



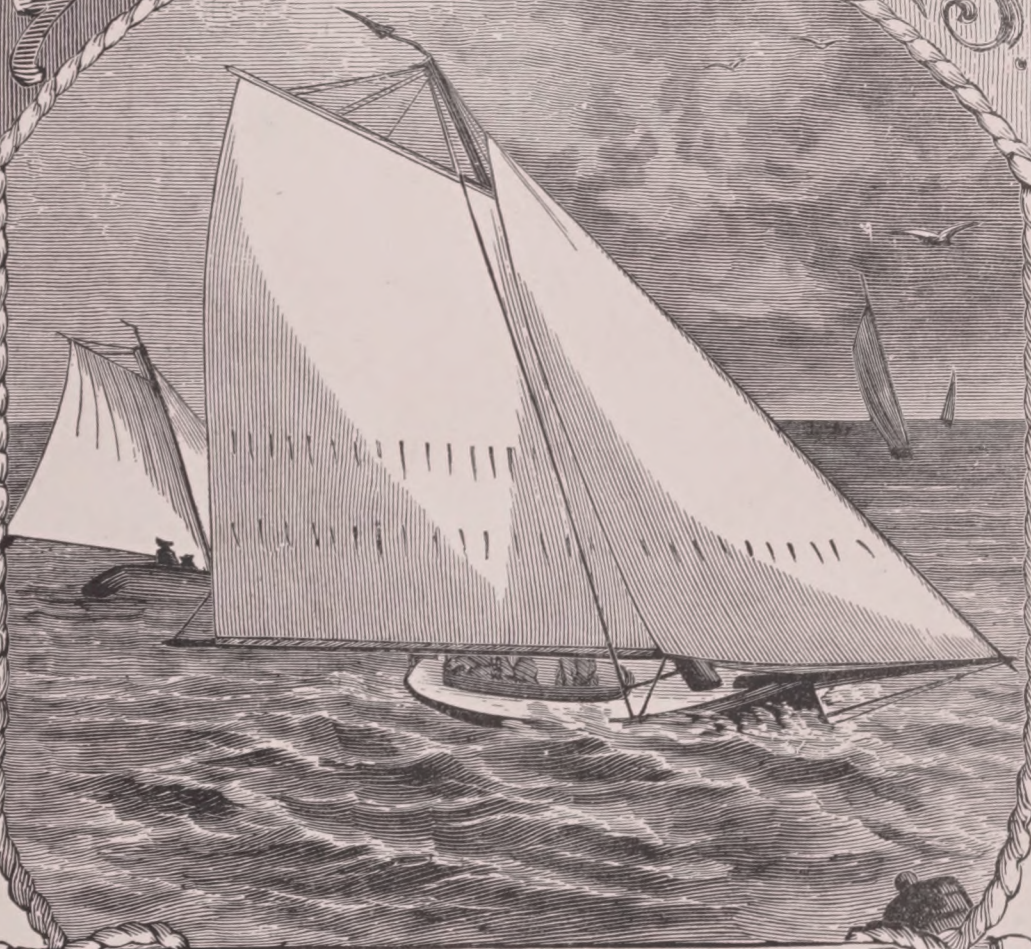




CLEARING THE BROKEN SPAR. Page 59.

OLIVER OPTIC'S

YACHT CLUB
SERIES



OCEAN BORN.

LEE & SHEPARD
BOSTON



THE YACHT CLUB SERIES.

OCEAN-BORN ;

OR,

THE CRUISE OF THE CLUBS.

BY

OLIVER OPTIC,

AUTHOR OF "YOUNG AMERICA ABROAD," "THE ARMY AND NAVY SERIES,"
"THE WOODVILLE STORIES," "THE STARRY FLAG SERIES," "THE
LAKE SHORE SERIES," "THE UPWARD AND ONWARD SERIES,"
"THE BOAT CLUB SERIES," ETC., ETC., ETC., ETC.

William Taylor Adams

WITH THIRTEEN ILLUSTRATIONS,

BY

BOSTON

LEE AND SHEPARD, PUBLISHERS

1903

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OCEAN-BORN.

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TO

MY YOUNG FRIEND

LEE SHEPARD DILLINGHAM LEAVITT,

OF HAMPTON, N. H.,

*For his own sake, as well as for that of the triplet of honored
names he bears, besides his own,*

This Book is Affectionately Dedicated.

PREFACE.

