tow the Santísima Trinidad, but with as little success as the night before. The situation, however, did not grow worse, as many damages had been repaired; and it was believed that, if the weather calmed, they could save the hull of the vessel. The English were determined to do so, for they wished to take it to Gibraltar as a trophy, the greatest ship that had ever been built. For this reason they worked zealously at the pumps night and day, and permitted us to rest sometimes.

During the entire day of the twenty-second the sea seethed with frenzy and lifted and tossed the hull of the ship as if it were a fisherman's frail launch; and that great mass of wood proved the strong bracing of its solid frames when it did not dash into a thousand pieces from the effects of the powerful beating of the waves. There were moments when the sea would become calm, and it looked as if the ship was going to sink forever; but the waves would rage again with the fury of a deep avalanche, and the haughty prow adorned with the Lion of Castile would rise, and again we dared to hope our lives would be spared.

On every side we saw ships here and there; most of them were English, with practically no damages, trying to reach the coast to take refuge. We also saw some Spanish and French ones, some unmailed, others being towed by some enemy vessel. Marcial recognized one of them as the San Idelfonso. We saw floating in the water a great mass of debris and spoils, such as topmasts, lower masts, broken launches, hatchways, fragments of balconies, stern ports; and lastly we caught sight of two unfortunate sailors, clinging to a big piece of wood, being carried away by the waves, and they would have perished if the English had not run quickly to their aid. They were carried aboard the Trinidad and thus they returned to the land of the living, . . . an experience, which after feeling themselves in the arms of death, was equivalent to being born again.

The day passed, alternating between agony and hope; at one moment it seemed absolutely necessary to board an English vessel in order to save our lives; the next moment we had hopes of saving our own boat.

The idea of being carried to Gibraltar as prisoners was terrible, if not for me, especially for men as scrupulous and stubborn as my master whose mental anguish on that day must surely have been too bitter even to dream of. But these painful alternatives ceased in the afternoon and the opinion was unanimous that if we did not go on board we would all perish in the boat. Friarte and Cisneros received the news with calmness and serenity, remarking that they did not see a great difference between dying in their own home and being prisoners in a foreign one. With much activity the transfer began at the faint light of dawn; it was certainly no easy task as over three hundred wounded had to be transferred. The uninjured of the crew numbered around five hundred men, a figure to which one thousand one hundred and fifty men had been reduced.

The transfer began hurriedly with the launches of the Trinidad, those of the Prince and three other vessels of the English fleet. Preference was given to the wounded; but, although great care was taken to save them every discomfort, it was impossible to lift them from their positions without causing them great pain, and some begged with loud cries that they be left in peace, preferring death to that trip which renewed their suffering. Haste did not give way to pity, and they were carried to the launches with as little mercy as the cold corpses of their comrades had been hurled into the sea.

Commander Friarte and chief of the fleet Cisneros embarked in the boats of the English officials, and they insisted that my master come with them, but he resolutely refused, saying that he wished to be the

last one to abandon the Trinidad. This truly vexed me; for the overflow of patriotism, which at first had made me so bold, suddenly disappeared; I thought only of saving my life, and I decided that remaining on board a ship that was sinking by the minute was certainly not befitting a noble end.

My fears were not unfounded, for half of the crew was not off when a low rumbling of dread and alarm arose in our vessel.

"We are going to sink!...To the launches, to the launches!" shouted some, while all, governed by the instinct of self-preservation, were running to the railing and seeking with avid eyes the returning launches. Every task was abandoned; the wounded were forgotten, and many of them who had been carried on deck were rushing about with a certain delirious madness, seeking a porthole through which they might hurl themselves into the sea. Through the hatchways came a pitiful cry which still resounds in my brain, chilling the blood in my veins and raising my hair. They were the screams of the wounded left on the first broadside who, feeling themselves soaked with the water which was now invading that place, were pleading for help either from God or man, I know not.

They begged in vain because everyone thought only of his own salvation. All rushed headlong to the launches, and this confusion in the darkness of the night hindered the transfer. Only one man, indifferent in the presence of such great danger remained on the quarterdeck without heeding what was going on around him; he was preoccupied and engrossed in meditation, as if those planks on which his feet rested were not

being lured by the immense abyss. He was my master.

Aghast I ran to him and said, "Señor, we are drowning!"

Don Alonso did not notice me, and I still believe, if memory serves me right, that without abandoning his attitude, he uttered words as foreign to the situation as these: "Oh! How Pacha is going to laugh when I go back home after this great defeat!"

"Señor, the ship is going to sink!" I shouted again, no longer describing the danger but pleading with gestures and shouts.

My master looked at the sea, at the launches, at the men who anxiously and blindly were leaping into them; and I searched with anxious eyes for Marcial, and called him with all the strength of my lungs. Then I became wholly oblivious to everything that was happening; I felt stunned, my eyes clouded over, and I don't know what occurred. When I try to relate how I saved myself, I can only recall memories as vague as the shadows of a dream, for without a doubt terror had taken away all consciousness. It seems that a sailor approached Don Alonso when I was talking to him, and that he grasped him in his strong arms. I felt myself being carried, and when my hazy mind cleared a little, I found myself in a launch, leaning on the knees of my master, who was holding my head between his hands with a fatherly affection. Marcial clenched the helm of the rudder; the launch was full of people.

I raised my eyes and saw at four or five yards distance at the right the black side of the nearby ship sinking; through the portholes where the water had not yet reached, there came a feeble brightness, that of a lamp lighted at nightfall, which was still keeping watch, guarding

untiringly the remains of the abandoned ship. Some cries reached my ears from the portholes. They were the poor wounded whom it had been impossible to save, and who were lying suspended over the abyss, while that miserable light permitted them to gaze at each other and communicate with their eyes the anguish of their hearts.

My imagination turned again to the interior of the boat; only an inch more of water was needed to break the frail balance which still held it. How these unfortunate ones must have watched the rise of the water! What they must have said in that awful moment! And if they saw those who were fleeing in the launches, if they sensed the creaking of the oars, with what bitterness their troubled souls must have groaned! But, too, is it certain that the awful martyrdom absconded their souls of every sin, and that God's compassion filled every nook of the ship in the moment it sank forever.

The launch moved away. I kept watching that shapeless hulk, although I suspect that it was my fantasy and not my eyes that saw the Trinidad in the darkness of the night; I even thought I distinguished a great arm descend from heaven to the surface of the waters. It was doubtless imagination produced by my own feelings and thoughts.

CHAPTER XIII

The launches moved away...to where? Not even Marcial himself knew where we were going. The darkness was so great that we lost sight of the other vessels, and the lights of the ship Prince disappeared behind the mist as if a gust of wind had extinguished it. The waves were so high and the sea wind so severe that the weak craft advanced very little, and due to the capable guidance it was endangered only once. We all were quiet, and most of us fixed our sad glances on the site where we supposed that our abandoned companions were struggling at that very instant with death in frightful agony.

With these sad thoughts, in accordance with my custom, I could not refrain from making other reflections which I might well venture to call philosophic. Someone will laugh at the idea of a fourteen-year old philosopher. But I shall not be disturbed by laughter, and I shall have the daring to describe here my thoughts at that time. Children, too, are accustomed to think great things; and on that occasion, before that spectacle, what mind except that of an idiot could remain calm?

Very well then. In our launches there were Spaniards and Englishmen, although the number of the former was greater; it was strange to observe how friendly they were with each other, how they helped each other, and how they totally disregarded the fact that on the previous day, they were killing each other in the manner of wild beasts rather than of men. I watched the Englishmen rowing with as much determination as our men; I observed in their faces the same signs of terror and hope,

and especially did I perceive in their expressions that blessed sentiment of kindness and charity, the incentive of all. With these thoughts, I said to myself, "Oh, God, why are there wars? Why can't those men be friends in all situations of life as they are in times of danger? Does not this that I see prove all men are brothers?"

But suddenly the idea of nationality, the system of islands that I had formed, cut short these reflections, and then I said, "But now, all this is the result of the islands wanting to take away some piece of land from the others; and doubtless in them all there must be very mean men who are the ones that arm the wars for their own personal gains, either because they are ambitious and wish to command, or because they are greedy and want to be rich. These bad men are the ones who deceive the others, all these unfortunate ones who go away to fight; and in order that the deceit may be complete, they lead them on to hate other nations, they sow the seeds of discord, they foment envy, and here is the result. I am sure," I added, "that this cannot last; I'll bet a doubloon to less money that within a short time the men of the various islands will become convinced that they are making a great blunder by fighting such terrible wars, and the day will come when they will embrace one another and all agree to form only one big family."

Thus I reasoned. I have lived seventy years since this time and I have not seen that day arrive.

The launch advanced with great difficulty through the sea. If my master would have permitted it, I think that Marcial would have attempted to throw the English into the sea, turn the prow toward Cadiz or the

coast, even with the almost certain probability of drowning in the crossing. I think that he must have confided this plan to my master, for I saw him talking to him in a low voice, and Don Alonso must have given him a lesson in honorable behavior, because I heard him say, "We are prisoners, Marcial, we are prisoners. It would have been better if we had never seen a launch."

The Prince had moved away from its former position; no light indicated to us the presence of an enemy ship. At last, we saw one, and a little later appeared the dim outline of a vessel plying to windward through the storm in a direction contrary to ours. Some believed it to be French; others, English; and Marcial declared it was Spanish. They forced the oars, and with great effort we came to within talking distance.

"Hail, on board the ship!" we all shouted.

They instantly answered in Spanish.

"It is the San Agustín," said Marcial.

"The San Agustín has sunk," replied Don Alonso. "I believe it is probably the Santa Ana, for she also was captured."

Truly as we drew nearer, we all recognized the Santa Ana, under the command of Lieutenant General Alava in the battle. Immediately the English who had her in custody prepared to lend us aid, and in a short time we found ourselves safe and sound on deck.

The Santa Ana, a 112 cannon ship, also had suffered heavy damages, although not as serious as those of the Santísima Trinidad; and while she was completely unruddered and without rudder, her hull was not in bad

condition. The Santa Ana lived 11 years after Trafalgar, and she would have lived even longer, if she had not sunk in Havana Bay in 1816 for lack of repairs. Her action on this occasion was glorious. She was under the command of Lieutenant General Alava, the officer in charge of the vanguard, which, when the order of the battle was changed, became the rearguard. Now you know that the column under the control of Collingwood advanced to attack the rearguard, while Nelson moved against the center. The Santa Ana, assisted only by the French Fougueux, had to fight the Royal Sovereign and four other English ones, and in spite of the inequality of strength, one side suffered as much damage as the other; Collingwood's ship was the first to withdraw from battle, and consequently he had to transfer to the frigate Burygalus. According to those who were present, the conflict was bitter, and the two powerful vessels struggled with their yardarms touching each other for a space of six hours until the Santa Ana had to surrender with General Alava wounded, Commander Cardogui wounded, five officers and ninety-seven sailors dead, and one hundred fifty others wounded. After she was captured by the English it was impossible to man her due to her bad condition and the furious wind that raged on the night of the twenty-first; thus when we boarded her, she was in a critical, but not desperate situation, and she was floating at the mercy of the waves unable to take any direction.

