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\*\*\* START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK BIMBO, THE PIRATE \*\*\*

No. II  
APPLETON LITTLE THEATRE PLAYS  
Edited by Grace Adams

BIMBO, THE PIRATE

BIMBO THE PIRATE

A COMEDY

\_By\_  
BOOTH TARKINGTON

[Illustration]

D. APPLETON AND COMPANY  
NEW YORK LONDON MCMXXVI

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## CHARACTERS

ROBERT  
LYDIA  
THE GUNNER  
DEUTERONOMY BIMBO  
DRISCOLL

[Illustration: STAGE PLAN FOR "BIMBO"]

BIMBO, THE PIRATE

NOTE: "Visit the old jail and see the pirate Trickey's Bible still preserved there."--\_Description of York Village, Me.\_

"The 'Articles' [rules for the government of George Lowther's pirate ship] were sworn to ... on a Bible.... We have an Article which we are sworn to, which is, not to force any married Man to serve us.... No gaming for money at cards or dice was allowed under any circumstances. No women were allowed on board.... When a vessel was captured, if a woman was found on board a sentinel was placed

over her immediately.... \_First\_, You are to keep such good Orders among your said Briganteen's Company that Swearing, Drunkenness and Prophaness be avoided, or duly Punished; And that God be duly worshiped."--\_The Pirates of the New England Coast\_, by George Francis Dow and John Henry Edmonds.

"On the Sabbath Day only such tasks were permitted as had to do with working of the Ship and there was no Diversion ... but to read books of a religious nature."--\_Narrative of a Seaman Captured and Forced by Pirates.\_

## SCENE

\_The rise of the curtain discloses a stage too dark to permit the audience to be sure of more than a single detail. This is a large brass lantern of feeble illumination; it hangs at about the middle of the stage, a little more than six feet above the floor, and is in motion, swinging slightly, as in response to a turbulence which has been made evident since a moment or two before the curtain's ascent. The turbulence is manifested by a composite sound, somewhat muffled, the trampling of feet, bellowings and angry shoutings, and a rattle of drums; and the repeated blare of fierce trumpets. Then a girl's voice is heard screaming in an anguish of fear and protest; for several moments the screams are heard above the other sounds, but end abruptly. There is a hoarse cheering; the trumpets are blown triumphantly to an accompaniment of drums; and then follows a short interval of silence; after which a door at the back of the stage is opened, a girl's voice is heard to moan and murmur as if she panted for breath; there is the thump of a human body falling upon wood; and the faint light of the lantern allows us to see an indistinct figure prostrate upon the floor beneath it.\_

## A HOARSE VOICE

There, missus! P'raps you'll have sense enough to lay there! I never did know a prudent female make such a commotion!

(\_Thus grumbling, the HOARSE VOICE withdraws, the door closes, and silence follows, broken presently by the girl's renewed moaning. A TROUBLED VOICE, a man's, speaks huskily out of the darkness at the right side of the stage.\_)

THE TROUBLED VOICE (\_weakly\_)

Who is that?

THE GIRL (\_plaintively\_)

Whose voice is that?

THE TROUBLED VOICE

Is that you? Lydia?

THE GIRL (\_faintly\_)

Robert? Is it Robert?

ROBERT (\_of the troubled voice\_)

Yes. They've lashed me beneath a table--or it might be a bench--and it's bolted to the deck. What of you, Lydia?

LYDIA

My hands are tied behind me. My ankles are lashed together.

ROBERT

Villains!

LYDIA (\_faintly\_)

Bloodhounds! Bloodhounds of the sea, Robert! (\_He groans; she goes on.\_) When they began leaping aboard us--ah, the horrid sight!--I saw you fighting among them. I tried to reach you---

ROBERT

I tried to come to you, Lydia!

LYDIA (\_weeping\_)

Dear heart, I saw it!

ROBERT (\_faintly\_)

I think my head is broke. I was struck into a swoon, Lydia, and knew naught till I found them lashing me beneath this bench. I can see a little. That lantern doesn't look like one of ours. I thought they'd brought me to our captain's cabin, but that lantern---

LYDIA (\_interrupting him, faintly and with horror\_)

No, no! Robert, don't you know where we are?

ROBERT

It hasn't the feel of our own ship.

LYDIA

No; we're in the other, Robert!

ROBERT (\_feebly\_)

We are?

LYDIA ( weeping )

They dragged me across the rail and threw me here. This is the pirate ship, Robert.

ROBERT

Then may Providence have mercy on our souls!

LYDIA (\_still weeping\_)

I saw them lay hold of my father--he tried to struggle----

(\_She sobs.\_)

ROBERT

Struggle? What could it boot? (\_He groans.\_) What booting anything? From our very sighting the strange sail we were done. No breeze for us in a flat sea--and he, with his great crew at oars, overhauling us; he came upon us like a shark to the body of a dead porpoise!

LYDIA

Hark! They're quiet now on the deck above us.

ROBERT

They have the two ships lashed together, and they're on ours, taking store of the plunder.

LYDIA (\_shuddering\_)

Will they murder all our crew, Robert--(\_with a sob\_)--and my father--and--and us?

ROBERT (\_solemnly\_)

We are in the hands of Providence, Lydia.

LYDIA (\_weeping\_)

Ah, no! In the hands of horrid pirates! (\_She sobs; is then quiet for a moment, and speaks in a tone of pathetic reflection.\_) How sudden it came upon us, Robert!

ROBERT

Sudden? Aye, sudden as a tide wave in the Indy oceans; it'll come out of a level sea and carry away half your ship while you're taking a puff o' your pipe! Sudden's the way of the sea, Lydia.

LYDIA

Oh, I believe it! Was it only a little while ago you and I stood and watched the moon lift itself out of the water so quietly?

ROBERT

Yes, at nightfall.

LYDIA

And we were happy--and didn't know it! We thought we had trouble! We were afraid to tell my father that you and I had found love together; we were afraid of what he would say. How strange it seems now; we thought that was trouble!

ROBERT

Aye, sweetheart; it's strange.

LYDIA

When they come to us how will they murder us, Robert?