OCEAN-BORN is the sixth and last volume of THE YACHT CLUB SERIES, and, following the plan of its predecessors in the series, the author has made it an independent story, having no necessary connection with the preceding books of the series. Perhaps the incidents are somewhat more romantic than those of the other volumes, but the author thinks they are not very improbable, or extravagant, though they do not often occur in the experience of real life. They would hardly excite the interest of the reader if they often happened in his daily life. A reverend and distinguished gentleman, himself an author of reputation and character, has said that there are only about half a dozen different plots used by writers of fiction. Doubtless there are only about this number of *elements* in all the plots; but by the arithmetic of permutations, even six would make a very considerable number of stories. Probably this story is one of this vast combinations, for it is hardly possible to add a new element to the material for story writing, any more than it would be to add a new element to the chemical ingredients of nature.

Though the hero sails on the ocean in a steam yacht, he is a young man of high aims and noble purposes. His character is

worthy the respect and imitation of the reader. Both the Yacht Club and the Dorcas Club are introduced in this story, in order that in this, the last volume of the series, "the conclusion of the whole matter" may be properly reached.

Thanking his many and partial readers for the favor they have extended to this story, the author hopes that this book and its companions in the same box will contribute to their moral elevation, as well as to their pleasure and amusement.

TOWERHOUSE, BOSTON,

March, 12, 1875.

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OCEAN-BORN:

OR,

THE CRUISE OF THE CLUBS.

CHAPTER I.

THE OCEAN-BORN.

“**W**HAT do you make it, Neil?”

“Longitude $69^{\circ}, 48', 32''$; latitude, $43^{\circ}, 9', 55''$.”

Neil Brandon, the captain of the steam-yacht, Ocean-Born, a young man of eighteen, was seated at a table in the forward cabin. He had just completed his calculations for latitude and longitude, and obtained the result announced to Berry Owen, the mate, who was at the wheel in the pilot-house, from which a door opened into the cabin. The captain was now working

a parallel ruler on a chart of the eastern coast, spread out before him.

“What’s the course?” asked the pilot.

“Hold on a minute till I get the variation,” replied Neil Brandon. “I have it now: north-north-east, half north.”

“North-north-east, half north,” repeated Berry Owen, looking into the binnacle in front of the wheel, and then shifting the helm to the course given out.

“We have done first rate; our last day’s run is two hundred and seventeen miles, which is an average of nine knots an hour,” added the captain.

“That’s splendid, considering the heavy sea we have had. But where are we, any how, Neil?”

“Let’s see,” answered the young navigator, as he ran his dividers over the chart; “Cape Elizabeth bears about north-west, twenty-eight sea miles; Bald Head, a little west of north, thirty miles; Manhegan Light, which we are running for, is about thirty-eight miles. We shall fetch it about half past four.”

“Der dinner ist ready,” said a young man

with a German face, who had been preparing the after end of the table for the noonday meal. "But I dinks der roast beef ist boiled zoo mooch."

"What makes you think so, Karl?" asked the captain, as he seated himself at the head of the table.

"Because he looks so black as der gook himself; and I dinks der bodadoes ist zoo rare."

"That is a matter of opinion on your part," added the captain.

"Was is dat?" asked Karl, rubbing his head, whereon the hair had been shaved down as close to the scalp as shears could do the job, though what was left of it stood up as straight as so many shoe-pegs.

"A matter of opinion, I say."

"A blatter of inions? I brings all der blatters as der gook tells me zoo bring."

"Did you call the engineer?" asked the captain.

"No; I calls der captain."

"Call Gerald Roach."

"I calls him. But de inions?"

"See here, Karl Schnaffer; you must not

learn English of the cook: onions, not *inions*."

"Onions," repeated Karl, pronouncing the word very well.

"I don't want any onions; I seldom eat them, and never when I am going on shore within twenty-four hours."

"What for you says a blatter of onions?"

"I didn't say so. I said a matter of opinion," laughed the captain. "Call Gerald."

"A madder of obinion! I don't know. I vill zee as der gook has any," added Karl, shaking his head.

"Go along! but call Gerald and Ben first."

Things appeared to be entirely democratic on board of the Ocean-Born, for Ben was the deck-hand. Presently he appeared, and soon after, Gerald Roach, the engineer, entered the cabin.

"Der gook says he don't peiter hab no madder of obinion do-day;" said Karl, entering the cabin. "He hab plenty in de ice-house; but he don't dink he gooks none do-day."

"All right; we will have it for supper," replied the captain. "Sit down; eat your dinner, Karl, and don't wear out your brains with one effort."

Karl seated himself. Just at that moment the steam yacht rolled heavily, and the three ribs of roast beef slid out of the platter into the plate of Ben Lunder, the deck-hand; the guard on the edge of the table prevented it from going into his lap.

