

CHAPTER 12

COUNCIL OF WAR

THERE was a great rush of feet across the deck. I could hear people tumbling up from the cabin and the forecastle, and slipping in an instant outside my barrel, I dived behind the fore-sail, made a double towards the stern, and came out upon the open deck in time to join Hunter and Dr Livesey in the rush for the weather bow.

There all hands were already congregated. A belt of fog had lifted almost simultaneously with the appearance of the moon. Away to the south-west of us we saw two low hills, about a couple of miles apart, and rising behind one of them a third and higher hill, whose peak was still buried in the fog. All three seemed sharp and conical in figure.

So much I saw, almost in a dream, for I had not yet recovered from my horrid fear of a minute or two before. And then I heard the voice of Captain Smollett issuing orders. The *Hispaniola* was laid a couple of points nearer the wind and now sailed a course that would just clear the island on the east.

'And now, men,' said the captain, when all was sheeted home, 'has any one of you ever seen that land ahead?'

'I have, sir,' said Silver. 'I've watered there with a trader I was cook in.'

'The anchorage is on the south, behind an islet, I fancy?' asked the captain.

'Yes, sir; Skeleton Island they calls it. It were a main place for pirates once, and a hand we had on board knowed all their names for it. That hill to the nor'ard they calls the Fore-mast Hill; there are three hills in a row running south'ard—fore, main, and mizzen, sir. But the main—that's the big un, with the cloud on it—they usually calls the Spy-glass, by reason of a lookout they kept when they was in the anchorage cleaning, for it's there they cleaned their ships, sir, asking your pardon.'

'I have a chart here,' says Captain Smollett. 'See if that's the place.'

Long John's eyes burned in his head as he took the chart, but by the fresh look of the paper I knew he was doomed to disappointment. This was not the map we found in Billy Bones's chest, but an accurate copy, complete in all things—names and heights and soundings—with the single exception of the red crosses and the written notes. Sharp as must have been his annoyance, Silver had the strength of mind to hide it.

"Yes, sir," said he, "this is the spot, to be sure, and very prettily drawed out. Who might have done that, I wonder? The pirates were too ignorant, I reckon. Aye, here it is: "Capt. Kidd's Anchorage"—just the name my shipmate called it. There's a strong current runs along the south, and then away nor'ard up the west coast. Right you was, sir," says he, "to haul your wind and keep the weather of the island. Leastways, if such was your intention as to enter and careen, and there ain't no better place for that in these waters."

"Thank you, my man," says Captain Smollett. "I'll ask you later on to give us a help. You may go."

I was surprised at the coolness with which John avowed his knowledge of the island, and I own I was half-frightened when I saw him drawing nearer to myself. He did not know, to be sure, that I had overheard his council from the apple barrel, and yet I had by this time taken such a horror of his cruelty, duplicity, and power that I could scarce conceal a shudder when he laid his hand upon my arm.

"Ah," says he, "this here is a sweet spot, this island—a sweet spot for a lad to get ashore on. You'll bathe, and you'll climb trees, and you'll hunt goats, you will; and you'll get aloft on them hills like a goat yourself. Why, it makes me young again. I was going to forget my timber leg, I was. It's a pleasant thing to be young and have ten toes, and you may lay to that. When you want to go

on the luff of the fore-sail; and almost at the same time the voice of the lookout shouted, 'Land ho!'

a bit of exploring, you just ask old John, and he'll put up a snack for you to take along.'

And clapping me in the friendliest way upon the shoulder, he hobbled off forward and went below.

Captain Smollett, the squire, and Dr Livesey were talking together on the quarter-deck, and anxious as I was to tell them my story, I durst not interrupt them openly. While I was still casting about in my thoughts to find some probable excuse, Dr Livesey called me to his side. He had left his pipe below, and being a slave to tobacco, had meant that I should fetch it; but as soon as I was near enough to speak and not to be overheard, I broke immediately, 'Doctor, let me speak. Get the captain and squire down to the cabin, and then make some pretence to send for me. I have terrible news.'

The doctor changed countenance a little, but next moment he was master of himself.

"Thank you, Jim," said he quite loudly, "that was all I wanted to know," as if he had asked me a question.

And with that he turned on his heel and rejoined the other two. They spoke together for a little, and though none of them started, or raised his voice, or so much as whistled, it was plain enough that Dr Livesey had communicated my request, for the next thing that I heard was the captain giving an order to Job Anderson, and all hands were piped on deck.