ROBERT (\_groaning\_)

I don't know!

LYDIA

Will they throw us into the sea, tied as we are?

ROBERT

I can't tell!

LYDIA

Do you think they would be kind enough to murder us together--if I asked them? (\_He groans, not answering.\_) If I begged them, don't you think they might, Robert?

ROBERT (\_in a strangled voice\_)

I--I hope so.

LYDIA

Hark!

ROBERT

What do you hear?

LYDIA (\_faintly\_)

I think they are coming now. (\_There is silence; then she whispers.\_)  
Hark!

(Silence again; after which a slight noise is heard; the door at the back of the stage is opened and a man appears there, carrying an iron lantern that affords a somewhat better view of the scene and of the three persons now animating it, though they and the place are still indistinct, the lights insufficient and the shadows heavy.)

The cabin walls are dark wood, hung irregularly with one or two strips of tapestry and some Oriental rugs. In each side wall are three small square windows, now covered by short red curtains; the ceiling, of brown wood, is low. Against the walls are several rough sea chests; there is a brass brazier with a grilled cover near the center of the cabin; and against the rear wall there is a tall cupboard, closed. A rough and heavy wooden table, six feet long, is upon the right of the stage and is set parallel with the side walls. Upon it are some articles of antique pattern; a large copper bowl, a painted wooden box with a padlock, some pewter mugs, a large ledger and a jar of long clay pipes.)

Beneath the table ROBERT is seen stretched upon the floor. His wrists are lashed to the rearward legs of the table and his ankles to the others. He is an athletic young man, about twenty-seven, and is dressed with a little more elegance than one might expect to see upon the mate of a merchant ship in the year 1725, though at present his attire and long curled hair are naturally much disarranged. One of the sleeves of his coat is almost torn away; his neckwear, of linen, bordered with lace, is in tatters; and his forehead shows a cut from a sharp edge.)

LYDIA, a beautiful maiden of eighteen or nineteen, is also a little too elegant for a rough sea voyage; and although her fineries are naturally rumpled by mishandling, she would otherwise receive favorable mention from the critics of St. James's, for, like ROBERT, she has been dressing to a lover's eye. She now lies upon her side beneath the central lantern, her ankles tied, her wrists roped behind her, and her long, luxuriant curls disordered.)

The man who has just entered by the only door that leads into the cabin--upon the left at the back--is the pirate ship's GUNNER. He is big in person, brawny, and brown-skinned. His long, coarse, black hair hangs about his face; a white cloth, stained with red, is bound round his head, covering one eye; and his cheeks and chin are blurred by two or three days' growth of beard. He wears a gay but soiled kerchief at his throat, a green coat heavily ornamented with gold lace, loose yellow breeches almost to the ankles, and is barefooted. At his waist hangs a heavy cutlass.)

THE GUNNER (as he enters)

We'll just have a better look at ye! We think belike you're worth lookin' at too!

(He laughs chucklingly, moving to the right.)

LYDIA (crying out and turning so that her face is away from him)

No! You shall not look at me!

THE GUNNER (\_halting, surprised\_)

Eh? I didn't mean you, missus. I mean this fine lad on his back here. (\_He goes to ROBERT, holds the lantern near him and stares at him.\_)  
Aye! A fine, lusty young man! I thought so. You give me a bit of a tousle, lad. It was you put this cut over my eye.

ROBERT

I'd put another over the other one if I----

THE GUNNER (\_laughing harshly\_)

Aye; I'd trust ye for that. I did a little to your own head. (\_He stoops and feels the top of ROBERT'S head as he speaks.\_) I give ye a knob there to handle ye by.

(\_He laughs and gives a pat of his heavy hand to the injury.\_)

ROBERT (\_wincing\_)

Don't!

THE GUNNER (\_repeating the pat\_)

I put a fine knob on ye.

ROBERT (\_in pain\_)

Cut my throat and be done with it if that's what you came for.

THE GUNNER (\_straightening up\_)

The captain's comin' to talk to ye.

LYDIA

Our captain?

THE GUNNER (\_laughing\_)

I guess he's your captain now, missus. His honor, Captain Bimbo.

LYDIA

The pirate captain?

THE GUNNER

Aye, missus--his honor, Captain Deuteronomy Bimbo, Esquire, commodore of all the high seas of the world and president of our company of one hunder' and seventy-one free gen'lemen rovers and brave seamen!

ROBERT ( groaning )



Bimbo? Is it the pirate Bimbo that's taken us?

THE GUNNER (\_astonished\_)

Why, if you're the seafarin' body ye look to be I should think ye'd know it. Who but Bimbo and his company could have took a ship as neat as we took yours? Bimbo? I should say it is Bimbo!

ROBERT (\_despairingly\_)

Bimbo!

LYDIA

Is he worse than other pirates, Robert?

ROBERT

We're under the tiger's claw, Lydia.

THE GUNNER (\_contemptuously\_)

You talk like an ignorant man. (\_Going to the windows at the right, he begins to set back the curtains, letting in a rosy light.\_) Sunrise is on the way; I'll just give ye some light to see the "tiger" by, lad! (\_He crosses and opens the other curtains, talking as he does so.\_) And look that ye speak him respectful. It's not every common mate of a merchant vessel he honors with his converse. Tiger, ye might find him, if ye scratch him.

LYDIA (\_faltering\_)

Have they--have they murdered--my father--yet?

THE GUNNER

Which would he be now? Is it a fat old Lunnon merchantlike man in a brindle wig and gold buckles to his shoon?

LYDIA

Yes. Have they----

THE GUNNER (\_dryly\_)

No. He's not murdered yet.

LYDIA

Will they let me speak to him before they----

THE GUNNER

Ask Captain Bimbo, missus. ( There is a flourish of trumpets outside. )

That'll be him now.

LYDIA (\_shuddering\_)

Ah!

ROBERT (\_groaning\_)

Bimbo!