“I’ll thank you for that roast beef, Ben,” said Captain Brandon, who was flourishing the carving-knife and steel; “that is, if you don’t want it all yourself.”

“I’m hungry, captain; and this piece is no more than a pattern for me,” replied Ben, thrusting his fork into the beef to keep it from jumping into his lap. “However, I can’t eat it whole, and you may cut it up.”

The deck-hand returned the ribs to the platter, and the captain proceeded to carve it. Contrary to the prediction of Karl, the red juices flowed from it, and the slices came off rare and tempting.

“I hope we shall be able to fill you up, Ben, before we return to Philadelphia,” said the captain.

“I don’t think you will, for this life on the rolling deep makes a vacuum in my stomach

faster than I can fill it. By the way, Neil, the perfection of the art of carving in New York is to cut roast beef as thin as tissue paper. Don't be too artistic. Half an inch thick for hungry fellows is about the guage," continued Ben. "Creation! how this tub rolls!"

"Don't you call the Ocean-Born a tub, Ben: it's a personal insult," interposed the captain.

"I take it all back; but she makes the soap-suds fly like a squall in the wash-house on Monday morning," added Ben, as a cloud of spray dashed in at the open door of the cabin.

"Shut that weather door, Ben," said Captain Brandon.

The deck-hand rushed to the lee door, which happened to be behind him.

"Not that?" exclaimed the captain; "that isn't the weather door."

"The weather door! I don't know w'ether that's the weather door or not; but it's pretty rough weather out of either door."

"The port door; the door on the port side."

"Exactly so; but you told me this very identical door was the weather door yesterday; and things are not what they seem," pleaded Ben.

“But the wind was south-east yesterday.”

“Writ in sand are all nautical terms,” added the deck-hand, as he closed the port door: “one day a word means one thing, the next day quite a different thing. I shall never learn.”

For a time silence pervaded, for the business of the moment was all-absorbing; but after a time, when Ben had devoured three slices of beef, used up four potatoes, and gnawed as many ears of green corn, even he began to manifest a sense of weariness.

“Captain Brandon, I regret that I can do no more,” said he. “My will is strong, but the flesh is weak.”

“Do you refer to the flesh you have eaten, Ben?” asked the captain.

“No; to my body corporate, which is too full for utterance.”

“In union there is strength; and, having united so many potatoes, slices of beef, slices of bread, and ears of corn within that body corporate, it ought to be strong.”

“Then my strength is weakness, for I can eat no more. I am weary, Captain Brandon.

The Ocean-Born rolls fearfully, and thus interferes with my laziness. Shall we ever cease to roll? I lie down in the sun, and the briny waves roll over me. I lie down in my downy bunk in the forecastle, and I roll out on the floor. I went out on the mainto'-gallant bobstay this morning, to adjust the mizzen royal jib-topsail downhaul, drenching my skysail boom, and putting out both of my dead-eyes. Shall we ever cease to roll, captain?"

"Are you seasick, Ben?"

"After that dinner?" laughed the engineer.

"Not seasick; no, not seasick; but the rolling interferes with my animal comfort, my *dolce far niente*. Can't you make her go along smoothly, great commander of the Ocean-Born?"

"Perhaps I can: I'll try, Ben. But I don't think she rolls as heavily as she did at daylight this morning."

"At daylight this morning! Can I ever forget it? As I lay in my downy bunk, thinking of the weary hours that must elapse before breakfast time, now bumping against the bunk-board, now against the side of the gallant steamer, I suddenly found myself sprawling upon

my stomach on the ceiling of the fore-castle. Can you explain that, Mr. Commander of the Ocean-Born?"

"I cannot."

"Inversion, in rhetoric, is a trick by which the spouter makes the argument of an opponent tell on his side. My opponent was the stormy ocean. But in a moment more I was right side up; that's when I shifted the argument to my side."

"What do you mean, Ben?"

"Only that the steamer rolled clear over, just as my dog does when I tell him to do it."

"Very good, Mr. Lunder!" exclaimed the engineer.

"Don't you believe it? I found a kink in the mainto'-gallant quarter-deck which can be explained in no other way. The backto'-gallant mainstay had a twist in it, and the mizzen-royal smoke-stack was crusted with salt enough to pickle a whole crew of fresh-water sailors. O, I know she rolled clear over! Besides, my trousers were fearfully mixed when I turned out, or rolled out, for the starboard leg was in the larboard trousers-leg, and the larboard leg

in the starboard trousers-leg. In other, but less classic, terms, they were on hind side afore. Shall we ever cease to roll, Grand Mogul of the Ocean-Born?"