I felt consolation in seeing that the faces of every man in the crew revealed the dread of approaching death; they were sad and gravely resigned to the pain of defeat and the humiliation of being prisoners.

I particularly noticed that the English officers in charge of the ship were not as kind and gentle as those who took command of the Trinidad. On the contrary, the commanders of the Santa Ana were very cross and disagreeable gentlemen, and they greatly vexed our men by their exaggeration of their own importance and their impertinent remarks at everything. This displeased the captured crew a great deal, especially the sailors, and I heard alarming mutterings, which would not have been very soothing for the Englishmen if they had heard them.

As to the rest, I do not want to relate the incidents of that night's sailing, ...if wandering aimlessly about, at the mercy of the waves without sails or rudder can be called sailing. I do not wish, then, to annoy my readers with the repetition of deeds already witnessed aboard the Trinidad, and I pass on to tell you other entirely different things, which will surprise you as much as they did me.

I had lost my fondness for walking about on upper deck and quarter-deck, and so when I found myself on board the Santa Ana, I took refuge with my master in the cabin where I could rest a little and take some food, for I was greatly in need of both. There were in that place, nevertheless, many wounded whom it was necessary to care for, and this task, although very pleasing to me, did not allow me the rest that my weary body demanded. I was busy putting a bandage on Don Alonso's arm, when I felt a hand on my shoulder; I turned around and met face to face a tall young man, wrapped in a long blue cape, and I did not recognize him at first. After looking at him closely for a few seconds, I uttered an exclamation of astonishment. It was young Don Rafael Malaspina, the sweetheart of my little mistress.

My master embraced him affectionately, and he sat down at our side. He was wounded in the shoulder and was so pale from loss of blood and fatigue that his face was completely disfigured. His presence produced very rare sensations in me, but I must confess everything, although some of it may not be very favorable to me. At first I experienced a certain joy on seeing a person of my acquaintance who had left such a horrible conflict unharmed; an instant later, however, the old hate that that man aroused in me awakened in my breast like a dulled pain which begins to torture one again after a period of relief. I confess with shame that I was sorry to see him safe and sound. I shall also say in my behalf that this regret was only a momentary sensation, fleet as a flash of lightning, real and dark, that blackened my soul; or better said, it was only a light eclipse of the light of my conscience, which temporarily dimmed its radiant brightness.

The wicked side of my character dominated for only an instant, and in that instant I suppressed it and hid it in the depths of my heart. Could everyone say the same thing?

After this moral conflict I viewed Malospina with joy because he was alive and with pity because he was wounded; and even yet I remember with pride that I tried to reveal these emotions to him. My poor little mistress! What great anxiety she must be enduring! My heart filled with kindness; I would have run to Vejer to say to her, "Señorita Rosa, your Rafael is safe and sound!"

Poor Malospina had been transferred to the Santa Ana from the Hepomaceno, a captured ship with such a large number of wounded that

it was necessary to divide them among the rest of the ships so that they would not perish in abandonment. As soon as the father-in-law and son-in-law had exchanged greetings and discussed the absent members of their families, the conversation turned to the battle; my master told what had happened on the Santísima Trinidad and then said, "But nobody says for sure where Gravina is. Has he fallen prisoner, or did he retreat to Cadiz?"

"The general," answered Malespina, "kept up a terrifying fire on the Defiance and the Revenge; the Neptune, a French vessel, and the San Ildefonso and the San Justo, our ships, helped him; but the strength of the enemy was doubled with the aid of the Dreadnought, the Thunderer and the Poliphemus, and after this all resistance was impossible. Since the Principe de Asturias had all her tackles cut, was without masts and pierced like a sieve, and as General Gravina and his major general had been wounded, they decided to abandon the conflict because every resistance was stupid and the battle was lost. On a broken piece of spar Gravina hoisted the sign of retreat, and accompanied by the San Justo, the San Leandro, the San Montañés, the Indomptable, the Neptune, and the Argonauta, he withdrew to Cadiz, painfully embarrassed at his inability to recover the San Ildefonso, which has remained in the power of the enemy."

"Tell me what happened on the Nepomuceno," said my master with very great interest. "I can hardly believe that Churruca is dead. In spite of the fact that everyone says it is true, I still hold to the belief that that divine man must be alive somewhere."

Malespina said that unfortunately he had witnessed the death of Churrucá and he promised to tell everything soon. Several officers formed in a group about him and I, more curious than they, pressed closer so as not to miss a syllable.

"From the time we left Cadiz," said Malespina, "Churrucá had the premonition of this great disaster. He had expressed his disapproval of the departure because he knew the inferiority of our strength, and moreover, he counted little on the intelligence of Commander Villeneuve. All his predictions have come true, even that one concerning his death, for without a doubt he foresaw it, so positive was he of not obtaining victory. On the nineteenth he said to his brother-in-law Apodaco, 'Before I surrender my ship, I will blow it up or sink it. This is the duty of those who serve their King and fatherland.' That very day he wrote to a friend of his and told him, 'If you find out that my ship has been captured, say that I have died'.

"I knew then by the grave sadness of his face that he realized the outcome would be disastrous. I believe that this certainty and the impossibility of avoiding it, although he felt it so strongly, profoundly disturbed his soul, capable of great deeds as well as great thoughts.

"Churrucá was a religious man because he was a superior man. At eleven o'clock on the morning of the twenty-first he ordered all the crew and marines to come on deck. He made them bow on their knees and in a solemn voice said to the chaplain, 'Perform the duties of your ministry, father, and forgive these brave ones who do not know what

awaits them in the conflict.' When the religious ceremony was over, he asked them to rise, and speaking in a firm, persuasive tone, he said, 'My children, in the name of God I promise bliss to him who dies fulfilling his duty. If anyone fails in his duty, I shall have him shot immediately; and if he should escape my glances, or those of the brave officers whom I have the honor of commanding, his remorse will follow him and may it degrade him for the rest of his days in his wretchedness and disgrace.'

"This speech, as eloquent as simple, linked the fulfillment of military duty to religion and brought enthusiasm to everyone of the crew of the *Nepomuceno*. What pitiful valor! It all was lost like a treasure which falls into the sea. When he caught sight of the English, Churruarua saw with the greatest displeasure that the first riggings were under the command of Villeneuve, and when he gave the sign for all the fleet to veer about, which, as you all know, confused the battle order, he told his assistant that he considered the battle lost with such stupid strategy. Immediately he understood the risky plan of Nelson, which consisted in cutting our line through the center and rearguard, surrounding the combined fleet, and attacking a part of their boats in such a way that they could not be given aid.

"The *Nepomuceno* came to position at the extreme of the line. Firing broke out between the *Santa Ana* and the *Royal Sovereign*, and one by one all the ships were entering the combat. Five English ships of Collingwood's division advanced opposite the *San Juan*; but two of them went on farther, and Churruarua had to face only tripled forces.

"We stood our ground against such superior enemies until two o'clock in the afternoon with great suffering but wreaking double havoc on our enemy. The great spirit of our heroic commander seemed to have been transmitted to sailors and soldiers, and the manoeuvres, like the firing, were being made with marvellous speed. The drafted ones had been drilled in heroism with only two hours of training; and our ship, because of its glorious defense, not only was the terror but the amazement of the English.

"They needed new reinforcements; they needed to be six against one. The two boats which had attacked us at first returned, and the Dreadnought stationed herself at the side of San Juan at the half pistol-shot alongside the alette and stern. Imagine the fire of these six giants as they vomited bullets and metal upon a seventy-four cannon boat. It seemed that our vessel was increasing in size in accordance with the fearlessness of her defenders. The gigantic proportions which our souls had assumed seemed to spread to our bodies, and as we saw how we were spreading terror to forces six times greater, we believed ourselves something more than men.

"Meanwhile Chirruca, who was our mind, was directing the action with astonishing serenity. He understood that skill had to substitute for force, and he economized on the firing, trusting everything to good aim and he was sure that each bullet brought ruin to the enemy. He noticed everything; he directed everything; the metal and bullets were flying above his head without his changing expression even one time. That weak, sickly man, whose handsome, sad face such frightful

seconds, instilled in us all a certain strange ardor with only a ray of his glance.

"But God did not wish that he survive the terrible contest. Seeing that it was not possible to antagonize a ship which was giving the San Juan such trouble along the prow, he himself went to aim the cannon, and he succeeded in vanquishing his opponent. He turned the quarterdeck abaff when a cannon bullet hit his right leg with such dexterity that his leg was almost torn from his body through the upper part of his thigh. We ran to support him, and the hero fell in my arms. What a horrible moment! It seems I can still feel beneath my hand the violent beating of a heart that still in that awful moment beats only for its native land. His physical decline was rapid; I saw him struggling to raise his head which was leaning over on his breast; I saw him trying to revive the deathlike palor of his face with a smile, and with his voice scarcely changed he exclaimed, 'This is nothing. Keep up the firing.'

"His spirit rebelled against death and pretended not to sense the awful pain of a mutilated body whose last throbs were fading with the seconds; we tried to take him down to the cabin, but it was not possible to raise him from the quarterdeck. Finally, yielding to our demands, he understood that it was necessary to give up command. He called for Moyna, his assistant, and they told him that he had died; he called for the commander of the first broadside, and he, although gravely wounded, came up to the quarterdeck and took over command.

"From that moment the crew lost courage; it was changed from a giant to a dwarf. Valor disappeared and we realized that it was

necessary to surrender. The consternation I felt when I received in my arms the hero of the San Juan did not keep me from observing the terrible results produced in the minds of everyone by that misfortune. A sudden moral and physical paralysis seemed to have invaded the crew; they were frozen and speechless, and the grief over the loss of such a dear man did not even give way to regret of the disgrace of surrender.

"Half of the crew was dead or wounded; most of the cannons, dismounted; the masts, except the foremast, had fallen; and the rudder was not functioning. In such a lamentable condition he still wished to try to follow the Principe de Asturias which had given the sign of retreat; but the Nepomuceno, mortally wounded, was unable to hold her course in any direction. And in spite of the ruin and havoc of the vessel, in spite of the dismay of the crew, in spite of unfavorable circumstances plotting our destruction, none of the six English ships dared to attempt boarding our vessel. They feared our ship even after conquering her.