(\_Drums beat and the trumpets sound again; then the notorious sea rover and pirate captain, DEUTERONOMY BIMBO, strides into the cabin and comes to an abrupt halt, staring from one to the other of his prostrate captives.\_)

\_He is a straight-standing, lean, active man of thirty-five, so deeply tanned that his swarthiness might make him seem almost a mulatto; and yet, with his long, black, carefully curled hair framing his face, he is neither an ugly man nor, in spite of the sharp severity of his expression, is he of an aspect obviously sinister. He is scrupulously dressed; has fine lace at his throat; wears a brocaded black-and-crimson coat, black silk waistcoat and black silk breeches and stockings, with silver buckles to his shoes. There is a dark crimson sash about his waist, with a bandolier of the same color passing over his left shoulder; and attached by crimson silk ribbons to the sash and bandolier are eight pistols. He carries no sword or cutlass, but has a great plumed hat in his hand.\_)

BIMBO (\_to the GUNNER, sharply, with a brief gesture toward ROBERT\_)

Make the gentleman easy.

(\_He goes on decisively to the table, tosses his hat upon it and picks up the ledger.\_)

THE GUNNER

Aye, your honor. (\_He proceeds at once to release ROBERT from his lashings.\_) A fine, strong, active seaman he is too.

BIMBO (\_growlingly\_)

D'ye think I've no eyes?

(\_He is intent upon the ledger, which he has opened.\_)

THE GUNNER (\_continuing his task\_)

I put a knob on his head for a handle to him if we need one.

(\_Chuckling, he pats ROBERT'S head again. ROBERT winces, groaning.\_)

BIMBO

Ha' done!

( \_He seats himself at the table, studying the ledger.\_ )

THE GUNNER ( \_completing his task\_ )

There, lad! His honor gives ye lief to stretch out the kinks in ye.

ROBERT ( \_rising quickly, though painfully\_ )

Lydia!

( \_He rushes to her, bending over to unfasten her wrists.\_ )

THE GUNNER ( \_following threateningly\_ )

Here! His honor didn't say you could----

BIMBO ( \_interrupting sharply, without looking up from the ledger, in which he has begun to write with a quill pen\_ )

Stand where you are. Let him alone.

( \_The GUNNER instantly obeys.\_ )

ROBERT ( \_untying LYDIA\_ )

Lydia, poor child! Lydia!

LYDIA ( \_whimpering\_ )

Poor Robert!

( \_As she rises he instantly puts her behind him and stands upon the defensive, facing the GUNNER and BIMBO.\_ )

ROBERT ( \_with a gleam in his eye\_ )

We're not done yet, Lydia.

( \_He grips the back of a heavy wooden chair.\_ )

THE GUNNER ( \_threateningly\_ )

What's in your mind to do with that chair?

ROBERT ( \_ominously\_ )

I think I could kill one man with it--two, I hope.

BIMBO ( \_not looking up\_ )

Don't lift that chair.

ROBERT ( \_fiercely\_ )

Won't I?

(\_He moves suddenly to swing the chair up as a weapon, but, although he struggles with it, cannot move it. He groans, and the GUNNER laughs loudly.\_)

THE GUNNER (\_laughing\_)

It's only bolted to the deck! Heave her up, cully!

BIMBO (\_still preoccupied with his writing\_)

We keep the seas longer than you of the merchant ships, mate. We can't let much lie about loose. Don't brain us with the chair; sit in it. (\_He glances across at them authoritatively.\_) You in that one, madam. (\_He points to another chair near ROBERT'S. They stare at him; he stares back, and after a moment they obey him. BIMBO looks at ROBERT.\_) I suppose you're in a puzzle what we'll do with you, mate.

ROBERT

I've faced death before this.

BIMBO (\_throwing down his pen impatiently\_)

You expect to have your throat cut, do you?

ROBERT (\_swallowing\_)

When you give the word for it. What else?

BIMBO (\_to the GUNNER, angrily\_)

You hear him?

THE GUNNER (\_gloomily\_)

Aye! It's the way of our calling!

BIMBO (\_disgustedly\_)

It's sickening! (\_He gets up and paces the floor angrily for a moment or two, then turns sharply to ROBERT.\_) You think that's all we want of a man like you--a man that fought a hundred of us when not another of your whole ship's company lifted a cutlass! You think all we want of you is to slit your guzzlet, do you? Aye! You do! From the look of your fool face I see it. Sickening!

ROBERT (\_huskily\_)

Then what do you want? To hang me instead of cutting my throat?

BIMBO

Faugh! ( He turns back to the table and throws himself in his chair.

The two captives watch him, terrorized, and as at some resentful thought he strikes the table with his clenched fist, LYDIA utters a little cry. He stares at her fiercely.\_) What, mistress?

LYDIA

Nothing.

( \_Shivers.\_)

BIMBO ( \_gruffly to the GUNNER\_)

Send us Brimstone with fire.

LYDIA ( \_crying out at this faintly\_)

Ah!

( \_The GUNNER goes out promptly.\_)

BIMBO

What?

LYDIA ( \_weakly\_)

Brimstone and fire! For--what?

BIMBO

For you.

ROBERT

For her?

BIMBO

Who else? D'ye think I want 'em for me? For you, mistress!

( \_He begins to apply himself to the ledger.\_)

LYDIA ( \_appealingly\_)

Robert!

( \_She rises, and so does ROBERT.\_)

ROBERT ( \_hoarsely\_)

Lydia!

( \_She clings to him.\_)

BIMBO ( standing up angrily )

Stand away from that woman!

LYDIA

Robert----

BIMBO (\_roaring\_)

Stand away from her!

(\_He overawes them, and slowly their arms fall from each other. Staring miserably at him all the while, they resume their seats.\_)

BIMBO (\_grunting\_)

That's better!

(\_He returns to his seat and the ledger. The door opens and LYDIA and ROBERT turn apprehensively as another pirate enters. He is dressed much as is the GUNNER, but is gaunt and of an extreme and unnatural pallor, his eyes glistening dishearteningly from dark hollows. He carries a pan of smoking hot embers.\_)

LYDIA (\_horrified\_)

Robert!

(\_ROBERT half rises.\_)

BIMBO (\_fiercely\_)

Sit where you are! (\_ROBERT sinks into his seat. BIMBO explains.\_) It's Brimstone and hot coals that I sent for.