'My lads,' said Captain Smollett, 'we've a word to say to you. This land that we have sighted is the place we have been sailing for. Mr Trelawney, being a very open-handed gentleman, as we all know, has just asked me a word or two, and as I was able to tell him that every man on board had done his duty, aloft and aloft, as I never ask to see it done better, why, he and I and the doctor are going below to the cabin to drink *your* health and luck, and you'll have grog served out for you to drink *our* health and luck. I'll tell you what I think of this: I think it handsome. And if you think as I do, you'll give a good sea-cheer for the gentleman that does it.'

The cheer followed—that was a matter of course; but it rang out so full and hearty that I confess I could hardly believe these same men were plotting for our blood.

'One more cheer for Cap'n Smollett,' cried Long John when the first had subsided.



‘Billy was the man for that,’ said Israel. “Dead men don’t bite,” says he. Well, he’s dead now hisself; he knows the long and short on it now; and if ever a rough hand come to port, it was Billy.’

‘Right you are,’ said Silver; ‘rough and ready. But mark you here, I’m an easy man—I’m quite the gentleman, says you; but this time it’s serious. Doory is dooty, mates. I give my vote—death. When I’m in Parliament and riding in my coach, I don’t want none of these sea-lawyers in the cabin a-coming home, unlooked for, like the devil at prayers. Wait is what I say; but when the time comes, why, let her rip!’

‘John,’ cries the coxswain, ‘you’re a man?’

‘You’ll say so, Israel when you see,’ said Silver. ‘Only one thing I claim—I claim Treawney. I’ll wring his calf’s head off his body with these hands, Dick!’ he added, breaking off. ‘You just jump up, like a sweet lad, and get me an apple, to wet my pipe like.’

You may fancy the terror I was in! I should have leaped out and run for it if I had found the strength, but my limbs and heart alike misgave me. I heard Dick begin to rise, and then someone seemingly stopped him, and the voice of Hands exclaimed, ‘Oh, stow that! Don’t you get sucking of that bilge, John. Let’s have a go of the rum.’

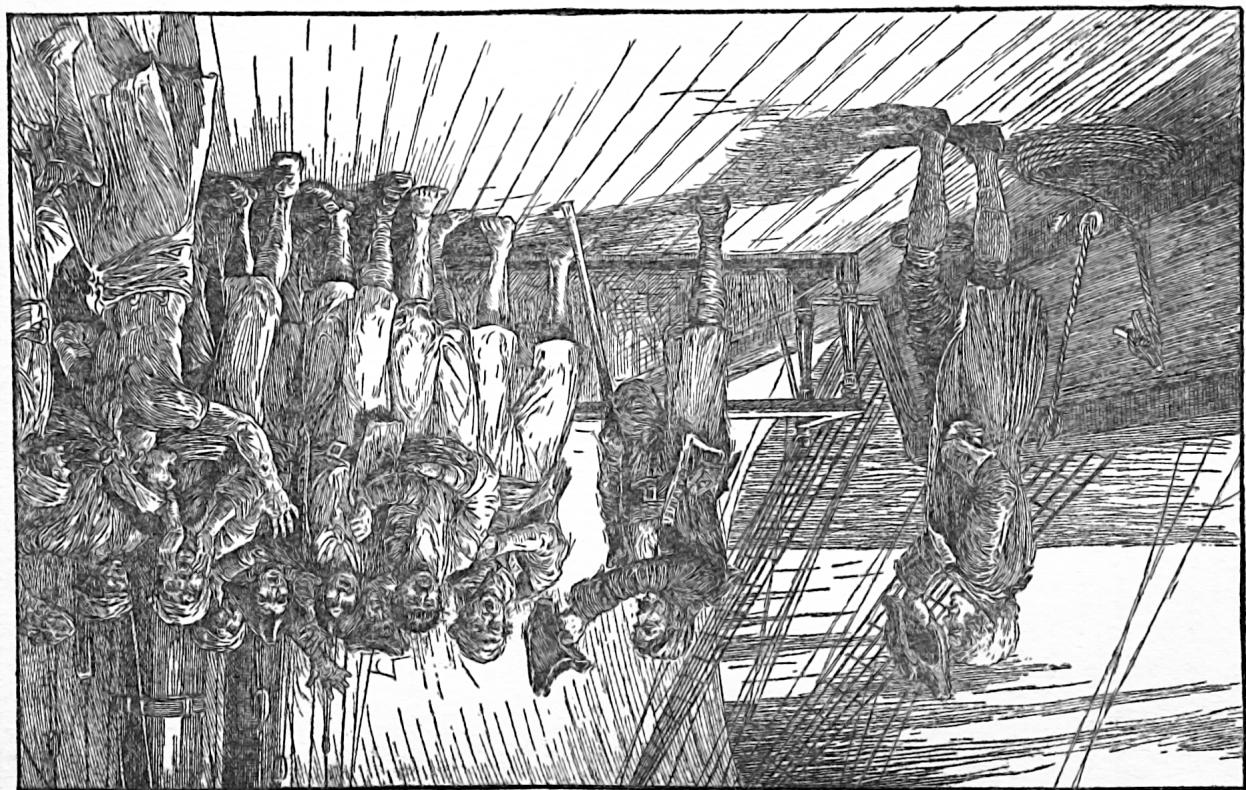
‘Dick,’ said Silver, ‘I trust you. I’ve a gauge on the keg, mind. There’s the key; you fill a pannikin and bring it up.’