"In the cabin, there!" shouted Berry Owen from the pilot-house; "I beg to remind you that I haven't had my dinner yet; and it's two bells in the afternoon watch."

"That's the way to put it! Two bells in the afternoon watch! I wonder what time it is! One o'clock. And I hope by fourteen bells in the evening watch this gallant steamer will cease to roll," added Ben, as he consulted his watch.

"It's too bad to keep Berry waiting so long for his dinner," said the captain.

"Better he than I. Shall I take the wheel?" asked Ben.

"Take the wheel! What will you do with it?"

"Get up a revolution."

"I am afraid you would roll her over again, and get your trousers snarled up once more. No, Ben; go below, and turn in."

"Turn over, you mean."

Captain Brandon hastened to the wheel-house to relieve Berry Owen.

“North-north-east, half north,” said Berry, as he relinquished the helm.

“North-north-east, half north,” repeated Neil, as he took the wheel.

The roast beef had been sent to the galley to be kept hot, as soon as the first course at the captain's dinner was finished. It was now returned, with fresh supplies of vegetables, for the mate's dinner, as it was called; and Martin Roach, the fireman, relieved at the engine by his brother, dined with him. The yacht continued to roll very heavily, and Ben Lunder could find no rest. He sat down in the pilot-house; he lay down in the cabin; he stretched himself on the hurricane deck; he leaned against the foremast, for the yacht was schooner-rigged; he spread himself out on the divan in the after-cabin; but still he rolled over, was jerked off his feet, pitched into the scuppers, and tumbled off his resting-place. The water washed the deck, and half drowned him. In the fore-castle, the dashing sea, beating against the bow and side of the vessel, made a noise like the ma-

chinery of a cotton factory. When he had finished his dinner, the mate returned to the pilot-house.

“All hands on deck!” shouted Captain Brandon. “We will try to take some of the roll out of her.”

“I am a believer in that doctrine; but I don’t see how it can be done,” added Ben.

“On deck, and I’ll show you,” replied Neil.

All hands, except the mate and the engineer, mounted the hurricane deck, where the wind was fresh enough to take them off their feet.

“Off with the stops of the foresail!” continued the captain.

“The stops! Here am I, captain; but I stop to be told what the stops are,” said Ben, jamming his hat down over his eyes, to prevent it from being carried away by the fresh breeze.

But the stops were all removed before Ben could learn what they were. The sheet was made ready.

“Now, stand by the sheet, Ben,” continued the captain.

“That’s just what I’m doing,” replied the deck-hand.

“Catch hold of it!”

Ben seized the sail.

“That isn’t the sheet, you lubber!” shouted Neil.

“I should say not. It’s a pretty rough sheet, and I shouldn’t care to sleep between a couple of such sheets.”

“This rope is the sheet,” added the captain, laying hold of it himself.

“Worse and worse! A rope sheet! I’m in despair.”

“Man the halyards!”

“Which — the foreto’-mizzen or the mainto’-backstay halyards?”

“Here you are, Ben!” called Martin Roach.

“Here I am, but I am unmanned, and don’t know how to man the halyards.”

“You take the throat with Karl, and I will take the peak.”

“Shall I take Karl by the throat?”

“No; take this rope, which is the throat-halyard,” explained Martin, as he put the line into the hands of Ben and Karl.

“I can pull die ropes so vell as never vas,” said Karl.

“Heave ahead, my hearty, then. This is the throat-halyard: choke him!” shouted Ben.

“Steady!” cried the captain.

“Steady as a judge: haven’t drank a drop to-day,” said Ben.

The wind was on the beam, and very fresh, and, of course, it was quite impossible to hoist and trim the sail, while the steamer was going ahead full speed on this course.

“Ben, ask Berry to luff her up,” shouted Neil.

“What, ho! In the pilot-house! Berry Owen!” yelled the deck-hand.

“On deck!” replied the mate, looking out through the low windows upon the hurricane deck.

“Stuff her up!” screamed Ben; and the noise of the threshing sail compelled him to speak loud enough to be heard above it.

“Stuff her up?” queried Berry.

“No, no; luff her up,” added Martin Roach.

“Luff! I thought he said stuff her up; and nothing is too strange to be done at sea,” laughed Ben.

The pilot put his helm down, and presently

the steamer pointed her nose into the wind's eye.

"Now, lively on your halyards!" said Neil, and, no longer needed at the sheet, he took hold with the deck-hand and steward. The sail was set, and the captain seized the sheet again, catching a turn over the cleat.