LYDIA (\_appealing to the man with the coals\_)

Don't hurt me! Don't hurt me! Don't----

BIMBO

He's deaf and dumb, mistress.

LYDIA (\_choking\_)

Oh!

(\_The DEAF-AND-DUMB MAN makes an unpleasant vocal sound, looking at BIMBO, who points to the brazier. The man dumps his coals in the brazier and stands beside it. The brazier glows. LYDIA and ROBERT stare at it in anguish. The DEAF-AND-DUMB MAN looks at BIMBO inquiringly, and the latter waves his hand. The DEAF-AND-DUMB MAN retires to a position near the door. LYDIA, panting, sinks down in her chair.\_)

ROBERT ( hoarsely )

I have my hands free. They shan't touch you, sweetheart!

BIMBO (\_angrily\_)

Stop that!

ROBERT

I will speak to her!

BIMBO (\_sharply\_)

Speak to her? Yes. But don't you call her sweetheart.

ROBERT (\_defiantly, yet with a tender accent\_)

She is my sweetheart.

BIMBO

That may be; but don't you call her so to-day, or I'll have 'em truss you down again.

(\_He again applies himself to his ledger. LYDIA again looks at the brazier, shudders, and begins to weep spasmodically.\_)

LYDIA (\_brokenly\_)

Was it only a little while ago--when the moon rose--and you and I were happy, Robert?

ROBERT

I think--I think life is just a moon path on the sea. It looks all shining white and beautiful--but of a sudden a shark's fin glides across it. We were swimmers in that moon path, sweet----

BIMBO (\_interrupting fiercely\_)

Don't you call her sweetheart!

ROBERT (\_defiantly\_)

Now, look ye, I won't be told----

BIMBO

You were going to! You would have if I hadn't stopped you! Now I've warned you twice, and you take care! (\_He claps his hands and the GUNNER appears in the doorway.\_) Fetch me in that old merchantlike critter with the fat paunch.

(\_The GUNNER withdraws.\_)

LYDIA

You want my father to see it, too, when you----

(\_She looks at the glowing brazier and shudders.\_)

BIMBO (\_crisply\_)

The fat old merchantlike body is your father, is he?

LYDIA (\_weeping\_)

Yes--my father.

BIMBO (\_thoughtfully\_)

And you and he the only passengers aboard. (\_To ROBERT.\_) The old man says he owns shares in your ship and cargo.

ROBERT (\_sullenly\_)

Yes, and in other ships and cargoes. 'Tis Mr. Driscoll, the great Liverpool merchant, and I warn you if harm comes to him, or to his daughter here, the whole British Navy will----

BIMBO (\_snarling\_)

The "whole British Navy"! The whole British Navy is hot after me now, mate, and has been these two years. This ship you're sitting in I took from the whole British Navy! Do you know what port I sailed out of when I first took on the honorable calling of a gentleman sea rover?

ROBERT (\_sullenly\_)

No, I don't.

BIMBO

Marblehead. I'm a Marblehead sailorman, born in Salem. You send the British Navy after me, meat, and old Doytcher King Geordie in it, and I'll have his crown off his head and sell it for ten shillin' in Boston market the Monday after!

ROBERT

'Tis no surprise to me that a pirate speaks treason to his king.

BIMBO

My king? I know but one king.

ROBERT

Aye! That's Satan!



BIMBO

Satan? Now, hark ye, mate! I'll not have Satan mentioned lightly aboard my ship. I'll have no blasphemy here.

(\_He claps his hands, and a member of the pirate crew enters quickly in response. This is a burly man of dismaying aspect; his hair is like the mop of an Australian bushman; he wears a shirt of gaudy calico, dirty red cotton pantaloons, loose and long, fringed with gold above his bare ankles, and he is so swarthy that he might be thought a Negro. His face is a map of ancient scars; he wears a long black beard, forked and done into two braids tied with orange ribbon, and in his sash are two long-handled tomahawks.\_)

\_BIMBO makes a gesture to the cupboard; the MAN WITH THE BRAIDED BEARD at once fetches from there a decanter and a silver goblet upon a tray. He places these before BIMBO and then joins the DEAF-AND-DUMB MAN, where both glare fixedly at ROBERT and LYDIA, who have intently watched the fetching of the liquor.\_)

BIMBO (\_pouring from the decanter, speaks sternly\_)

Now, mark me. I don't take this dram for pleasure. (\_He drinks; then looks at them severely.\_) Do you suspect me of it?

ROBERT (\_boldly\_)

No. You drink to get you in the mood for horrid deeds.

BIMBO (\_angrily\_)

I drink because I'm cold inside. Where is that fellow?

THE GUNNER (\_outside\_)

Coming, your honor; I'm here, sir.

(\_He enters, bringing by the arm an elderly and portly man dressed in good gray cloth, with fine lace and gold buttons and buckles. His grizzled wig is well curled round a large face, rosy with agitation. At sight of him LYDIA springs to her feet.\_)

LYDIA

Father! (\_She runs to him and throws her arms about him.\_) Oh, poor Father!

(\_She clings to him, sobbing.\_)

BIMBO (\_impatiently\_)

Enough o' that, now! Ha' done!

DRISCOLL (\_glaring at him over LYDIA'S shoulder\_)

Wretch! Horrid and bloody wretch!

(\_The GUNNER and the PIRATE WITH THE BRAIDED BEARD growl fiercely and start toward him.\_)

BIMBO (\_checking them\_)

Let be! Put her in her chair.

(\_They swing her away from her father.\_)

ROBERT (\_springing up as they lay hands upon her\_)

Let her alone! I'll----

(\_He stops, finding the DEAF-AND-DUMB MAN close beside him, grinning, and with a bare cutlass in his hand. The other two pirates put LYDIA into her chair, where she continues to sob.\_)

BIMBO (\_resuming his seat at the table, glances at his ledger, then addresses DRISCOLL\_)

How many barrels of molasses have you got in that ship o' yours?

DRISCOLL

Wretch!