Terrified as I was, I could not help thinking to myself that this must have been how Mr Arrow got the strong waters that destroyed him.

Dick was gone but a little while, and during his absence Israel spoke straight on in the cook’s ear. It was but a word or two that I could catch, and yet I gathered some important news, for besides other scraps that tended to the same purpose, this whole clause was audible: ‘Not another man of them’ll jine.’ Hence there were still faithful men on board.

When Dick returned, one after another of the trio took the pannikin and drank—one ‘To luck,’ another with a ‘Here’s to old Flint,’ and Silver himself saying, in a kind of song, ‘Here’s to ourselves, and hold your luff, plenty of prizes and plenty of duff.’

Just then a sort of brightness fell upon me in the barrel, and looking up, I found the moon had risen and was silvering the mizzen-top and shining white



doctor with a map and such—I don’t know where it is, do I? No more do you, says you. Well then, I mean this squire and doctor shall find the stuff, and help us to get it aboard, by the powers. Then we’ll see. If I was sure of you all, sons of double Dutchmen, I’d have Cap’n Smollett navigate us half-way back again before I struck.’

‘Why, we’re all seamen aboard here, I should think,’ said the lad Dick.

‘We’re all forecastle hands, you mean,’ snapped Silver. ‘We can steer a course, but who’s to set one? That’s what all you gentlemen split on, first and last. If I had my way, I’d have Cap’n Smollett work us back into the trades at least; then we’d have no blessed miscalculations and a spoonful of water a day. But I know the sort you are. I’ll finish with ‘em at the island, as soon’s the blunt’s on board, and a pity it is. But you’re never happy till you’re drunk. Split my sides, I’ve a sick heart to sail with the likes of you!’

‘Easy all, Long John,’ cried Israel. ‘Who’s-a-crossin’ of you?’

‘Why, how many tall ships, think ye, now, have I seen laid aboard? And how many brisk lads drying in the sun at Execution Dock?’ cried Silver. ‘And all for this same hurry and hurry and hurry. You hear me? I seen a thing or two at sea, I have. If you would on’y lay your course, and a pint to windward, you would ride in carriages, you would. But not you! I know you. You’ll have your mouthful of rum tomorrow, and go hang.’

‘Everybody knewed you was a kind of a chapling, John; but there’s others as could hand and steer as well as you,’ said Israel. ‘They liked a bit o’ fun, they did. They wasn’t so high and dry, nohow, but took their fling, like jolly companions every one.’

‘So?’ says Silver. ‘Well, and where are they now? Pew was that sort, and he died a beggar-man. Flint was, and he died of rum at Savannah. Ah, they was a sweet crew, they was! On’y, where are they?’

‘But,’ asked Dick, ‘when we do lay ‘em athwart, what are we to do with ‘em, anyhow?’

‘There’s the man for me!’ cried the cook admiringly. ‘That’s what I call business. Well, what would you think? Put ‘em ashore like mattoons? That would have been England’s way. Or cut ‘em down like that much pork? That would have been Flint’s, or Billy Bones’s.’

And this also was given with a will.

On the top of that the three gentlemen went below, and not long after, word was sent forward that Jim Hawkins was wanted in the cabin.