"Churrua in agonizing convulsions ordered the flag to be nailed fast and that his vessel not be surrendered while he lived. The agreement, unfortunately, could be only of short duration, because Churrua was dying rapidly, and all of us who were assisting him were astonished that a body in such a condition still survived; but the strength of his spirit together with an irresistible determination for life kept him alive, because for him living was a duty on that occasion. He did not complain of his suffering, nor did he regret his approaching death;

rather, his every earnest desire was that the crew not know the gravity of his condition, and that no one should fail in his duty. He thanked the crew for their heroic behavior, he addressed some words to his brother-in-law Ruiz de Apodaca, and after leaving a keepsake for his young wife and putting his thought on God, whose name we heard his dry lips faintly call several times, he passed away with the peacefulness of the just and the fortitude of heroes, without the satisfaction of victory but also without the impairment of defeat, and even to death he associated duty with divinity and made discipline a religion; firm as a soldier, serene as a man, with as great dignity in death as in life he did not utter one complaint or accuse any person. We looked at his body, still warm, and it all seemed to us a ghastly mistake; he must awaken to command us again; and in weeping for him we possessed less firmness in spirit than he in death, for on going he took away all the valor, all the ardor with which he had inspired us.

"The San Juan surrendered, and when the officers of the six vessels which had defeated him came on board, each one claimed for himself the sword of the dead brigadier. All said, 'He surrendered to my ship; and for a while they disputed and each one claimed the honor of the victory for the ship to which he belonged. They wanted the temporary commander of the San Juan to decide the question and say to which of the English vessels he had surrendered, and the officer replied, 'To all of them; for the San Juan would never have surrendered to one alone.'

"In the presence of the body of the fallen Churrucá, the English who knew him by his reputation for valor and knowledge showed deep re-

gret and one of them said this or something similar: 'Illustrious gentlemen like this one should not be exposed to the dangers of combat, and indeed should be preserved for the progress of the science of navigation.' Then they arranged for the obsequies to be carried out with the English crew and marines at the side of the Spanish, and in all their acts they conducted themselves like kind, generous gentlemen.

"The number of wounded on board the San Juan was so great that they transferred us to other ships of theirs or captured ones. It fell to my lot to change to this one which has been the most severely damaged; but they count on being able to carry it to Gibraltar before any others now that they are no longer able to take the Trinidad, the largest and the most desirable of our ships."

Here the narration of Malespina ended. He had held the most intense attention during his story of what he had witnessed. According to what I heard, I understood that on every ship there had occurred a tragedy as frightful as that he had witnessed and I said to myself, "What a disaster, blessed God, caused by the stupidity of one man!" And although I was then only a little child, I remember that I thought, "One foolish man is not capable of committing in any moment of his life the blunders which nations directed by hundreds of talented men make at times."

CHAPTER XIV

A great part of the night was spent in listening to the story of Malespina and other officers. The interest of those narrations kept me so alert and excited that I was unable to go to sleep for a long time afterward. I could not banish from my memory the image of Churrucua just as I saw him safe and sound in the home of Dona Flora. And truly, at that time I had been greatly surprised at the intense sadness in the face of the great seaman as if he foretold his sad, approaching death. That noble life had been extinguished at forty-four years of age, after twenty-nine years of honorable service in the army as a wise man, as a soldier, and as a seaman; for Churrucua was everything, besides a perfect gentleman.

I thought of these and other things and when finally my body gave way to fatigue, I fell asleep at dawn of the twenty-third, my youthful nature at last having overcome my curiosity. During the sleep which should be expected to be long and restless and rather agitated by the dreams and nightmares common to the overexcitement of my brain, I heard the thunder of the cannons, the shouts of the battle, the roar of the rushing waves. At the same time I dreamed I was firing the guns, that I was mounting the mast and spars, that I was running along the broadsides filling the spearracks and I was even in command of the rigging on the quarterdeck like an admiral. I do not need to say that in that amusing combat conceived within my own brain I whipped all the English I could get my hands on with more ease than if their ships had been of cardboard and their bullets of broaderstabs. I had under

my command several thousand ships, all larger than the Trinidad, and they moved at my merest whim with as great precision as the playthings with which my friends and I entertained ourselves in the mud puddles of the Caleta.

But finally all these glories vanished, a fact which is not strange since they were only dreams, but especially not strange when, moreover, we see realities also disappear. Everything ended when I opened my eyes and became aware of my smallness in comparison with the magnitude of the disaster which I had experienced. But, a strange thing! Again, I also heard cannon shots, I heard the frightening roar of the affray and cries which told of great activity among the crew. I thought I was still dreaming; I sat up on the couch where I had slept, I listened carefully; and truly, a deafening shout of "Long live the King," burst on my ears, and I was certain that the ship Santa Ana was fighting again.

I went outside, and I was able to understand the situation. The weather had calmed somewhat; on the windward side I saw some dismantled ships and two of the English were firing on the Santa Ana, who was defending herself under the protection of two others, one, Spanish and another, French. I could not explain that sudden change in our situation as prisoners; I looked at the stern and saw our flag floating in place of the English. What had happened? Or better, what was happening? For the thing was happening in those moments.

On the abaft quarterdeck there was one whom I learned was General Alava, and although wounded in several parts of his body he had strength

enough to direct that second combat which seemed destined to send into oblivion the former misfortunes of the Santa Ana. The officers encouraged the seaman. This one loaded and fired the guns which were still serviceable while some acted as guards, holding at bay the English who had been disarmed and surrounded in the first between-deck. The officers of this nation, who before had been our guardians, had been changed into prisoners.

I understood everything. The heroic commander of the Santa Ana, Ignacia M. de Alava, seeing a few Spanish vessels approach which had set sail from Cadix with the idea of recapturing the prisoner vessels and saving the crew of the nearest ones from drowning, with patriotic speech addressed his overthrown crew. They responded to the voice of their chief with one supreme effort; they forced the English who were in custody of the ship to surrender themselves, they hoisted again the Spanish flag and the Santa Ana was free, although involved in a new fight, more dangerous perhaps than the first.

This strange daring, one of the most honorable episodes of the drama of Trafalgar was accomplished in an unrigged boat, without rudder, with half of her men dead or wounded, and the rest in a moral and physical situation truly lamentable. It was necessary, that act once undertaken, to defy its consequences; two English ships, also very badly damaged, were firing on the Santa Ana; but fortunately she was aided by the *Asis*, the *Montañés* and the *Rayo*, three of those who retreated with *Gravina* the day of the twenty-first and had come back again to rescue the captured. Those noble injured ones entered the

new and desperate battle; perhaps with more courage than the first because bleeding wounds kindle rage in the souls of combatants, and they seem to fight with more ardor since they have less life to lose.

All the incidents of the terrible day of the twenty-first reappeared before my eyes; the enthusiasm was great, but men were few and for this reason it was necessary to redouble the effort. It is fitting that such a heroic deed has occupied only a short page in our history while it is true that in comparison to the great event that today is known by the name of Battle of Trafalgar, these episodes fade and almost disappear like feeble gleams in a terrifying night.

Then I saw a sight which made me shed tears. I had not found my master anywhere, and fearing that he might encounter some danger, I went down to the first broadside, and I found him engaged in firing a cannon. His trembling hand had seized the linstock from the hands of a wounded sailor, and with the weak vision of his right eye the poor old man was searching for the mark to send the bullet. When the gun fired, he turned toward me tremulous with joy and with a voice I could scarcely understand he said to me, "Ah! Now Pacha will not laugh at me! We shall enter Cadiz in triumph."

In brief, the fight ended happily because the English realized the impossibility of recovering the Santa Ana whom two other French vessels and a frigate which arrived in the thickest of the fight aided, besides the three ships in view.

We were freed in the most glorious manner; but as soon as the deed was finished, one could clearly see the danger that we encountered,

for the Santa Ana needed to be towed to Cadiz due to the bad condition of her hull. The frigate Francesa Themis pitched out a cable and turned her prow to the north but how could that boat have strength enough to haul another as heavy as the Santa Ana, and who was able to help herself with only the top sails of the foremast. The ships which had rescued us wished to carry their prowess further,...that is the Rayo, the Montañes, and the San Francisco de Asis...and they forced sail to recapture also the San Juan and the Bahama which were manned by the English. We were left then alone with only the help of the frigate which was hauling us,...a baby leading a giant. What would happen to us if the English by chance recovered from their great loss and pursued us with new forces again? Meanwhile Providence seemed to favor us, for the wind, favorable to the direction we were taking, was carrying our frigate, and the ship, affectionately led behind her, was nearing Cadiz.

Five leagues separated us from the harbor.

What inexpressible joy! Soon all our sorrows would end; soon we would set our feet on firm ground, and although we carried the news of great disaster, we also brought happiness to many hearts, suffering mortal anguish in the belief that those now returning with life and health were lost forever.

The courage of the Spanish ships had victory only in the rescue of the Santa Ana, and they had to withdraw without being able to pursue the English vessels which held the San Juan, the Bahama and the San Ildefonso in custody. We were still four leagues away from our desti-

nation when we saw them withdraw. The sea wind had increased, and it was the general opinion on board the Santa Ana that if we delayed in arriving at port, we were going to have a very bad time. New and more terrible difficulties. Again hope was lost within sight of the harbor, when a few paces more over the terrible deep would have placed us in complete safety within the bay.

In addition to all these things a very bad looking night was approaching; the sky, loaded with black clouds, seemed to have tumbled down upon the sea, and the bolts of lightning which inflamed it at brief intervals gave a fearful tint to the dusk. The sea increased in excitement with a fury still unsatisfied with so great a victim and blustered in anger as its insatiable ferocity sought a larger number of spoils. The shattered remains of the largest fleet that had ever challenged her fury against that of her enemy did not escape the anger of the elements, which, like an angry god of antiquity, had no compassion even in the supreme hour, as cruel in the presence of fortune as in the face of disaster.