(\_The GUNNER and the MAN WITH THE BRAIDED BEARD again growl menacingly.\_)

BIMBO (\_again checks them\_)

Let be, I say! (\_To DRISCOLL.\_) How many barrels of rum? Fourteen dozen o' rum, isn't it?

DRISCOLL (\_fiercely\_)

You bloody-minded villain! I'm as well-known on 'Change in London as the Duke o' Marlboro is at Blenheim! You'll see Execution Dock for this; I swear it!

BIMBO (\_warningly\_)

You have a care when and where you speak of swearing. (\_Looking at the ledger.\_) I make it sixteen score molasses, fourteen dozen rum, seventeen hogshead Jamaica cured tobacco, thirteen hundred sixty bushel of grain or thereabouts, mildewed and part useless; the tobacco of poor quality and the molasses dirty. (\_He closes the ledger disgustedly.\_) There's a fine cargo for you! I hazard there's not seventy pounds value that's worth our keeping. And yet landsmen say we have an easy profession and envy us.

THE GUNNER

Aye; they think all we have to do is overhaul a ship and carry away big chests o' gold and jewels.

BIMBO

Jewels! (\_Laughs hollowly.\_) We hain't a jewel this twelvemonth. (\_Angrily to DRISCOLL.\_) Do you know what we've got from the last seven ships we've taken? Fish! Salt fish! And if there's one thing we don't need it's fish.

THE GUNNER (\_violently\_)

I hate fish!

BIMBO

It's enough to make a man give up his calling! (\_He throws himself into a chair.\_) Why, if I could ha' known beforehand how many cargoes would prove just salt fish and spoilt grain, do you think I'd ever gone for this way of business?

THE GUNNER (\_vehemently\_)

No! And neither would any young man that could find another opening for himself.

BIMBO

If a youth came to me now for guidance, asking my advice whether or no to take up this calling, I'd bid him think it over, I would. In the first place: How many have the right gift for it? In the second, not one in a thousand has the patience; and in the third, not one in ten thousand has the gimp to persevere over the discouragements. The youth, all confidence and ignorance, thinks he has only to get him some brisk companions and take rich treasure ships----

THE GUNNER (\_with a gloomy laugh\_)

Aye, so I thought when I was new at it.

BIMBO

Fish! Seven cargoes o' salt fish! Seven! And now, when we've been struggling on and wearing ourselves out to improve our conditions and lay by a little something except salt fish for our old age, all we get to reward us is spoilt grain, bad rum, tobacco not fit to smoke, and molasses full of dead bugs!

THE GUNNER (\_hotly\_)

Yes; and if I had my way, somebody'd suffer for 't!

(\_He makes a menacing gesture toward the three captives, who are grouped together upon the right. ROBERT sitting despondently, his elbows on his hands; LYDIA drooping unhappily in her chair; and

DRISCOLL standing in an attitude of sturdy defiance. But at this sinister speech of the GUNNER, and his equally ominous gesture, LYDIA cries out faintly and begins to weep again.\_)

DRISCOLL (\_sternly\_)

Quiet, Lydia. Let these villains not believe they fright us!

LYDIA (\_plaintively\_)

Let them not believe they fright us? Don't you see what they intend, Father?

(\_She glances at the brazier, shuddering.\_)

DRISCOLL

Be quiet.

LYDIA

Look yonder! (\_Rising, she points to the brazier.\_) Look yonder! That is for me. (\_DRISCOLL looks at the brazier incredulously.\_) Don't you understand? That is for me! He said it was for me!

BIMBO (\_roughly\_)

Well, what of it? What if it is for you?

DRISCOLL (\_agitated and becoming violent\_)

Wretch! Would you dare?

(\_He is roughly grasped and restrained by the GUNNER.\_)

LYDIA (\_becomes hysterical\_)

They mean to burn me. I can't bear it! Oh, Robert, help me! Father! Father!

ROBERT (\_leaping to her, taking her in his arms\_)

They shan't touch you, Lydia! Sweetheart!

BIMBO (\_roaring\_)

Drag him away from her! Stop that!

(\_The DEAF-AND-DUMB MAN and the PIRATE WITH THE BRAIDED BEARD spring upon ROBERT and LYDIA, dragging them apart and holding them fast.\_)

LYDIA (\_stretching out her arms despairingly to ROBERT as she is dragged from him\_)

Robert, beloved----

ROBERT (\_struggling to reach her\_)

My love! My love forever----

DRISCOLL (\_astonished and angry\_)

What! What do you call each other?

BIMBO (\_indignantly\_)

I should think you would ask that! They have no decency at all.

LYDIA (\_faintly, as the PIRATE WITH THE BRAIDED BEARD forces her again into her chair\_)

Save me, Robert! I love you!

DRISCOLL (\_angrily\_)

What do you?

LYDIA

I love him! They mean to burn me!

ROBERT (\_struggling to reach her, though the DEAF-AND-DUMB MAN holds him fast\_)

They shall not! I say they shall not!

DRISCOLL (\_fiercely, at the same time\_)

You shan't love him! (\_He struggles with the GUNNER and shouts\_) You shan't! You shan't!

LYDIA (\_writhing in her chair and screaming\_)

Save me! Save me!

BIMBO (\_roaring and stamping his foot\_)

Silence!

(\_The three pirates clap their right hands over the mouths of the three vociferating captives, and the latter, after trying to make themselves heard in spite of this encumbrance, relapse into a despairing acceptance of the situation.\_)

BIMBO (\_exasperated\_)

What's all the pother? What's the matter with you, mistress? Who talks of burning you?

LYDIA ( behind the hand of her captor, indistinctly )

You did!

BIMBO

I said: Who talks of burning you? Let her speak.

(The MAN WITH THE BRAIDED BEARD removes his hand from her mouth.)

LYDIA

You did!

BIMBO

Did what?

LYDIA (pointing to the brazier fearfully)

You said--that--was for me!

BIMBO

Because you shivered. It was because I thought you were cold.

LYDIA

You said, "Send brimstone with fire!"

BIMBO (frowning; pointing to the DEAF-AND-DUMB MAN)

His name's Brimstone. He's Salem born, too--Brimstone Smith.