I found them all three seated round the table, a bottle of Spanish wine and some raisins before them, and the doctor smoking away, with his wig on his lap, and that, I knew, was a sign that he was agitated. The stern window was open, for it was a warm night, and you could see the moon shining behind on the ship’s wake.

‘Now, Hawkins,’ said the squire, ‘you have something to say. Speak up.’ I did as I was bid, and as short as I could make it, told the whole details of Silver’s conversation. Nobody interrupted me till I was done, nor did any one of the three of them make so much as a movement, but they kept their eyes upon my face from first to last.

‘Jim,’ said Dr Livesey, ‘take a seat.’

And they made me sit down at table beside them, poured me out a glass of wine, filled my hands with raisins, and all three, one after the other, and each with a bow, drank my good health, and their service to me, for my luck and courage.

‘Now, captain,’ said the squire, ‘you were right, and I was wrong. I own myself an ass, and I await your orders.’

‘No more an ass than I, sir,’ returned the captain. ‘I never heard of a crew that meant to mutiny but what showed signs before, for any man that had an eye in his head to see the mischief and take steps according. But this crew,’ he added, ‘beats me.’

‘Captain,’ said the doctor, ‘with your permission, that’s Silver. A very remarkable man.’

‘He’d look remarkably well from a yard-arm, sir,’ returned the captain. ‘But this is talk; this don’t lead to anything. I see three or four points, and with Mr Trelawney’s permission, I’ll name them.’

‘You, sir, are the captain. It is for you to speak,’ says Mr Trelawney grandly.

‘First point,’ began Mr Smollett. ‘We must go on, because we can’t turn back. If I gave the word to go about, they would rise at once. Second point, we have time before us—at least until this treasure’s found. Third point, there are faithful hands. Now, sir, it’s got to come to blows sooner or later, and what I propose is to take time by the forelock, as the saying is, and come to blows

some fine day when they least expect it. We can count, I take it, on your own home servants, Mr Trelawney?’

‘As upon myself,’ declared the squire.

‘Three,’ reckoned the captain; ‘ourselves make seven, counting Hawkins here. Now, about the honest hands?’

‘Most likely Trelawney’s own men,’ said the doctor; ‘those he had picked up for himself before he lit on Silver.’

‘Nay,’ replied the squire. ‘Hands was one of mine.’

‘I did think I could have trusted Hands,’ added the captain.

‘And to think that they’re all Englishmen!’ broke out the squire. ‘Sir, I could find it in my heart to blow the ship up.’

‘Well, gentlemen,’ said the captain, ‘the best that I can say is not much. We must lay to, if you please, and keep a bright lookout. It’s trying on a man, I know. It would be pleasanter to come to blows. But there’s no help for it till we know our men. Lay to, and whistle for a wind, that’s my view.’

‘Jim here,’ said the doctor, ‘can help us more than anyone. The men are not shy with him, and Jim is a noticing lad.’

‘Hawkins, I put prodigious faith in you,’ added the squire.

I began to feel pretty desperate at this, for I felt altogether helpless; and yet, by an odd train of circumstances, it was indeed through me that safety came. In the meantime, talk as we pleased, there were only seven out of the twenty-six on whom we knew we could rely; and out of these seven one was a boy, so that the grown men on our side were six to their nineteen.

‘Dick’s square,’ said Silver.

‘Oh, I know’d Dick was square,’ returned the voice of the coxswain, Israel Hands. ‘He’s no fool, is Dick.’ And he turned his quid and spat. ‘But look here,’ he went on, ‘here’s what I want to know, Barbecue: how long are we a-going to stand off and on like a blessed bumboat? I’ve had a’most enough o’Cap’n Smollett; he’s hazed me long enough, by thunder! I want to go into that cabin, I do. I want their pickles and wines, and that.’

‘Israel,’ said Silver, ‘your head ain’t much account, nor ever was. But you’re able to hear, I reckon; leastways, your ears is big enough. Now, here’s what I say: you’ll berth forward, and you’ll live hard, and you’ll speak soft, and you’ll keep sober till I give the word; and you may lay to that, my son.’

‘Well, I don’t say no, do I?’ growled the coxswain. ‘What I say is, when? That’s what I say.’