"Ben, ask Berry to lay her course again," said he.

"Belay your horse again, Mr. Owen!" said Ben to the mate.

"What?" asked the puzzled helmsman.

"Belay your horse. I don't know what it means; but that's what the captain says," added Ben, stooping down at the after windows of the pilot-house. "I suppose you are to hitch the animal, and give him his oats."

"I don't understand you," answered Berry, impatiently.

"O, well, if you don't, I give up the conundrum."

"Lay her course!" cried the captain.

"Lay her course! I understand that," said the helmsman.

As the steamer fell off, Neil trimmed the fore-

sail, and then belayed the sheet. The mainsail was set by the same process. The steamer heeled well over under the influence of the fresh breeze, and her motion was much steadier than before. Karl went below to wash the dishes; Ben stretched himself on the lee divan in the forward cabin, and the captain remained on deck to watch the sails. The Ocean-Born tore through the water at a furious rate, the sails adding two or three knots to her speed.

Suddenly, as the captain was looking up to windward, a little cloud of smoke rose, apparently from the water, and an instant later the sound of a gun came to his ears.

“What was that, Berry?” he asked, going to the pilot-house.

“A gun; but I see no vessel in that direction.”

“What can it be?”

“I don’t know.”

“Pass up my glass, if you please.”

The spy-glass was handed up through the window, and Neil proceeded to make a minute examination of the surface of the ocean. The steamer had been out of sight of land all day,

though it was now about time, if the calculations made were correct, to make out Seguin Light to the northward. While Neil was engaged in his survey, another puff of smoke, followed by the report of a gun, guided his examination, and he discovered something white. The gun was fired several times.

“Do you make it out, Neil?” asked Berry.

“I see something white on the water. There is no mast or sail; but it must be a boat. Somebody has been blown off from the shore,” replied the captain.

“Somebody in distress—isn’t it?”

“I suppose so; though I don’t see how a boat without a mast should happen to have on board a gun big enough to make all that noise. There’s another gun. They are not firing for the fun of it.”

“She must be in distress, whatever it is.”

“There goes a signal—a red cloth on a pole.” continued the captain, taking another look with his glass.

“We must run down to her,” said Berry.

“Certainly; but she is dead to windward of us, and we must take in sail. Send all hands on deck!”

It was an easier job to take in the fore and main sails than it had been to set them. The course of the steamer was changed and the firing on board of the stranger ceased.

“What’s the matter now, high and mighty commander of the Ocean-Born?” asked Ben, when the sails were secured, for thus far he had had no time to ask questions.

“There’s a boat in distress directly ahead of us, Ben,” replied Neil. “Didn’t you hear the guns she fired?”

“Not a gun: I was fast asleep in the forward cabin, digesting my dinner, which I found to be a heavier operation than usual to-day.”

“I should think you would, after the quantity of beef and green corn you ate.”

“But who is in distress, captain?”

“I don’t know: I haven’t been introduced to him or them yet.”

“Are they really in distress?”

“If they are not, they ought to be sunk for compelling us to go out of our course. I think it must be some boat blown off by the fresh breeze.”

“How delightful!” exclaimed Ben. “A real

vessel or boat in distress, shooting cannon on the boundless ocean! What a sensation! I shall write a nautical romance when I return to Philadelphia, full of bobstays, jib-booms, and fo'peaks. A young lady shall be rescued from the awful wreck, hoisted into the steamer by the foreto'-backstay, and all that sort of thing. I shall buy a ton of salt to pickel the romance in."

"I can see her now without the glass," said the captain.

"Do you see the lady, young and pretty?"

"No; but I see that she is not a row-boat, as I supposed. She is a yacht of thirty feet or so long. Her masts have been carried away, and she is rolling in the trough of the sea. If there is any heroine on board of her, she must be seasick in the cabin, and not quite in a situation to take her place on your pages."

The Ocean-Born continued to approach the stranger until she could be clearly made out, as she rose on the heavy waves.

"She is a dismasted sloop. There are four young fellows on her deck," said Captain Brandon.

“What a cheerful sight the steamer must be to them!” added Ben.

“As true as you live, Ben, there is a lady on board of her!” exclaimed Neil.

“I knew it! She is clinging to the mainto’-gallant hatchway — isn’t she?”

“There’s another lady.”

“Two! That spoils the romance, and I give it up.”

In a few moments more the steamer was within hailing distance of the wreck.

CHAPTER II.

THE DISMASTED SLOOP.