LYDIA (incredulous)

It wasn't to burn me?

BIMBO (annoyed)

It was to get you better comfort.

LYDIA (relieved, but not greatly)

Oh! Am I just to--(shuddering)--to be thrown into the sea?

BIMBO (angrily)

What! (He turns back to the table as if to control himself; is silent a moment; then addresses his subordinates with an air of helpless indignation.) There it is! That's the reputation such people as Low and Lowther and Teach get for our calling! Now you see what comes of drinking on duty! Men like that misbehave, and the reputation of a whole business suffers for it! I told Lowther the last time I saw him; I said: "I hear your crew was in liquor when they took a Portagee vessel and went and did harm to some o' they poor Portagees," I said.

"Oh, well," he says, "what of it? They was only Portagees," he says. "What of it?" I asks him. "Why, there's this of it," I says. "You and such as you and your crew," I says, "you'll get a bad name to all of us!" I says. He didn't like it, but I thought best to speak out to his face. And you see I spoke true.

THE GUNNER (\_gloomily\_)

So ye did! That's it; let one or two bad uns get into any business, soon you'll hear everybody saying the whole business is bad!

BIMBO (\_crossly to LYDIA\_)

Why, if we did you harm, don't you know it would only set people against us when they come to hear of it? Why don't you use your mind a little?

LYDIA (\_vaguely and feebly\_)

My mind?

BIMBO

Don't you know that men in our way of business have got to keep the public confidence? We have to depend on trading off our goods, don't we? Do you suppose if we lost the confidence of the coast folk we could hope to prosper? (\_Shaking his head to the GUNNER.\_) I declare, it's sickening, the little that people of one walk in life know of those in another walk in life!

THE GUNNER

Yes, 'tis. Sickening! (\_Here he addresses DRISCOLL, in a tone of annoyance as DRISCOLL has begun to renew his struggle with him.\_) Stand quiet, you! What's the matter now?

(\_DRISCOLL replies with fury; but as his mouth is still obstructed by the GUNNER'S powerful swarthy and soiled hand, proper enunciation is impossible and no more than indignant but formless sounds are heard.\_)

BIMBO (\_sharply\_)

Let him be understood.

(\_The GUNNER removes his hand.\_)

DRISCOLL (\_instantly breaking out in great fury\_)

The British Crown itself shall hear of this! He's been working with tar, and claps his vile hand under my nose! The smell of tar always makes me sick. Wretch!

THE GUNNER

Stop your abuse o' my hand!

DRISCOLL

You lay that dirty hand to my face again, and, blast your vitals,  
I'll----

BIMBO (\_vehemently\_)

Shame! Close him up again! (\_The GUNNER again puts his hand over  
DRISCOLL'S mouth and holds it there, despite the prisoner's struggles.  
BIMBO approaches them and addresses DRISCOLL severely.\_) Don't you know  
what day it is? Shame on you!

LYDIA (\_amazed and confused\_)

What it is? What day----

BIMBO (\_severely\_)

I hope that at least you, madam, are aware that this is the Sabbath.

LYDIA (\_vacantly\_)

Sunday? It's Sunday?

BIMBO (\_sternly\_)

It is. (\_To DRISCOLL.\_) We allow no profanity on this vessel on the  
Sabbath Day. According to our interpretation, "Blast your vitals" is  
profanity. Old man, if you can't speak without profanity--and on the  
Seventh Day too--we won't let you speak at all. Shame on you!

(\_DRISCOLL struggles and mumbles under the GUNNER'S hand.\_)

LYDIA (\_aghast\_)

But you're pirates! What difference does it make to a pi----

BIMBO (\_annoyed, interrupting quickly\_)

Pray use another term. We are a commonwealth of free seamen.

LYDIA (\_breathlessly going on\_)

But what have you to do with Sunday?

BIMBO

There it is!

(\_The GUNNER groans, shaking his head, and BIMBO sinks despondently  
into a chair.\_)

LYDIA



But what could pi----

BIMBO (\_quickly\_)

Be silent, mistress! You but show your ignorance and rub salt in a galled wound. (\_He clasps his forehead, suffering; then rises, returns to his table, and speaks resignedly.\_) 'Tis the way o' the universe, so why should we complain? In all the world no man has full understanding of any other--nor has any woman--(\_with a resentful side glance at LYDIA\_)--of anything, I think. Hark ye, mistress; you're young and may learn a little. What is the common error of mankind?

LYDIA

Why, sin.

BIMBO

I said error. The common error is to misjudge all who walk not in our own way, and to call them sinners. Then, having called them sinners, we think they sin every sin. That is the common error; and now, as it is the Seventh Day and meet for confession, I humbly confess to be an erring creature, not above this error myself. To make the matter plain to you, take the calling of a play actor. Now, that is a calling abhorrent to me from my earliest training. I look upon it as wholly sinful and wanton and of the way to everlasting fires. Therefore, unless I give heed to second thoughts, I would believe any play actor guilty of all sins--a man that would beat his wife and murder little children, perhaps even upon the Sabbath Day. Yet, if the truth were known, it might be found that just because a man is a play actor he would not of his nature's necessity and habit do these things. Nevertheless, my first thought would be that he would--because he is a play actor. Fall not into the like misjudgments, mistress. Know that our ship's company live under rigid law and rule. Else we could not hope to prosper. What think you may be our company's recreations on this day?

LYDIA (\_bitterly\_)

I suppose they will take to gaming and to carousing on my father's rum.

(\_The GUNNER and the MAN WITH THE BRAIDED BEARD utter short, grim laughter.\_)

BIMBO (\_sternly\_)

When I took my dram o' brandy I told you it was for no pleasure I had of it. No man of our company may have his dram o' Sundays except one, and that for being cold inside him, nor may any perform any labor except to the ship's pressing need. For recreation--none is permitted except the reading of some religious book.

LYDIA (\_incredulously\_)

What!

BIMBO (\_going on, explaining to her with gloomy patience\_)

As for gaming, neither dice nor cards shall ever be seen on any ship of mine, I promise you. We permit no gaming any day at all, much less upon the Seventh. So much for that, madam!