‘When! By the powers!’ cried Silver. ‘Well now, if you want to know, I’ll tell you when. The last moment I can manage, and that’s when. Here’s a first-rate seaman, Cap’n Smollett, sails the blessed ship for us. Here’s this squire and

have. When a mate brings a slip on his cable—one as knows me, I mean—it won’t be in the same world with old John. There was some that was feared of Pew, and some that was feared of Flint; but Flint his own self was feared of me. Feared he was, and proud. They was the roughest crew afloat, was Flint’s; the devil himself would have been feared to go to sea with them. Well now, I tell you, I’m not a boasting man, and you seen yourself how easy I keep company, but when I was quartermaster, *lamb* wasn’t the word for Flint’s old buccaneers. Ah, you may be sure of yourself in old John’s ship.’

‘Well, I tell you now,’ replied the lad, ‘I didn’t half a quarter like the job till I had this talk with you, John; but there’s my hand on it now.’

‘And a brave lad you were, and smart too,’ answered Silver, shaking hands so heartily that all the barrel shook, and a finer figurehead for a gentleman of fortune I never clapped my eyes on.’

By this time I had begun to understand the meaning of their terms. By a ‘gentleman of fortune’ they plainly meant neither more nor less than a common pirate, and the little scene that I had overheard was the last act in the corruption of one of the honest hands—perhaps of the last one left aboard. But on this point I was soon to be relieved, for Silver giving a little whistle, a third man strolled up and sat down by the party.

on 'em aboard here, and glad to get the duff—been begging before that, some on 'em. Old Pew, as had lost his sight, and might have thought shame, spends twelve hundred pound in a year, like a lord in Parliament. Where is he now? Well, he's dead now and under hatches; but for two year before that, shiver my timbers, the man was starving! He begged, and he stole, and he cut throats, and starved at that, by the powers!

'Well, it ain't much use, after all,' said the young seaman.

"Tain't much use for fools, you may lay to it—that, nor nothing,' cried Silver. 'But now, you look here: you're young, you are, but you're as smart as paint. I see that when I set my eyes on you, and I'll talk to you like a man.'

You may imagine how I felt when I heard this abominable old rogue addressing another in the very same words of flattery as he had used to myself. I think, if I had been able, that I would have killed him through the barrel. Meantime, he ran on, little supposing he was overheard.

'Here it is about gentlemen of fortune. They lives rough, and they risk swinging, but they eat and drink like fighting-cocks, and when a cruise is done, why, it's hundreds of pounds instead of hundreds of farthings in their pockets. Now, the most goes for rum and a good fling, and to sea again in their shirts. But that's not the course I lay. I puts it all away, some here, some there, and none too much anywhere, by reason of suspicion. I'm fifty, mark you; once back from this cruise, I set up gentleman in earnest. Time enough too, says you. Ah, but I've lived easy in the meantime, never denied myself o' nothing heart desires, and sleep soft and ate dainty all my days but when at sea. And how did I begin? Before the mast, like you!'

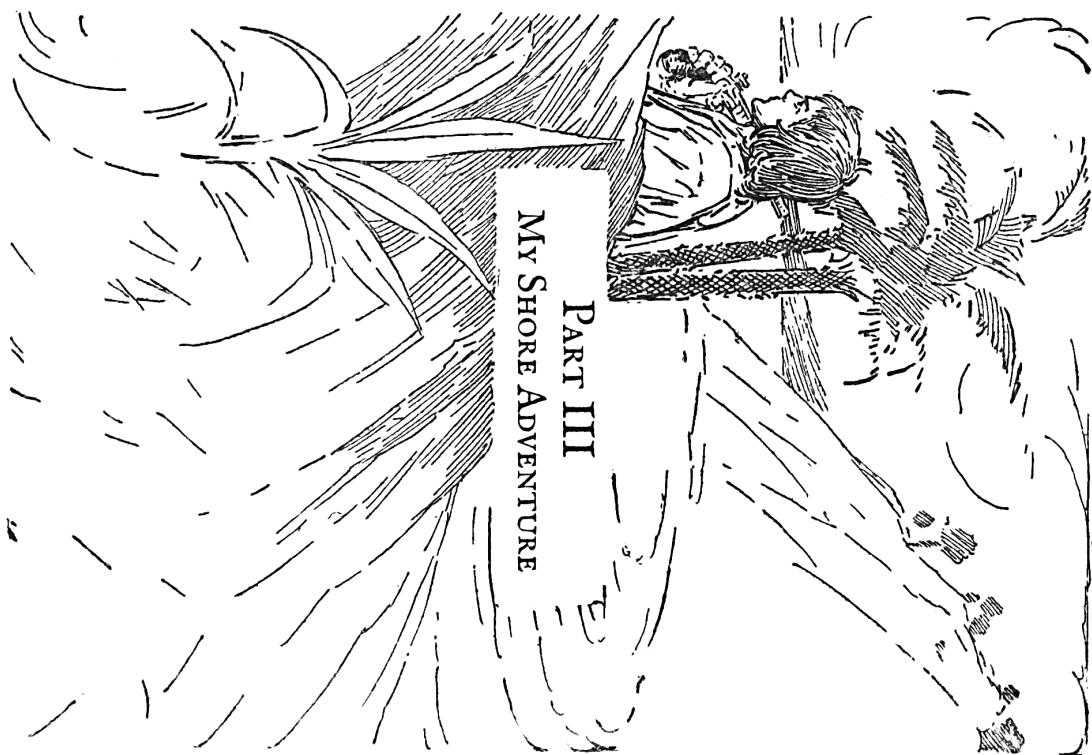
'Well,' said the other, 'but all the other money's gone now, ain't it? You daren't show face in Bristol after this.'