I saw expressions of profound sadness on the face of my master as well as in that of General Alava, who, in spite of his wounds, was still on hand at every situation; he ordered signals to be given to the frigate Themis to increase her speed if possible. Far from acceding to his justifiable impatience, our tugboat prepared to reef and to lay in the sails so as to better resist the furious wind. I experienced the general sadness, and thought to myself how easily destiny jokes at our best laid plans, and with what rapidity one passes from the greatest

of luck to dire misfortune. But there we were upon the sea, the majestic emblem of human life. A little wind transforms it; the gentle wave, lapping the boat with soft stroke, changes into a liquid mountain, breaking her and jerking her. The pleasing sound, which during good weather forms the light ripples of the water, is then a voice that shouts and roars, injuring the fragile vessel; and she, hurled about sinks down, feeling the lack of steadiness in her keel, then is thrown headlong by an oncoming wave to rise again. A serene day brings a horrible night, or on the contrary, a moon which adorns the night and calms the spirit is accustomed to precede a terrible sun, before whose clarity nature is torn asunder by its powerful upheaval.

We were experiencing the misfortune of these alternatives and besides that which comes as a result of man's own works. After the combat we had suffered a shipwreck; saved from this, we were again engaged in a fight, with a fortunate outcome, and then when we were reaching the end of our troubles, when joyfully we were greeting Cadiz, we were again in the power of the storm which was dragging us away, anxious to destroy us. This series of misadventures seems absurd, doesn't it? It seemed the cruel mania of a divinity determined to cause every evil possible to misguided humans; but no...it was the logic of the sea together with the logic of war. Is he not an imbecile who is astonished at seeing the worst catastrophes created by these two elements combined?

A new situation increased the sadness of that afternoon for my master and me. We hadn't seen young Malespina since the Santa Ana had been recaptured. At last, after looking for him a long time, I found

him huddled 'p on one of the couches of the cabin.

I approached him and saw that he was very quiet. I questioned him, but he was unable to answer me. He wished to rise, but he fell back again breathless.

"You are wounded," I said, "I shall call them to care for you."

"It is nothing," he answered. "Could you bring my a little water?"

Quickly I called my master.

"What is the matter? The wound in your hand?" asked he, examining the youth's hand.

"No, it is something more," replied Rafael sadly, and he motioned to his right side near his belt.

Then, as if the effort used in showing his wound and in saying those few words were too much for his weakened condition, he closed his eyes and didn't talk or move for some time.

"Oh, this looks serious," said a surgeon who had come up to examine him.

Ralespina, overcome with sadness on seeing himself in such a state, and thinking there was no remedy for himself, did not even pay any attention to his wound and moved away to a spot where his thoughts and memories stopped him. He thought he was going to die, and he refused to let anyone do anything for him. The surgeon said that although the wound was grave, it did not appear fatal; but he added if we didn't reach Cadiz that night so that he could be treated conveniently on land, his life, as well as the lives of the other wounded, would be in great danger.

The Santa Ana had had ninety-seven dead and one hundred forty wounded in the combat of the twenty-first; the resources of the infirmary had been exhausted, and some indispensable medicines were lacking completely. The misfortune of Malespina was not the only one after the recapture; God wished that another person very dear to me should suffer the same fate. Marcial fell wounded; at first he scarcely felt pain or weakness as his vigorous spirit sustained him; nevertheless, he was not long in going down to the hold and said that he felt very bad. My master sent for the surgeon to help him; and this one limited himself to the statement that the wound wouldn't be of any importance in a young man of twenty-five; *Medio-hombre* (Half-man) was more than sixty.

Meanwhile the ship *Rayo* passed on the port side and within speaking distance. Alava ordered that the *Themis* be asked if she thought she could enter Cadiz, and she answered back loudly, "No!"; then the *Rayo* was asked; and as she was almost unharmed, she answered that she intended to reach port surely. Then several officers gathered and agreed that they transfer to that ship Commander Gardequi, severely wounded and many other officers of land and sea, among them the sweetheart of my mistress. Alonso obtained permission for Marcial to be transferred also, due to the fact that his advanced age aggravated his condition considerably, and he assigned to me the task of accompanying them as a page or nurse, and he ordered me not to leave their side for one minute until they were in Cadiz or Vejer in the care of their families. I promised to obey; but I wanted to persuade my master that he too board

the Bayo as it was safer, but he didn't even want to listen to such a proposition.

"Fate," he said, "has brought me to this boat, and in it I will be until God decides whether he will save us or not. Alava is very ill, most of the officers are wounded, and here I can be of some service. I am not one of those who quit danger; on the contrary, I have been looking for it since the twenty-first, and I want to see the time when my presence in the fleet is profitable. If you arrive before I do, as I hope, tell Faca that the true sailor is a slave to his country, and that I am very happy at having come, and that I am not sorry, no sir, I am not sorry,...on the contrary... . Tell her that she will be glad to see me, and that surely my companions would have missed me if I had not come. How could I fail? Don't you think I did right in coming?"

"Surely, that is clear; what doubt can there be?" I answered trying to calm his agitation which would not allow him to see the futility of consulting with a lowly page a question of such serious importance.

"I see that you are a sensible person," he added, feeling consoled with my approval. "I see that you have lofty and patriotic ideas... but Faca sees things only in the light of her egotism; and as she has such an unusual temper and has got it into her head that fleets and cannons are good-for-nothing, she can't understand that I... . Well, I know that she will be furious when I return, since we haven't won, she will say this and something else,...I will go crazy...but...I will not pay any attention to her. What do you think? Don't you think I

shouldn't pay any attention to her?"

"I think so," I answered. "Your lordship has done very well in coming; that fact proves that you are a brave sailor."

"Well, go with those arguments to Paca, and you will see what she will say," he said, each time more excited. "Finally, tell her I am safe and sound, and that my presence here has been very necessary. The truth is in the recapture of the Santa Ana, I played a very important part. If I had not aimed those cannons so well, who knows, who knows... What do you think? It might be that I may do something else, or it may be if the wind is favorable, we may recapture a pair of ships... . Yes, sir... . Right now I am thinking of a certain plan... . We shall see, we shall see... . So good-by, Gabriel. Be careful what you tell Paca."

"No, no, I will not forget," I replied. "She shall know that if it had not been for your lordship, the Santa Ana would not have been recaptured; and she shall know, too, that perhaps at best you are bringing us two dozen ships to Cadiz."

"Two dozen, no, man," he said, "that is a great deal. Two ships or perhaps three. Well, I think I have done very well in coming to the fleet. She will be furious with me and will run me crazy when I get back, but, I think, I say again, that I have done very well in coming here."

Having said this, he left me. A minute later I saw him seated in a corner of the cabin. He was praying and moving the beads of the rosary on the sly because he didn't want them to see him engaged in such devout exercise. I presumed by his last words that my master had

lost his reason, and as I saw him pray, I realized the weakness of his spirit which he had vainly forced to overcome his advanced age, and now, unable to sustain the conflict, he was seeking God for aid. Dona Francisca was right. For many years my master had been good-for-nothing except to pray.

According to the agreement, we transferred. Rafael and Marcial, as well as the other wounded officers, were lowered into the arms of robust sailors to one of the launches with great difficulty. The powerful waves hindered this operation a great deal; but finally it was completed, and both launches started toward the Rayo. The crossing from one ship to the other was very bad; but finally, although there were moments when it seemed to me that the boat was going to disappear forever, at last it reached the side of the Rayo, and with very much labor we scaled the ladder.

CHAPTER XV

"We have jumped from the frying pan into the fire," said Marcial when they placed him on deck. "But when the captain orders, the sail-or doesn't. They certainly gave this cursed thing the name *Rayo* for a bad name. He says that she will enter Cádiz before midnight, and I say that she will not enter."

"Do you say, Marcial, that we will not reach there?" I asked eagerly.

"You, Gabriel, sir, do not understand about this," he answered me.

"When my señor Alonso and the officials of the *Santa Ana* think that the *Rayo* will reach harbor tonight, she has to do it. When they say so, they will have it so."

"And you do not know, little sardine, that those señors of the stern are more easily mistaken than we sailors of the upper deck. If that isn't so, take for example the commander of the entire fleet, Mr. Corneta; may the devil carry him away. Now you see that he didn't have the slightest idea how to command a fleet. Do you think that if Mr. Corneta had done what I was saying, he would have lost the battle?"

"And you don't think we will reach Cádiz?"

"I say that this ship is heavier than lead and tricky besides. She has a bad gait, she steers badly, and she looks like she is crippled, one-eyed, and one-handed like me, for if they set the helm for here, she goes for there."

Truly, according to general opinion, the *Rayo* was in very poor

condition for the sea. But in spite of this, in spite of her advanced age, for she was around fifty-six years old, since she was in a good state, she didn't seem to be running any danger, for if the sea wind was becoming stronger, also the port was near. Wasn't it logical, in every way, to suppose that the Santa Ana, unmasted, without helm, and forced to resort to towing of a frigate was running the greater danger?

Marcial was put in the orlop and Malospina in the cabin. When we left him there with the other wounded officers, I heard a voice that I recognized although at first I could not place the person to whom it belonged. I approached the group from which came the resounding chatter which dominated all the other voices, and I was astonished to recognize José María Malospina himself in person. I ran to him to tell him his son was here, and the good father suspended the string of lies he was telling to hurry to the young man's side. Great was his joy to find him alive, for he had left Cadiz because of his impatience to learn his whereabouts at any cost.

"Nothing much is wrong with you," he said, embracing his son, "a simple scratch. But you aren't accustomed to feeling wounds. You are a girl, Rafael. Oh, if you had been of age so as to have gone to the Bascon war with me! You would have seen a fine thing. Those were real wounds. You know that a bullet hit me in the lower arm, went up toward the shoulder, turned down through the entire back, and came out along the belt. Oh, what a strange wound! But at the end of three days I was well, commanding the artillery in the attack of Bellegarde."

Later he explained the motive for his presence on board the *Rayo* in this manner: "On the night of the twenty-first we learned in Cadiz the outcome of the battle. As I said, sirs, they didn't want to pay any attention to me when I talked about artillery reforms, and here are the results. Very well then; as soon as I learned it and found that that Gravina with a few ships had arrived in retreat, I went to see if the *San Juan*, the one that you were on, was among them. But they told me that it had been captured. I cannot picture to you my anxiety. I was almost positive you were dead, especially when I learned of the great number of misfortunes on your ship. But I am a man who sees things through to the end, and learning that the departure of a few ships had been ordered with the object of relieving the dismantled and rescuing the prisoners, I decided to settle all my doubts and embarked on one of them. I explained my intention to Solano and afterwards to the Major General of the fleet, my old friend Escano, and with some hesitation they let me come. On board the *Rayo* where I set sail this morning, I asked about you and the *San Juan*; but they told me nothing consoling; on the contrary, I learned that Churrucá had died and that his ship, after battling with much glory, had fallen into the power of the enemy. Imagine what my anxiety was! How far away I was today when we redeemed the *Santa Ana*, the boat you were on; if I had known it for sure, I would have redoubled my efforts in the orders I gave with permission of these gentlemen, and the ship of Alava would have been free in two minutes."