OF course no one knows better than the writer, that within hailing distance of the Ocean-Born is a dismasted sloop, on board of which are at least two ladies and three or four young men. Certainly it would be gallant, courteous, polite, and even humane, to rescue those unhappy voyagers, especially the ladies, without a moment's delay; yet as they have endured the hardships and braved the perils of their present situation for several hours, I am of the opinion that they can stand it a little longer, while I give my readers, to whom I am under still greater obligations to be courteous, polite, and humane, some needed information in regard to the steam yacht and those on board of her, who have been talking and acting through a whole chapter without a proper introduction.

There were seven of them on board of the Ocean-Born. Undoubtedly the captain, Neil Brandon, was the "greatest toad in the puddle," though I have already intimated that the social relations of the ship's company were very democratic. He was a young man of eighteen, the only son of a poor widow who was worth just half a million of dollars, yielding her an income of exactly thirty-five thousand dollars a year. It is necessary that these figures should be accurately stated in order to render it probable that the son could own a share in a steam yacht of thirty-eight and twenty-six hundredths tons, old measurement, and be able to pay a portion of the expenses of running her. Steam yachts like the Ocean-Born are expensive luxuries; but it must be admitted that the expense of keeping one, when equally divided among four persons, is only one fourth as much as when the whole is paid by a single individual. Without stopping to demonstrate this proposition, I will content myself by adding that the captain's share of the expenses was comparatively light.

I can only give the current information, at this stage of the story, in regard to Madam

Brandon, the mother of the captain, without vouching for its correctness. Everybody in the vicinity of her residence knew that her husband had made his fortune by the rise of land. Grandfather Brandon had owned a farm in what is now, but was not then, the city of Philadelphia. He left it to his three sons, two of whom made haste to sell their portions for the most they could get, and then made haste to spend the money they obtained for it in eating, drinking, and riotous living, so that they died and filled drunkards' graves. Neil Brandon, the oldest son, did not sell his fifty acres, and did not indulge in riotous living. He was a seafaring man, and he thought that after he had become tired of voyaging on the ocean from clime to clime, he might wish to settle down upon the old place, and end his days on the farm. The house and barn of his father were on his land, and he leased his estate for more than enough to pay the taxes and all other expenses.

He had gone to sea before the mast when he was eighteen, and when he was thirty he was mate of an East Indiaman, with the hope and expectation of soon becoming her commander;

but, according to the current story, he had suddenly become disgusted with the sea, and abandoned his calling before he had reached the summit of his ambition. When he became mate of the ship, he married a woman of French descent in New Orleans. She sailed with him to Liverpool, and thence to the East Indies, as a passenger. He left her in Hong Kong, while he made a voyage to San Francisco, and she again sailed with him for New York. On the voyage their only child, Neil, was born. His mother often called him her Ocean-Born, and when the boy was old enough to understand it, he rather liked the name. The ship went to New Orleans from New York, and took a cargo of cotton for Liverpool. After this voyage, the mate expected to be the captain of the vessel; but for some reason which Madam Brandon did not very clearly explain, even to her son, he left the ship at Hong Kong, and came home as a passenger.

When the boy was four years old, Neil Brandon took up his residence on his farm near Philadelphia. The city was pushing its way out in the country. Great avenues were cut through

his farm, and Neil sold all his land for twenty-five cents a foot, except the lot on which his house stood. It is true that he was vexed, a year later, to see the same land sold for double, triple, and quadruple the price he had received. Houses were erected all around him, and finally he sold the old homestead lot, to become the site of a church. After he had bought another lot, and built a substantial residence upon it, he found that he had invested just half a million dollars in bonds, mortgages, and other securities. When he had moved into his new house, he was taken sick. The doctors told him he might live a month, and he might live a year, but the end was near. He made his will, leaving all his property to his wife, now not more than thirty years old. People thought, after Neil Brandon was dead, that this was a very strange will, for Madam Brandon might marry again, and even deprive the son of any portion of his father's wealth. But when the boy was eighteen, she had not married again, though even at forty-two she was a good-looking woman; and it was said that she had made a will, giving all her fortune to the boy.

Madam Brandon was not a well-educated and accomplished woman. She even admitted that her parents were poor, and that she had been a servant before she was married. But she was a lady of good common sense, and she took care that her boy should have every advantage which the educational institutions of the country afforded. Unfortunately, as she considered it, Neil began to manifest an inclination for a sea-faring life. When he was a dozen years old, he "took to boats" as a duck takes to the water. The neighbors said he had inherited his father's taste for the sea. At sixteen he sailed a boat like an old yachtman; but Madam Brandon kept him to his studies with great tact. She gave him a boat for his leisure hours and vacations, but she insisted that his lessons should be learned. His friend and nautical companion was Berry Owen, the son of a rich merchant; and they spent weeks together in sailing up and down the Delaware, and even far out to sea, in the *Niobe*, a sloop of five tons, which they owned in common.