'Why, where night you suppose it was?' asked Silver derisively.

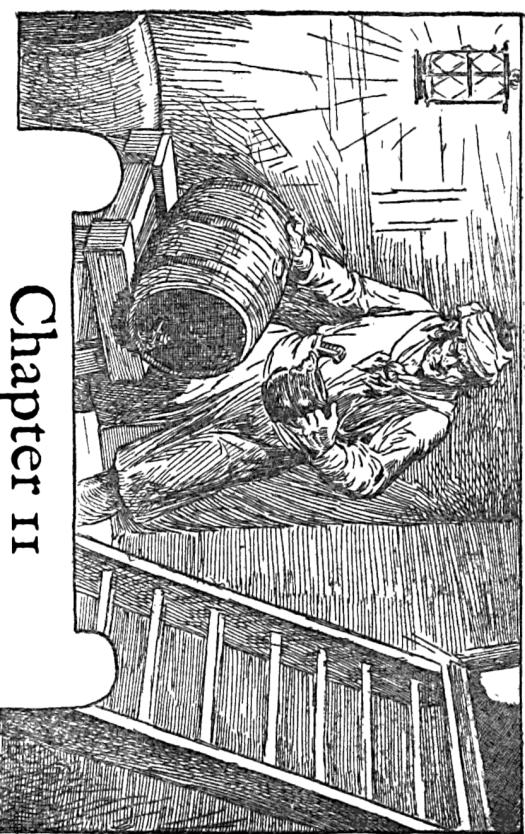
'At Bristol, in banks and places,' answered his companion.

'It were,' said the cook; 'it were when we weighed anchor. But my old missis has it all by now. And the Spy-Glass is sold, lease and goodwill and rigging; and the old girl's off to meet me. I would tell you where, for I trust you, but it'd make jealousy among the mates.'

'And can you trust your missis?' asked the other.
'Gentlemen of fortune,' returned the cook, 'usually trusts little among themselves, and right they are, you may lay to it. But I have a way with me, I



PART III My Shore Adventure



Chapter II

WHAT I HEARD IN THE APPLE BARREL

No, not I,' said Silver. 'Flint was cap'n; I was quartermaster, along of my timber-leg. The same broadside I lost my leg, old Pew lost his deadlights. It was a master surgeon, him that amputated me —out of college and all—Latin by the bucket, and what not; but he was hanged like a dog, and sun-dried like the rest, at Corso Castle. That was Roberts' men, that was, and comed of changing names to their ships—*Royal Fortune* and so on. Now, what a ship was christened, so let her stay, I says. So it was with the *Cassandra*, as brought us all safe home from Malabar, after England took the viceroy of the Indies; so it was with the old *Walrus*, Flint's old ship, as I've seen amuck with the red blood and fit to sink with gold.'

'Ah!' cried another voice, that of the youngest hand on board, and evidently full of admiration. 'He was the flower of the flock, was Flint!'

'Davis was a man too, by all accounts,' said Silver. 'I never sailed along of him; first with England, then with Flint, that's my story; and now here on my own account, in a manner of speaking. I laid by nine hundred safe, from England, and two thousand after Flint. That ain't bad for a man before the mast—all safe in bank. Tain't earning now, it's saving does it, you may lay to that. Where's all England's men now? I dunno. Where's Flint's? Why, most