LYDIA (\_bitterly\_)

I see. Your only recreation is to torture your captives!

BIMBO (\_shaking his head despondently\_)

So! (\_He exchanges a pained, satiric smile with the GUNNER.\_) That's all they know of us, is it? (\_He turns again to LYDIA.\_) Young madam, again you speak out of your ignorance. You and your father and the young man here have given us much provocation. Have you heard one word of profanity from us? Have you even heard a threatening expression?

LYDIA (\_pointing at the GUNNER\_)

He said we should be made to suffer for the badness of our cargo.

BIMBO (\_severely\_)

He meant a fine or toll should be levied against your father; but that would mean our holding him here and having his daily association with us on our ship until the fine or ransom could be sent from Jamaica. I would vote against it, because from what we have seen of him I would rather go without the money.

LYDIA

So you strip us of what goods we have----

BIMBO (\_sharply\_)

Only such as we shall not be ashamed to sell to honest folk. We shall not touch your father's molasses. If he was a poor man and what we levied from him deeply injurious to his business, we should take up a gathering, or collection, for him.

LYDIA

You mock us!

BIMBO (\_to the GUNNER, gloomily\_)

If no one will give you credit for it, what is the good of a good action?

THE GUNNER (\_gloomily\_)

Aye! What's the use?

BIMBO (\_to LYDIA\_)

Now, look ye: In all our ventures from first to last, never once have we took our toll of poor seafaring bodies that we did not pass the hat for 'em, and every man of our crew from captain to cook's helper put in something to make life brighter and give our captives hope when we sent 'em on their way to begin their business over again. If your father had been a poor man--and of better morals--and if what we levy of his cargo sorely crippled his hope to make a living, we'd do as much for him. As it is, it's not to be looked for.

LYDIA (\_anxiously\_)

But will you let us go?

BIMBO

Why, if what a merchant captain and his crew must expect from us is to be stripped of all and mishandled, we'd have a fine business of it! They'd strain twice as hard to outsail us, and fight to death afore we could board 'em. There's ruffians in every business that make it harder for the good, practical men to make it pay; but you shouldn't judge us by the exceptions just because the exceptions get more talked about.

LYDIA (\_eagerly and hopefully\_)

Then you'll put us back aboard our own ship and let us go?

BIMBO

I didn't say that.

LYDIA (\_crestfallen\_)

Oh!

BIMBO

Your father, yes. I wouldn't keep a Sunday-swearing man among my crew at no price! One rotten apple in a barrel will contaminate the whole.

LYDIA (\_anxiously\_)

And Robert and me----

BIMBO

You scratched and fought or you'd not ha' been touched. Now that you've learned what becomes a respectable-manner female, you're not only free to go, but you must go. By the strictest law of our commonwealth, women are not permitted aboard except when the ship might be in a port, and then only on Saturday afternoons and only such as may be wife to one of the crew and accompanied by her mother.

LYDIA ( anxious )

And Robert?

BIMBO (\_looking ROBERT over\_)

This is a different matter. He's a fine, active-bodied seaman and knows the art of navigating. But more: he has familiar knowledge of all the upper coast of South America--I had it from the master of your ship--and we design to cruise upon those coasts. He's needful to our company.

LYDIA (\_piteously\_)

You mean to take him with you?

BIMBO (\_sharply\_)

He must sign our articles and become one of our commonwealth.

LYDIA (\_crying out\_)

No! No! No!

BIMBO

Why, his case is none so bad. We'll learn him our business, and if he's diligent he'll rise in it. Who can tell? If we get better cargoes, away from this discouraging fish and molasses belt of trade, he may come to you in England, retired and prosperous and ready to marry you--and all belike within seven or eight years from now!

LYDIA (\_wailing\_)

Seven or eight years! Seven or eight! Eight years! Eight----

BIMBO (\_uncomfortably\_)

Ha' done with your caterwauling, young female; we must have him. There's not one of us can pilot those coasts, and 'twould endanger us to let him go.

LYDIA (\_throwing herself on her knees before him\_)

Oh, pray don't separate us!

BIMBO

Don't beg me! This is a commonwealth, governed by law, and the law would depose me if I jeopardized the common safety by turning loose this pilot. He must sign with us. Let him speak.

(\_The DEAF-AND-DUMB MAN releases ROBERT, who rushes to LYDIA and helps her to her feet.\_)

ROBERT ( his arms about her )

Don't kneel to this ruffian for me, sweetheart.

BIMBO (\_angrily\_)

I told you not to call her sweetheart. You do it for pleasure, and our law forbids it on the Seventh Day. Stand away from her! Take your arm from her! You do that for pleasure too.

ROBERT (\_hotly\_)

I do it to protect her.

BIMBO

You don't. It's for pleasure, and we won't have it. Stand away from her, I say. (\_ROBERT sullenly obeys.\_) Now we'll fetch you to the articles of our company, and you'll sign 'em.

ROBERT

Sign 'em? I'll die first, ten thousand times!

BIMBO (\_hotly\_)

You'll sign 'em. We'll hold you and guide your hand. (\_He takes a large and soiled parchment from the table drawer and places it upon the top of the table.\_)

LYDIA (\_wailing\_)

You'll make him a pirate? Oh, death were better for us both!

BIMBO

Fetch him here.

(\_The DEAF-AND-DUMB MAN and the MAN WITH THE BRAIDED BEARD push ROBERT to the table and into a chair there, where BIMBO forces a quill pen into his hand.\_)

ROBERT (\_as this is done\_)

They shall not make me! Let me go, you black villains! I defy you!

BIMBO (\_forcibly guiding his hand on the parchment\_)

There! You're writing it, my lad. "Robert." That's done. It's a bad hand, but legible. What's your last name?

ROBERT (\_panting\_)

You'll never know.

BIMBO ( grimly )

Never mind. Robert is enough. Your hand's been to our parchment, and you're one of us by law.

LYDIA (\_crying out\_)

Oh! Ha' mercy!

BIMBO

Hold him here while I get the old man and his daughter back to their own vessel. (\_Moving toward the door.\_) Come, mistress.