While thus engaged in yachting, they made the acquaintance of Gerald and Martin Roach,

two of the sons of a wealthy and enterprising machinist, who built the largest and finest steam engines and other machinery in the country. They sailed together, and became fast friends. Off cape May, in a calm, one day, they talked about a steam yacht, and what a glorious plaything it would be. In one they could defy a calm, which was the abomination of enthusiastic sailors and yacht-men. In another year the dream was realized. Mr. Roach had been experimenting in iron vessels, and had built the hull of the yacht. Neil's mother and Berry Owen's father together agreed to pay one half of the expense of the vessel, and she was completed. Because they liked the name, and because the idea had been first talked about on the ocean, they called her the Ocean-Born.

Gerald and Martin Roach were both learning their father's business, and both of them had worked on the hull and engine of the yacht. Gerald was nineteen, and "knew an engine all to pieces," as Neil expressed it to his mother, when she spoke of the peril of playing with so dangerous a motor as steam. He was competent to make the designs and build an engine, and

certainly he was able to run one, and make all needed repairs upon it. Martin, though two years younger, was not much less accomplished, and had actually constructed a little engine, which he had attached to the steam-heating apparatus in his father's house. Both of these boys worked three hours in the machine shop every day, besides attending to their studies in school. They had their holidays and vacations, like other boys, which were employed in the steam yacht, till the ice closed the river. Neil said nothing more about going to sea, and Madam Brandon was entirely satisfied. She gladly paid her son's share of the expenses of the vessel.

During the first year of their experience, the ship's company of the Ocean-Born, as the young men called themselves, seldom went beyond the Capes at the mouth of the Delaware, though on the long vacation they made a voyage around Cape Charles, and to the head of Chesapeake Bay. Neil and Berry were studying navigation at school and they often invited their instructors, to make excursions with them, in order to obtain the practical application of the science. Both of them could take observations with the

instruments, and work out the problems to obtain the latitude and longitude. They were deeply interested in the study, and once at least every day, when on board of the yacht, they worked out the ship's position, wherever they were. They had a record of the precise latitude and longitude of scores of points on the river and bay, taken for the sake of the practice. All the young men were zealous students, and during the first year, at least, the pilot-house and engine-room were places for study. When they went up the Chesapeake, it was necessary to employ a pilot, and they procured a very intelligent shipmaster, who voluntarily became their instructor.

For a month before the long vacation, the second year, an extended voyage was discussed. The Ocean-Born had proved herself to be a thorough sea-going vessel. The boys had been out in her at sea in a gale of wind, and knew precisely what she would do. Finally it was agreed that the trip should be to the coast of Maine, including a run up the Penobscot River, and a visit to Mount Desert, going in at Newport on the way. The yacht was coaled and provisioned for the voyage.

Ordinarily the four owners sailed the Ocean-Born alone, though, as may well be supposed, there were plenty of volunteers to assist on board, even in the most menial capacities. It was necessary to have a cook for a long cruise, for Mr. Roach and Madam Brandon insisted that the boys should not depend upon amateur efforts for their diet. Peter Blossom, a colored man, and a first-rate cook, was engaged; and he was the only hired man on board. Neil Brandon was the captain, because he was believed to be the best sailor. Berry Owen was the mate, though practically the two young men performed the same duties. On short cruises, one of them had to act as deck-hand, when there was any work for one, as in anchoring, getting under way, and making a landing. Gerald Roach was nominally the engineer, and Martin the fireman; but at sea one of them would tend the fire and take charge of the engine. While Neil and Berry took turns at the wheel, Gerald and Martin spelled each other at the engine. They kept the regular nautical watches in both departments.

Karl Schnaffer was the nephew of a rich Ger-

man merchant, who had been in the country but a short time. He lived next door to Mrs. Brandon, and Neil was much interested in him. He was still struggling with the difficulties of the English language. He was the captain's friend, and acted as cabin steward. Ben Lunder was a former schoolmate of Berry Owen, but was now a sophomore in Columbia College, in New York. Ben had never been far out at sea. He knew very little about nautical matters, and he affected to know still less. Both he and Karl made a great deal of fun on board, and sedate as Gerald Roach generally was, he could not help laughing at the follies and blunders of Ben, the deck-hand, and Karl, the cabin steward.