The officers who surrounded him eyed him slowly on hearing the last boastful remark of Don José María. By their laughter and whispers,

I understood that during the whole day they had been highly entertained by the yarns of that fine gentleman, who could not restrain his loose tongue, not even under most critical and painful circumstances.

The surgeon said that it was necessary to keep the wounded man quiet and not to carry on any conversation in his presence, especially if it concerned the disaster that had occurred.

Don José María heard this advice, but on the contrary he saw fit to arouse the sick man's spirit and added, "In the Rosellón war, we seriously wounded men, (and I was so several times) ordered the soldiers to dance and play the guitar in the infirmary, and I am positive this treatment cured us sooner than all the plasters and medicines."

"Why in the wars of the French Republic," said an Andalusian officer who wished to amaze José María, "it was decreed that there be a complete dancing wait and an opera company, and the doctors and pharmacists were dispensed with, for with a couple of arias and two dozen capers everybody was like new."

"Halt, there!" exclaimed Malespina. "That is a fake, sir. How can wounds be cured with music and dance?"

"You said so."

"Yes, but that has happened only one time, and it is not likely to happen again. Is it probable that there will happen again a war like that of Rosellón, the bloodiest, the most skilled, the most strategic that has occurred since Epaminondas? Surely not. For in that war everything was extraordinary, and I can swear to it, for I

witnessed it from beginning to end. To that war I owe my knowledge of artillery. Have you not heard me talk about myself? I am sure that you will become acquainted with my name. For be assured that I am planning a wonderful project in my head, so great that if some day it becomes a reality, disasters like this of the twenty-first will not happen again. Yes, señors," he added looking with an expression of gravity and self-importance at the three or four officers who were listening to him, "it is necessary to invent something stupendous, which will return our loss to us and assure our navy victory forever and ever, amen."

"Let's see, Señor José María," said an officer, "explain to us what your invention is."

"Well, now I am busy at constructing a three hundred millimeter cannon."

"Man, three hundred millimeters!" exclaimed the officials with looks of laughter and derision. "The largest we have on board are only thirty-six."

"Those are children's playthings. Imagine the destruction these three hundred millimeter guns would do firing on the enemy fleet," said Malespina. "But what the devil is this?" he added, balancing himself so as not to roll on the floor, for the rocking of the bayo was so great that it was very difficult for him to hold himself erect.

"The sea wind is getting stronger, and it looks to me as if we shall not enter Cádiz tonight," said an officer on withdrawing.

Only two were left, and the liar continued his speech in these terms: "The first thing that should be done is to construct ships

from ninety-five to one hundred yards in length."

"Confound it! Do you think that the 'little' launch would be quite average?" indicated an officer. "One hundred yards! The Trinidad, bless her, was seventy, and everyone thought she was too long. You know that she heaved badly and that all her manoeuvres were done with great difficulty."

"I see that you are frightened at such a small matter, sir," continued Malespina. "What are one hundred yards? Much larger ships still could be constructed. And I must inform you that I would construct them of iron."

"Of iron!" exclaimed both listeners, unable to control their laughter.

"Of iron, yes. Perhaps you are not acquainted with the science of hydrostatics. According to that I would construct an iron vessel of seven thousand tons."

"And the Trinidad had only four thousand!" said an officer, "and that seemed excessive. Don't you understand that such a colossal tackle and rigging would be necessary to move that mountain of weight that no human strength would be capable of operating it?"

"A trifle! Oh, señor seaman, who tells you I would be so stupid as to move that vessel by means of the wind? You do not understand me. If you knew that I had here an idea... . But I do not care to explain it to you because you would not understand me."

At this point in his chatter, Don José María took such a tumble that he fell on his all fours. But not even that closed his trap.

Another of the officers went away, and only one was left who had to keep the conversation going.

"What unsteadiness," the old man continued. "It looks as if we are going to be dashed against the coast... . Very well, as I said, I would move that huge bulk of my invention by means of Why do you not guess it? By means of water steam. For this a strange machine would be built, in which the steam compressed and expanded alternately within two cylinders would place some wheels in motion...then... ."

The officer did not wish to hear more, and although he held no position on the boat and belonged to no service crew as he was one of the rescued, he went to aid his comrades who were rather busy with the wind. Malespina was left alone with me. And then I thought he would keep quiet due to the fact that he would judge me a poor person at conversation. But unfortunately, he took me for more than I was worth, and he started talking to me in the following terms: "You well understand what I mean, don't you? Seven thousand tons, steam, two wheels...well!"

"Yes, sir, I understand perfectly," I answered to see if he would keep quiet, for I was in no mood to listen to him; and the violent vibrations of the boat, warnings of great danger, were not conducive to a discussion concerning the exaltation of seamanship.

"I see that you understand me and are impressed with my inventions," he continued. "Now you will understand that the boat of my imagination would be invincible in attacking as well as defending. It alone probably would have defeated the thirty English vessels with four or five shots."

"But wouldn't the cannon of those English ships harm it, too?"

I said timidly, arguing more for the sake of courtesy than for interest in the matter.

"Oh, your observation, little man, is very judicious, and it proves that you comprehend and appreciate great inventions. To avoid the effect of the enemy's artillery, I would cover my ship with thick sheets of steel, that is, I would put over it a steel armor like that the ancient warships used. By this means, she could attack without the enemy's missiles having any more effect on her sides than little bread bullets thrown by a baby's hand. The idea I have had is marvelous. Imagine that our nation had two or three ships like those. What would become of the English fleet with all its Nelsons and Collingwoods?"

"But in case that those ships could be made here," I said briskly, knowing the strength of my argument, "the English would make the same kind, also; and then the proportions of the conflict would be the same."

Jose Maria was stupefied with this reasoning, and for an instant he was perplexed without knowing what to say. But his inexhaustible vein didn't hesitate to suggest new ideas to him and he answered crossly, "And who has told you, daring young man, that I would be capable of revealing the secret so that the English might know? The ships would be made with the greatest concealment without saying a word to anyone. Let us suppose a new war should occur. The English provoked us and we said to them, 'Yes, sir, we are ready; we will fight.' The ordinary ships go out to sea, the battle starts; just imagine that two or three of those iron monsters appear in the combat waters, vomiting smoke and

rushing here and there without paying any attention to the wind; they go wherever they wish with a push of their sharp prows; they make splinters of the opponent vessels, and with a pair of cannon shots... just imagine...everything is over in a quarter of an hour."

I did not wish to make objections because the idea that we were running a great danger prevented my mind becoming occupied with thoughts contrary to the usual ones in such a critical situation. I didn't think any more about the dreadful imaginary ship until thirty years later I learned about the application of steam to navigation, and still later, when at the end of the half-century I saw in our glorious frigate *Numancia* the finished realization of the wild dreams of the Trafalgar liar.

Half a century later I thought about José María and said, "It seems strange that the extravagances conceived by a crazy man, or liar, become marvelous realities with the passing of time."

Since I observed this coincidence, I do not condemn absolutely any utopia, and every liar seems to me a man of genius.

I left José María to see what was happening, and as soon as I put my feet out of the cabin, I learned the compromising situation in which the *Rayo* found herself. The sea wind not only prevented her entrance into Cádiz, but it was loading her toward the coast, where she would surely run aground and shatter herself to pieces against the rocks. However bad the fate of the *Santa Ana* which we had abandoned might be, it could not be any worse than ours. I eagerly watched the faces of the officers and sailors to see if I could find something to

indicate hope, but unfortunately for me, in all I saw signs of despair. I consulted the sky and I saw it awfully ugly; I observed the sea and I found it very furious; the only thing possible was to turn to God, and He was so little favorable to us since the twenty-first!

The *Rayo* was running toward the north. According to the indications the sailors whom I had approached were making, we were passing opposite the bank of Murrajotes, the bank of Hazte Afuera, of Juan Pola, opposite Torregorda, and lastly in front of Cadiz castle. In vain were carried out all the operations necessary to turn the prow toward the inside of the bay. The old ship, like a frightened horse refused to obey; the wind and the sea, running with impetuous fury, were hauling her about from south to north, without nautical science being able to prevent it.

We did not delay in going beyond the bay. Rota, Punta Candor, Punta of Meca, Regla, and Chipiona were soon well to our right. There was no doubt that the *Rayo* was going straightway to dash herself to pieces inevitably near the mouth of the Guadalquivir. I don't need to say that the sails had been lowered, and as the recourse was not enough against so strong a storm, the topmasts were lowered also; finally it was considered necessary to take down the masts to keep the ship from tearing to shreds beneath the waves. In great storms a vessel needs to make herself small; she wishes to be changed from a lofty oak to a humble weed, and as her masts cannot fold up like the branches of a tree, one sees the painful necessity of cutting them off and being without limbs to save her life.

The loss of the vessel was now inevitable. With her main mast and mizzenmast taken down, she was abandoned, and the only hope lay in being able to anchor near the coast, for which action the anchors were prepared and the cables reinforced. She fired two shots to beg for aid from the nearby coast, and as we clearly distinguished some bonfires on the coast, we felt cheered by the belief that someone would give us help. Many were of the opinion that some Spanish or English vessel had run aground there and that the fires we saw were lighted by the shipwrecked crew. Our anxiety increased with the minutes, and it is my duty to say that I believed I was approaching a disastrous end. I was unable to pay attention to what was happening on board, and in my emotional distress I could think only of death which I judged inevitable. If the boat was wrecked, who could clear the space of water separating him from land? The most terrible place for a storm is that in which the waves revolve against the earth and it looks as if they are digging it out in order to carry fragments of the beach into the profound depths. The force of the wave as it advanced and the violence with which it dashed back were so great that no human force could conquer them.

Finally, after several hours of mortal anguish the keel touched on a sand bank and stopped. Her entire hull and the remains of her mast and spars trembled for an instant. It appeared that they intended to overcome the obstacle placed in their path, but the latter was greater, and the vessel, leaning first to one side and then to the other, sank her stern beneath the water and after a breath-taking

creak, remained motionless.

Everything was over, and now it was possible to think only of saving one's life by crossing the space of sea that separated us from the coast. This seemed almost impossible to do in the crafts we had on board; but there were hopes that they would send us help from shore, for it was evident that a recently shipwrecked crew was bivouacking there, and a few of the war sloops whose sally the naval authority of Cadiz should order for such cases could not be far away. The *Rayo* fired new shots, and we awaited help with the greatest impatience, for if it did not come soon, we would all perish with the ship. This unfortunate cripple, whose bottom had been torn open on running aground, was threatened with being dashed to pieces by her own convulsions; the moment could not be far away when the nails from some of her frames would become disjointed, and we would be at the mercy of the waves with only the help that the scattered debris of the ship could give us.