LYDIA (\_rushing to her father\_)

Father, you can save him. You can pay ransom for him. You can promise to send them coin from England. Father!

BIMBO (\_to the GUNNER\_)

Bring them with me!

LYDIA (\_despairingly\_)

Father, tell them you'll pay them. Father----

ROBERT (\_appealing\_)

Mr. Driscoll, if you will, I'll pay you back. I'll save till----

DRISCOLL (\_furiously as the GUNNER removes his hand from his mouth to lead him toward the door\_)

You villain! (\_This is to ROBERT.\_) You think she's for the likes of you, do you? You knew I meant to wed her to her cousin Jock in Liverpool, and you made love to her on the sly. Don't look for help from me. You've got your deserts, and I'm glad of it. You'll hang when they catch you, because you're signed and made into a bloody pirate. Why, blast you----

BIMBO (\_peremptorily\_)

He's profane again. Stop him!

(\_The GUNNER again claps his hand over DRISCOLL'S mouth.\_)

DRISCOLL (\_struggling\_)

You're a bloody--bluggy----

(\_The GUNNER shuts him off.\_)

BIMBO

That's another oath. You use that word as profanity. Shame! Lock him in

his cabin on his own ship and let him swear there; we can't have it on ours. Come, madam.

LYDIA

No!

ROBERT (\_held by the two pirates\_)

Lydia! I shall find a way to throw myself into the sea. (\_Brokenly.\_)  
Think of me--sometimes!

LYDIA (\_sobbing\_)

Father, you shan't abandon him. You don't know--you don't know--you don't know----

BIMBO (\_sharply\_)

He doesn't know what?

LYDIA

It is his own son he abandons.

BIMBO (\_frowning\_)

His son?

LYDIA

His son-in-law. We were married the night before we sailed from Jamaica!

(\_DRISCOLL struggles fiercely and utters sounds.\_)

BIMBO (\_staring at LYDIA\_)

Oh--oh, pshaw!

(\_He utters this with the vehemence of acute disappointment and throws himself in a chair, completely disheartened.\_)

THE GUNNER (\_peevishly\_)

Well, if that isn't news to make a man sick! Just when we thought we had a fellow could pilot us on the richest coast in--well, it is--it's a nuisance! (\_To the struggling DRISCOLL.\_) Come along, you!

DRISCOLL

I won't. (\_Escaping for an instant, he makes at ROBERT.\_) Now, blast your vitals, I'll---

THE GUNNER (\_again securing the captive and silencing him\_)

Stop it!

DRISCOLL

Bla----

THE GUNNER

Shame on you! It's worse, him being your son-in-law and almost your own flesh and blood. Shame!

DRISCOLL (\_indistinctly\_)

He's a bloody pirate! He's a bl----

BIMBO (\_rising, gloomily\_)

No. No, he isn't--not unless the lady consents. (\_He turns to LYDIA appealingly.\_) Now, if he joins us, he might make a very good living and maybe a snug fortune before middle age. (\_Hopefully.\_) Wouldn't you consent to it?

LYDIA (\_shuddering\_)

Never!

BIMBO (\_sighing heavily\_)

That's the end of it, then. (\_At the table.\_) He'll have to be crossed off. (\_He draws a line through the scrawled signature "Robert," and turns to LYDIA.\_) Our laws strictly forbid us to force a married man unless we obtain his wife's consent. Let him go.

(\_He turns aside in disappointment.\_)

ROBERT (\_springing to LYDIA joyously\_)

Lydia!

LYDIA (\_rapturously\_)

Robert!

BIMBO (\_turning upon them sharply\_)

No sweethearting, now. Stand away from her.

(\_ROBERT and LYDIA, checked, stand looking at each other gloomily.\_)

ROBERT

Can't I even kiss her?

BIMBO (\_horrified\_)



Kiss your wife--on Sunday! (\_Sternly.\_) Where was you brought up?

LYDIA (\_tenderly\_)

But you can take comfort from this: you know I want to kiss you, Robert.

BIMBO (\_crossly\_)

Well, belike he can wait till Monday. To-morrow we'll have what's decent of your cargo aboard us, and you'll be under way for England again. (\_To the other pirates.\_) Take 'em all three to their own ship.

(\_The GUNNER shoves DRISCOLL toward the DEAF-AND-DUMB MAN and the MAN WITH THE BRAIDED BEARD.\_)

DRISCOLL (\_during the moment of this release, shouting at ROBERT\_)

Blast you! Bla----

BIMBO (\_fiercely\_)

Stop it!

(\_The two pirates seize DRISCOLL; and the MAN WITH THE BRAIDED BEARD claps his hand over his mouth. Struggling, they push and pull him to the door.\_)

BIMBO (\_taking up his great plumed hat from the table\_)

I will make a short address to the crew on the subject, Duty!

THE GUNNER (\_bellowing out of the door\_)

What ho! Trumpets there! His honor will speak to us on the subject, Duty! His honor will come on deck! Trumpets!

(\_Trumpets and drums sound without. DRISCOLL, struggling and uttering sounds, is conducted forth by the DEAF-AND-DUMB MAN. The PIRATE WITH THE BRAIDED BEARD and the GUNNER stand by the door at salute. With a firm gesture BIMBO puts on his hat. Then he passes toward the door. Suddenly he halts and turns sharply upon ROBERT, who has leaned toward LYDIA. ROBERT instantly draws back, and he and LYDIA stand at salute.\_)

BIMBO (\_severely to ROBERT\_)

You was going to kiss her! How dare ye! And look at the state your father-in-law's in about you, too. Pass before me.

(\_They do so. As they go he folds his arms, then stalks after them to the door.\_)

THE GUNNER (\_shouting\_)

His honor will deliver his weekly address. Trumpets there for his honor!

(The drums and trumpets sound fiercely again as the pirate captain stalks majestically out of the door.)

CURTAIN

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Italicized or underlined text is surrounded by underscores: italics.

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Obvious typographical errors have been corrected.

\*\*\* END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK BIMBO, THE PIRATE \*\*\*

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