Those on land could not help us, but God wished that a sloop which had set out to sea from Chipiona should hear the cannon shots of alarm, and it approached us from the prow, keeping at a good distance. As soon as we saw its great mainsail, we felt that we were saved, and the commander of the *Rayo* ordered that the transfer be made without recklessness in such dangerous moments.

When I saw that a transfer was being discussed, my first intention was to run to the side of the two persons who were of interest to me there, young Malospina and Marcial, both wounded although the

second was not seriously. I found the artillery officer in a rather serious condition, and he was saying to those around him, "Do not move me; let me die here."

Marcial had been carried on deck and was lying on the floor with such weakness and prostration that his appearance gave me great fright. He raised his eyes when I approached him, and as I took his hand, he said in a choking voice, "Little Gabriel, do not leave me."

"To land! All of us are going to land!" I exclaimed trying to arouse him; but he, moving his head in sadness, seemed to foresee misfortune.

I tried to help him to rise, but after the first effort his body fell again as if dead, and finally he said, "I cannot."

The bandages on his wounds had fallen away, and in the disorder of the rush I could find no one to replace them. I cared for him as I could, consoling him at the same time with words of hope, and I even tried to laugh and ridicule his appearance to see if this method could encourage him. But the poor old man did not open his lips but inclined his head with a gloomy gesture, insensible to my jokes as well as to my comforting words.

Busy with him, I did not notice that the transferring to the launches had begun. José María and his son were almost the first ones whom they lowered. My first impulse was to follow after them and carry out the orders of my master, but the image of the wounded and abandoned sailor stopped me. Malespina did not need me, while

Marcial, almost given up as dead, was stretching out his icy hand, saying to me, "Gabriel, do not abandon me."

The launches approached with difficulty, but in spite of this, once the wounded were on board, the transfer was easy because the sailors rushed on them by sliding down a cord or hurling themselves with a leap into them. Many dashed into the water and reached them by swimming. In my imagination I began to wonder which of these two procedures I would employ to save myself. There was no time to lose because the *Reyo* was breaking to pieces; almost all the stern was under water and the cracking of the cross timbers and frames half under water announced that rather soon that mountainous mass would no longer be a ship. Everyone was running hurriedly toward the launches, and the sloop, which kept away at a distance, skilfully devising ways to resist the sea, picked them up. The launches returned empty in a short time, but they were soon filled again.

I saw that Half-man was abandoned, and I went choking and crying to some sailors and asked them to carry Marcial to save him; but they were busy enough trying to save themselves. In a moment of desperation I tried to lift him on my back but my limited strength barely succeeded in raising his lifeless arms from the floor. I ran along the entire deck in search of a kind soul, and some were about to yield to my requests, but the danger distracted them from such good intentions. To understand this inhuman cruelty one must necessarily have been in such terrible straits; sentiment and charity disappear before the instinct of self-preservation which dominates

one so completely and at times makes him a wild beast.

"Oh, those wicked men do not want to save you, Marcial," I exclaimed with the deepest grief.

"Let them alone," he answered me. "It's the same to me on board as on land. Go on, run, child, for they are leaving you here."

I do not know which thought tormented me more, that of remaining on board where doubtless I would perish, or that of leaving him alone to his misfortune. At last the voice of nature was stronger than any other force, and I took several steps toward the gunwale; I turned back to embrace the poor old man and then I ran rapidly toward the place where the last sailors were embarking. There were four; when I reached the spot, I saw that the four had leaped into the sea and were swimming nearer the launch which was about ten or twelve yards in the distance.

"What about me?" I exclaimed with anguish when I saw they were leaving me. "I am going too! I am going too!"

I shouted with all my strength, but they did not hear me, or they did not want to heed me. In spite of the darkness I saw the launch, I saw them climb into her, although I could scarcely see this action due to the distance. I decided to hurl myself into the water to follow the same fate, but in the very instant I made this resolution my eyes lost sight of the launch and the sailors, and in front of me there was only that horrible darkness of the water.

Every means of salvation had disappeared. I turned my eyes in every direction and I saw only the waves beating against the remains of the ship; in the sky not even one star, on the coast not one light.

The sloop had disappeared too. Beneath my furiously stamping feet the hull of the *Rayo* was breaking into pieces, and the only piece left whole was a part of the prow and the deck was full of debris. I found myself upon a shapeless raft which threatened to sink every minute.

On seeing myself in such a situation, I ran to Marcial saying, "They have left me, they have left us!"

The old man sat up with very great effort, leaning on one hand; he raised his head and with his troubled eyes gazed into the black space surrounding us.

"Nothing!" he exclaimed. "I see nothing. No launches, no land, no lights, no coast. They will not return."

As he said this a terrible rush sounded under our feet in the depth of the orlop, entirely soaked by this time. The quarterdeck inclined violently to one side, and it was necessary for us to grasp tightly to the base of a pin wheel to keep from falling into the water. We had no flooring. The last remains of the *Rayo* was going to be dragged through the waves. But as hope never completely deserts one, I still thought it possible that the situation might last until dawn without becoming worse, and I felt consoled to see the foremast was still standing. With a firm determination to climb it when the hull began to sink, I gazed at that proud tree trunk on which were floating pieces of ropes and shreds of sails, and which was resisting, a colossus dishevelled in desperation, and I begged for mercy from heaven.

Marcial allowed himself to fall on the deck and said, "There is no hope now, Gabriel. Neither will they wish to return, nor would

the sea let them if they had the desire. Since God wishes, we two must die here. It doesn't matter for me; I am an old man and not good for a damned thing...but you,...you are a child and...."

As he said this his voice became unintelligible with emotion and hoarseness. A little later I heard those words: "You have no sins because you are a child. But I... . Although when one is dying like this... . I was going to say...like a dog or cat, it isn't necessary that a priest come and give him 'solution (absolution) but it is enough if he has an understanding with God. Haven't you heard that?"

I do not know what I answered him; I think I did not answer him and began crying disconsolately.

"Courage, Gabriel," he continued. "Man must be a man, and now is the time when you can tell who has a soul and who doesn't have one. You have no sins; but I have. They say that when a person is dying and he can't find a priest to confess to, he should tell what he has on his conscience to the first one he meets. Well, I am telling you, Gabriel, I am confessing to you and I am going to tell my sins, and trust that God is listening to me behind you, and that He is going to pardon me."

Speechless from fright and the solemn words I had just heard, I embraced the old man who continued in the manner: "Well, I say that I have always been 'postolic Roman Catholic and that I have always been and am now devoted to the Virgin Carmen whom I am calling

on for help now; and I say that I haven't confessed for twenty-one years or taken communion; it wasn't my fault, but the fault of putting off the damned service, and because a person always leaves it for the next Sunday. But now I am sorry for not having done it, and I say, and swear, and declare that I love God, and the Virgin, and all the saints, and may they punish me for all my offenses, because if I didn't confess or take communion, it was because of those damned cassocks, for they made no leave for the sea just when I had the notion of obeying the church. I have never stolen a pin point, nor have I told any lies, except just a few to joke. I am sorry for the beatings I gave my woman thirty years ago, although I still think they were well given because she was meaner than a heifer and had a disposition more devilish than a scorpion. I haven't failed in everything the ordinance commands; I don't hate anybody except the cassocks whom I would have loved to see made into mince-meat; but they say that we all are children of God, and I forgive them, and likewise in the same way I pardon the French who have brought this war on us. I won't say any more, because it looks like I am going at full sail. I love God and I am at peace. Hug me, Gabriel, and hold me tight against you. You have no sins and you are going to find 'trinquality' (tranquility) with the angels divine. But it is better to die at your age than to live in this stubborn world... . So courage, child, for this is finished. The water is rising and the Bayo is gone forever. Death is kind to a drowning person; don't be afraid; put your arms around me. In a little while we will be free from pain; I will be

happy as Christmas wishes, dancing through the skies carpeted with stars; and there happiness never ends, because it is eternal, just like the other one said, tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow and another one forevermore."

He could not say more. I grasped Half-man's body strongly. A violent blow of the sea washed away the prow of the ship and I felt the beating of the water against my back. I closed my eyes and thought of God. At the same instant I lost every sensation and I did not know what happened.

CHAPTER XVI

When the awareness of life again dully lighted my spirit, I felt a very intense cold, and this sensation alone made me realize my own existence; but my mind held no memory of the past, nor could I realize anything concerning my now situation. When my head cleared and the numbness of my senses disappeared, I was stretched out on the beach. Some men were around me, watching me with interest. The first thing I heard was: "Poor little thing. He is coming to himself."

Gradually I was coming back to life and with it back to memory of the past. I remembered Marcial, and I think the first words my lips uttered were questions about him. Nobody knew how to answer me. Among those surrounding me I recognized some sailors of the *Rayo*; I asked them about Half-man and they were convinced that he had perished. Then I wanted to find out how I had been saved, but they gave me no information.

They gave me something to drink, I don't know what; they carried me to a nearby house, and there near a good fire and under the care of an old woman I recovered my health but not my strength. Then they told me that another sloop, coming out to examine the remains of the *Rayo* and those of a French vessel that had met the same fate, found me near Marcial, and they were able to save my life. My companion in the agonizing experience was dead. I also learned that in the travail of the vessel shipwrecked on the coast several unfortunate ones had lost their lives.

I wanted to know what had happened to Halespina, and there was no one who could give me any information concerning the father and son.

I asked about the Santa Ana, and they told me that it had reached Cádiz safely, and because of this news, I resolved to start immediately on the road to join my muster. I was quite a distance from Cádiz, on the coast which leads to the right bank of the Guadalquivir. I needed, then, to start on my way immediately so as to cover such a long distance as soon as possible. I waited two days to rest, and at last, accompanied by a sailor who took the same road, I started on my way toward Sanlúcar. On the morning of the twenty-seventh I remember that we crossed the river, and then we continued our journey on foot without leaving the coast line. As the sailor who accompanied me was friendly and happy, the trip was as pleasant as I could wish for, considering the fact that my soul was still crushed by Larcial's death and by the last scenes I witnessed on board. On the road we discussed the battle and the shipwreck that followed it.

"Half-man was a good sailor," my companion on the trip would say. "But who sent him out to sea with a load of more than sixty years? The end that he has met is well spent."

"He was a brave sailor," I said, "and so fond of war that his weakness did not keep him away when he made up his mind to come to the fleet."

"Well, I am taking leave of it," continued the sailor. "I don't want any more battles on the sea. The King's pay is poor, and later if you are left lame or crippled, they tell you 'good-night, if I have seen you, I don't remember you.' It looks strange that the King

these who serve him so badly. What do you think? The majority of the ship commanders who fought the battle of the twenty-first haven't received their salaries for several months. The last year I was in Cadiz a ship captain, not knowing how to keep himself or his children, started serving in an inn. His friends discovered him although he tried to hide his misery, and at last they succeeded in removing him from his low position. This thing happens in no other country in the world, and then they are afraid that the English wish to conquer us! Well, I'm not saying anything about arms. The arsenals are empty, and regardless of how much money is asked from Madrid, ...not a dime. It is true that all the treasuries of the King are used to pay salaries to the gentlemen of the court, and among these the Prince of Peace, who is collecting forty thousand dollars as an Advisor of the State, as Secretary of the State, as Commander-in-chief, Head Sergeant-of-Arms...

As I have said, I don't want to serve the King. I'm going home to my wife and children. I have already served my time, and within a few days they are going to give me my leave.

"Well, you will have no cause to complain, little friend, if it fell to your lot to go on the *Rayo*, a ship that scarcely entered action. I was not on the *Rayo*, but the *Baham* which doubtless was one of the ships that fought best and longest."

"It has been captured and its commander died, if I am not mistaken."

"That's right," he answered. "And I still want to cry when I think about Don Dionisio Alcalá Galiano, the bravest brigadier general in the armada. Yes, indeed; he had a high temper and he wouldn't allow the

least mistake; but his strict discipline made us love him more, for the captain who makes himself feared, if justice accompanies the severity, inspires respect and at length he wins the affection of those under his command. And it can also be said that no other gentleman has been born in the world more generous and refined than Don Dionisio Alcalá Galiano. And when he wanted to treat his friends, he didn't beat around the bush; one time in Havana he spent more than ten thousand dollars on a certain banquet that he gave on board the ship."

"I have also heard it said that he was a man very wise in seamanship."

"In seamanship? He knew more than Merlin and all the doctors in the Church. Why, he had made maps without end, and had discovered lands and things very near hell itself. And they send men like him to a battle to die like a cabin boy. I'll tell you what happened on the Bahama. From the time the battle began Don Dionisio Alcalá Galiano knew that we had to lose it, because that damned veering about... . We were in the reserve and at the tail end of the line. Nelson, who was an expert, saw our line and said, 'Now if I cut them through two distinct points and get them between two fires not so much as one ship will escape me.' Thus the damned man did, and as our line was so long, the head could not go to aid the tail (Nelson's words). He defeated us in parts by attacking us in two strong columns placed in the shape of a cradle, which is, they say, the method the Moorish captain Alejandro the Great used and which they say Napoleon uses today. He certainly surrounded and divided us, and was ruining us in such a way that we couldn't help one another and each ship was forced to combat with three or four.

"Well, you will see that the Bahama was one of the first to enter the fire. Alcalá Galiano reviewed the crew at noon, and examined the range of guns, and preached us a sermon in which he said, pointing to the flag, 'Gentlemen, you are all under the impression that that flag is nailed.' Now we knew what kind of man was commanding us, and so that language did not shock us. Later he said to a marine guard, Alonso Batorón, in charge of it, 'Take care to defend it. No Galiano surrenders it and neither should a Batorón do so.'"

"It is a pity," I said, "that those men have not had a chief worthy of their valor, since the command of the fleet was no longer entrusted to them."

"Indeed it is a pity, and you will see what happened. The fighting began, which you will learn was a good thing if you were on board the Trinidad. Three ships pierced us like a sieve on the port and starboard sides. From the first moments the wounded were falling like flies and the commander himself received a bad contusion in his leg and afterwards a sliver in his head that gave him much trouble. But do you believe that he was afraid or that he used salves or sticking plasters? Bah! He kept on in the quarterdeck as if nothing was happening although persons very dear to him were falling at his side to rise no more. Alcalá Galiano was commanding the manoeuvre and artillery as if we had been making a salute in front of a plaza. A bullet of little importance carried off his eyebrow, and this made him smile. It seems that I can still see him. The blood from the wounds was

spotting his uniform and hands, but he didn't care any more for this than if it were drops of salt water splashed from the sea. As his disposition was somewhat passionate and his temper, fiery, he gave his orders shouting and with so much courage that if we had not obeyed them through duty, we would have obeyed them through fear. But finally everything ended when a half-caliber bullet struck his head, killing him instantly.

"When this happened enthusiasm, if not the battle, ended. When our beloved commander fell dead, they hid him so that we wouldn't see him; but no one failed to comprehend what had happened, and after a desperate struggle for the honor of the flag, the Bahama surrendered to the English, who will carry her to Gibraltar if she doesn't sink on them as I suspect."

After finishing his story and telling how he had changed from the Bahama to the Santa Ana, my companion gave a deep sigh and was quiet for a long time. But as the road was becoming long and tiresome, I wished to begin the conversation again, and I began telling him what I had seen, and at last told him about my transfer on board the Rayo with young Malespina.

"Ah," he said. "Is he the young artillery officer who was carried to the sloop to land on the night of the twenty-third?"

"The same one," I answered, "and nobody has given me any information concerning his whereabouts."

"Well, he was among those who perished in the second launch which was not able to reach land. Some of the sound ones were saved, among

them the father of the artillery officer; but all the wounded were drowned, as it is easy to understand, since the unfortunate ones could not reach the coast by swimming."

I was stunned on learning the death of Malespina, and the idea of the grief that was awaiting my unhappy idolized little mistress filled my soul and smothered every resentment.

"What a horrible misfortune," I exclaimed. "And shall I be the one to carry such sad news to his afflicted family? But, señor, are you sure of what you say?"

"I have seen with these eyes the father of that young man complaining bitterly and reviewing the details of the tragedy with such suffering that it broke my heart. According to what he said, he had saved all those in the launch, and he swore that if he had wished to save only his son, he could have done so at the cost of the lives of all the rest. He preferred, nevertheless, to give life to the greatest number, even sacrificing that of his son in kindness to many, and thus he did. He appeared to be a man of great soul and exceedingly skillful and brave."

This story saddened me so much that I didn't talk any more concerning the matter. Marcial dead! Malespina dead! What awful news I was carrying to my master's home! I almost decided not to return to Cádiz and to let chance or public report carry such painful news to the refuge of the hearth where so many hearts were beating with unrest. Nevertheless, it was necessary for me to appear before Don Alonso in order to give some account of my conduct.

At last we reached Rota, and from there we embarked to Cadiz. You cannot imagine what turmoil there was in the vicinity with the news of the defeat of the fleet. Gradually reports of what had happened were arriving and by this time the fate of the greatest part of ships was known although still the whereabouts of many sailors and members of the crews was not known. Along the streets one witnessed every moment scenes of desolation when a recent arrival told the story of the dead he knew and named the persons who had not returned. The multitude invaded the wharf to recognize the wounded, hoping to find a father, a brother, a son, or a husband. I saw scenes of frenzied joy, mingled with pitiful screams and terrible cries. Hopes vanished, suspicions were confirmed most of the times, and the number of those who won in that agonizing game of fate was rather small compared to that of those who lost. The corpses that appeared on the coast of Santa Maria removed doubts for many families, and others waited still hoping to find among the prisoners taken to Gibraltar a dearly beloved person.

In justice to the town of Cadiz, I should say that never has any neighborhood undertaken the aid of the wounded with so much determination, never distinguishing between natives and enemies, on the contrary, supplying everyone under the ample flag of charity. Collingwood wrote in his memoirs about this generosity of my townsmen. Perhaps the magnitude of the disaster killed all resentments. Is it not sad to consider the fact that only misfortune makes men brothers?

In Cadiz I was able to learn the entire action of the war for I, in spite of having taken part in it, knew only particular situations,

as the length of the line, the complication of the movements, the various destinies of the ships did not permit otherwise. According to what they told me there, besides the Trinidad the Argonauta with ninety-two guns under the command of Don Antonio Pareja, and the San Agustín of eighty guns commanded by Don Felipe Cagigal had been sunk. With Gravina on the Príncipe de Asturias there had returned to Cádiz the Montañés, with eighty guns whose commander Alcedo died in the battle together with his assistant Castaños; the San Justo of seventy-six cannons under the command of Don Miguel Gastón; the San Leandro, a seventy-four cannon ship, commanded by Don José Quevedo; the San Francisco, a seventy-four cannon ship, commanded by Don Luis Flores; the Rayo with one hundred cannons which Mac-donell commanded. From these the Montañés, the San Justo, the San Francisco and the Rayo set sail the twenty-third to recapture the ships in sight; but the last two were lost on the coast as well as the Monarca, of seventy-four cannons commanded by Arguosa, and the Neptune with eighty cannons whose heroic commander Don Cayetano Valdés, already famous for his voyage of the fourteenth, was on the verge of death. Those captured were: The Bahama, which was destroyed before reaching Gibraltar; the Ildefonso, a seventy-four cannon, commander Vargas, which was taken to England; and the Neopascano, which for many years remained in Gibraltar, preserved as an object of veneration or sacred relic. The Santa Ana reached Cádiz safely the same night we abandoned her. The English also lost some of their strong vessels, and no few of their officers shared the glorious end of Admiral Nelson.

In regard to the French, it is not necessary to say that they had as great losses as we. With the exception of the four ships which

retired with Duannair without entering in the battle, a stain that in a long time could not be effaced from the name of the French navy, our allies conducted themselves heroically in the battle. Villeneuve, wishing that his errors be forgotten in one day, fought resolutely to the end and was carried a prisoner to Gibraltar. Many other commanders fell into the power of the English and several died. Their ships met the same fate as ours; some retired with Gravina, others were captured, and many were lost on the coasts. The Achilles exploded in the midst of the battle, as I indicated in my story.

But in spite of these disasters our ally, proud France, did not pay such dear consequences for that war as Spain. Napoleon had transported in a short time the great army from the banks of the Mancha Canal to Central Europe and was putting into execution his colossal campaign against Austria. The twentieth of October, a day before Trafalgar, Napoleon witnessed on the field of Ulm the marching of the Austrian troops, whose generals handed over their swords to him, and two months later, the second of December of the same year on the fields of Austerlitz he won the greatest battle of his career.

These triumphs softened the loss of Trafalgar in France; Napoleon himself ordered the newspapers not to speak of the matter, and when he learned of the victory of his implacable enemies, the English, he was content to shrug his shoulders and say, "I cannot be everywhere."

CHAPTER XVII

I tried to postpone the moment of appearing before my master, but finally hunger, nakedness, and lack of shelter forced me to go. As I neared the home of Doña Flora, my heart beat with such fury that at every step I stopped to get my breath. The immense pain that the death of young Malospina was going to cause weighed upon my soul so heavily, that if I had been responsible for that disaster, I should not have felt more anguish. I arrived at last and entered the house. My presence in the patio produced a great tumult. I heard loud steps on the upper corridors, and I had not had time to say a word when someone embraced me tightly. I did not delay in recognizing the face of Doña Flora more painted that day than an altarpiece and wildly disfigured with the joy my presence caused in the heart of the excellent old woman. The sweet names of "little sprout," "pretty little thing," "angel baby," and others which she lavished on me with all generosity did not make me smile. I went up and everything became excitement. I heard my master say, "Here he is, thank God!" I entered the living room and Doña Francisca approached me, asking with mortal anxiety, "And Don Rafael? What has happened to Don Rafael?"

I was confused for a long time. My voice was choking in my throat, and I did not have courage to tell the fatal news. They repeated the question and then I saw my little mistress coming from a nearby room with pale face, frightened eyes, and an appearance revealing the anguish that possessed her. The sight of her caused me to break into

bitter weeping, and I did not need to say a word. Rosita gave an awful cry and fell back fainting. Don Alonso and his wife ran to help her, hiding their sorrow in the depths of their souls. Doña Flora was grief stricken, and calling me apart to assure herself better that I was returning with a whole and sound body, she said, "And so that gentleman is dead? I thought so, and I have told Paca so, but she has firmly believed that she could save him. Indeed, if it is God's will... . And you are safe and sound. What a pleasure! Have you not lost anything?"

The consternation that reigned in the house is impossible to describe. For over an hour only cries were heard and wailing and sobs, for Malespina's family was there too. But what strange things God permits for his ends. A quarter of an hour had passed, as I have said, since I had told the news when a noisy, crooehy voice reached my ears. It was that of Don José María Malespina, who was shouting in the patio, calling his wife, Don Alonso, and my little mistress. What attracted my attention was the fact that the voice of the liar seemed as happy as usual, and this seemed highly innocuous after the sad bereavement that had occurred. We ran to meet him and I was astonished to see him as happy as a Christmas greeting.

"But Don Rafael?" my master said to him in amazement.

"Safe and sound," answered Don José María. "That is to say, sound, no...but out of danger, yes, because his wound no longer requires care. The brute of a surgeon thought he was dying. But I knew good and well he wasn't! Surgeons, pooh! I have cured men,

I, I, with a new procedure, not in use, which I alone know."

These words which changed the situation in such a radical manner left my master and mistress amazed; then an intense joy replaced the former sadness, and at last when the great emotion allowed them to think about the mistake, they summoned me with severity and scolded me for the great anxiety that I had caused them. I excused myself by saying that it had been told to me just as I had related it, and Don José María became furious and called me a lying, meddling little brat.

Actually, Don Rafael was alive and out of danger; but he had remained in Sanlúcar in the home of acquaintances while his father came to Cadiz in search of the family in order to take them to the wounded man's side. The reader will not understand the origin of the mistake which caused me to report in such good faith the death of the young man; but I wager that all who read this suspect that some stupendous lie of old man Malespina caused the news of the supposed tragedy to come to my ears. Thus it was, no more, no less. I found out later when I went to Sanlúcar with the family, Don José María had forged a fiction of heroism and generosity on his part; in various circles he referred to the strange case of his son's death, imagining some particulars and such dramatic circumstances that for several days the feigned protagonist was the object of everyone's praises for his self-denial and bravery. He told that the launch capsized and that he had to choose between the rescue of his son and that of all the others and he decided in favor of the latter course since it was more generous and magnanimous. He adorned all this in such a manner, told such

curious, interesting, and at the same time such noble details that many believed him. But the fraud was soon discovered and the deceit did not last very long, notwithstanding the fact it necessarily reached my ears and obliged me to inform the family. Although I had a very bad idea concerning the voracity of old Malespina, I could never believe that he would permit himself to lie about such serious matters.

After experiencing those strong feelings, my master fell into a deep melancholy; he seldom talked, and it seemed that his soul, having settled every kind of accounts with the world, was preparing for the last journey. The conclusive absence of Mareial took from him the only friend of his second childhood, and having no one with whom he could play the game of little ships, he sank into the depths of despair. Doña Francisca did not notice his sadness and never relaxed in her tirade of humiliation. The day of my arrival I heard her say to him, "You have done fine! What do you think? Aren't you satisfied yet? Go on, go on to the fleet. Was I right or not? Oh, if you had paid attention to me... Will you learn now? Do you see how God has punished you?"

"Woman, leave me in peace," answered my master sadly.

"And now we are left without a fleet, without sailors, and we are going to be left without means of going on if we keep united with the French. God grant that those gentlemen will not give us a bad deal. The one who has acted gloriously is Senor Villeneuve. Why, if Gravina had opposed the departure of the fleet as they say Churruarín and Alcalá Galiano did, he would have avoided this catastrophe that is

breaking our hearts."

"Woman, what do you mean by that? Do not embarrass me," said my master, very angry.

"Why, don't I understand? More than you. Yes, sir. I repeat it. Gravina is probably very courteous and very brave; what is he now? He has certainly done fine!"

"He did what he should. You prefer that we should have looked like cowards?"

"Like cowards, no; like wise men, yes. That's it. I say it and I repeat it. The Spanish fleet should not have left Cadiz and yielded to the genialities and egotism of Villeneuve.

"It has been reported here that Gravina was of the opinion, like his companions, not to set sail. But Villeneuve, who was determined to do so, in order to do an honorable deed so as to reconcile him to his master, tried to wound the pride of our men. It appears that one of the reasons that Gravina objected was the bad weather, and looking at the barometer in the cabin he said, 'Do you not see how it is going down?' Then Villeneuve said dryly, 'The thing going down here is valor.' On hearing this insult Gravina arose blind with anger and threw in the face of the Frenchman his department at the defeat of Finisterre. They crossed words and at last our admiral exclaimed, 'We will go to sea tomorrow morning!' But I think Gravina should not have paid any attention to the bravado of Villeneuve, no sir; for wisdom is above everything else, and especially since he knew as he did that the conditions were not right for the fleet to battle the English."

The opinion, which then seemed to me an attack on national honor, later appeared very well founded. Doña Francisca was right. Gravina should not have given in to the demands of Villeneuve. By saying this, perhaps I defame the aureole of prestige which the people placed around the chief of the Spanish forces on that lamentable occasion. Without denying the merit of Gravina, I think there was exaggeration in the excessive praises showered on him after the battle and at the time of his death.* Everything indicated that Gravina was a true gentleman and a brave seaman. But perhaps due to his intense courtesy he lacked that resolution which the constant habit of war gives and also the superiority, which in such difficult careers as that of seaman, is acquired only in the assiduous cultivation of the sciences which constitute it. Gravina was a good division chief, but nothing more. Foresight, serenity, firm and unbreakable determination, which are characters necessary in organizations destined to the command of great forces, no one had except Don Cosme Damian Churruga and Don Dionisio Alcalá Galiano.

My master, Don Alonso, answered the last words of his wife, and when she left, I saw that the pitiful old man was praying as earnestly as that night in the cabin of the Santa Ana, the night of our separation. From that day on, Señor de Cisniega did nothing but pray, and praying he spent the rest of his life until he embarked on the ship that returns no more.

*He died in March, 1806, as a result of his wounds.

He died after his daughter married Don Rafael Malespina, an event which took place two months after the great naval battle which the Spaniards called the "Battle of the Twenty-first" and the English called "Trafalgar" because it had occurred near the cape of this name. My little mistress married in Vejer at dawn of a beautiful winter day, and they left immediately for Medina-sidonia where they had a home prepared for them. I was a witness of their happiness during the days preceding their wedding, but she did not notice the deep sadness that engulfed me; nor if she had noticed, she would not have known the cause. Each time she increased more in importance in my eyes, and each time I became more humble in the presence of the double superiority of her beauty and her social position. I had become accustomed to the idea that such an admirable combination of graces could not, or should not be for me, and this realization gave me peace, for resignation with the renunciation of every hope, is a consolation similar to death, and for that reason it is a great consolation.

They married, and the same day they left for Medina-sidonia, Doña Francisca told me to go also and put myself at the service of the newly married ones. I went by night and during my solitary journey I kept struggling with my ideas and emotions which oscillated between accepting a position in the house of the young husband and wife or rejecting it forever. I arrived the following morning, I approached the house, entered the garden, put my foot on the first step of the doorway, and there I stopped because my thoughts absorbed my entire being and I needed to be perfectly still in order to think better. I think I

remained in that position for more than half an hour.

A deep silence reigned in the house. The bride and bridegroom were doubtless sleeping the first sleep of tranquil love, undisturbed by any trouble. I could not help recalling the scenes of those far away days when she and I used to play together. For me she was then the first thing in all the world. For her I was, if not the first, at least something she loved and missed for an absence of an hour. In such a short time, what a change!

Everything I saw seemed to express the happiness of the two lovers and seemed an affront to my loneliness. Although it was winter, I imagined that all the trees in the garden were covered with foliage and that the grape-arbor which shaded the door was filled unexpectedly with young vines to protect them when they left for a walk. The sun was very warm and the air was moderate, refreshing that nest whose first straws I myself had helped to gather when I was a messenger of their love. The rose bushes, stiff with cold, appeared covered with roses and the orange trees seemed filled with orange blossoms and fruit which a thousand birds were coming to peck in participation of the wedding festivities. My meditations and visions were interrupted until the profound silence reigning in the house was broken by the sound of a fresh young voice which resounded in my soul causing me to shudder.

That happy voice produced in me an indefinable emotion, and emotion akin to fear or shame, I don't know which; but I can assure you that a sudden resolution tore me from the door, and I left the garden running

like a robber fearful of discovery.

My decision was irrevocable. Without losing time I left Medina-sidonia, determined not to serve that house or the one in Vejer. After thinking a little while, I decided to go to Cadiz and from there to Madrid. I did so, conquering the carasses of Doña Flora who tried to tie me with a chain made from the withered roses of her love; and since that day, how many things have happened worthy of being told! My destiny, which already had taken me to Trafalgar, took me later to other glorious and inglorious scenes, but all worthy of memory. Do you wish to know my entire life? Well, wait a little while and I will tell you something more in another book.

Typed by:

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