The Ocean-Born had been to Newport, and was now on her voyage to the Penobscot. On the day before we introduced her to the reader, the wind had been south-east, with heavy rains. Early in the morning the breeze had swung around to the north-west, and it had blown very fresh all day.

The yacht was eighty-six feet long, and eighteen feet beam. Her "house on deck" was fifty feet long. The forward and after cabins

were each fifteen feet long. Connected with the forward cabin were two large state-rooms, occupied by Neil and Berry. Aft the engine-room were two more, one of which was used by the Roaches, who preferred to room together. In the fore-castle, which was of good size, light, and well ventilated, were eight berths, in which good beds were made up for the use of any party who might be on board. Indeed, this fore-castle was fitted up and furnished quite as well as the forward cabin, which was the mess-room of the officers. The after-cabin was quite elegant, and was seldom opened, except when ladies were on board. The galley, where Peter Blossom presided, was fitted up with every convenience a cook could expect to find on board a vessel. In the hold, under the main deck, were the engine, boiler, and coal-bunkers. The ice-house was in the run, reached by a scuttle in the quarter-deck, and it was well filled with beef, mutton, poultry, fish, and other substantial.

Before the Ocean-Born came within hailing distance of the dismasted yacht, Neil Brandon

had made up his mind in regard to the character of the yacht. Two ladies had showed their heads above the side of the companion-way. It was evident that a pleasure party was on board of the yacht, that her mast had been carried away, and thus disabled, she had been blown off the coast.

“How now, captain of the Ocean-Born? What shall I do?” asked Ben Lunder, as the steamer approached the wreck.

“Do nothing, Ben, but keep still if you can,” replied Neil.

“I will try to keep still; but I’m afraid it’s quite impossible.”

“Ring your speed-bell, Berry,” continued the captain, as the yacht approached still nearer to the dismasted craft.

The speed of the steamer decreased; but in a few moments she was near enough to the wreck to heave a line on board.

“Steamer, ahoy!” shouted some one on board of the sloop.

“On board the sloop!” replied Neil. “What shall we do for you?”

“Can you tow us in?”

“ Ay, ay. Where were you bound ? ”

“ To Belfast.”

“ All right! We are bound up the Penobscot. Shall I take you off ? ”

“ No — thank you. We are all right.”

“ Stand by to catch a line ! ” continued Neil. — “ Now, Berry, run across her bow, and stop her when our stern is up with her bowsprit.”

The gong in the engine-room sounded, and the steamer went ahead slowly, rolling heavily in the sea.

“ Ring one bell ! ” shouted the captain.

“ One bell,” replied Berry, in the pilot-house ; and the boat stopped.

Neil had coiled up a heave-line, which he tossed on the forecastle of the sloop, where it was caught and secured to her cable-rope. Ben helped the captain haul it in, and it was made fast to a heavy iron ring below the rail of the steamer.

“ All ready ! Go ahead ! ” shouted the spokesman on board the sloop.

“ Ring one bell,” added Neil. — “ Start her very slowly, Gerald,” to the engineer, at the door of whose room he stopped.

In the heavy sea there was some danger of swamping the "tow" if the work was not properly done. The hawser tightened and strained; and, as the steamer went ahead, a large wave rolled over the bow of the sloop.

"Stop her Gerald!" said the captain, still standing at the door of the engine-room. — "On board the sloop!"

"The steamer!" replied some one from the yacht.

"Give her more hawser! Slack off!"

"Ay, ay!"

"Make fast; about double the length you had before."

"All right! Go ahead!"

"Start her slowly, Gerald," said the captain. With a longer line the sloop towed better, but she rolled badly in the trough of the sea.

"Ring the speed-bell, Berry," said the captain, when he had observed the tow for a time.

The Ocean-Born went ahead at full speed; but the sloop seemed to work very well, rolling no worse than before.

"Where are the heroines, captain?" asked Ben.

“In the cabin of the sloop. They have closed up the companion-way to keep the sea out,” answered Neil.

“But aren't we going to transfer them to the stormy hatchway of the Ocean-Born?”

“I think not.”

“Don't we rescue them, and all that sort of thing?”

“That is just what we are doing.”

“But don't we rig out the foreto' thingumbob and h'ist in the main-royal what-you-call-it? In other words don't we get out the mizzen starboard life-boat, and wrench those fair beings from the embrace of the heaving billows?”

“No we don't,” laughed the captain. “We tow the sloop into Belfast: that's all we do at present.”

“Those waves are wet,” added Ben, shaking his head.

“Rather moist; and for that reason I should advise those ladies, if I were permitted to speak to them, to keep out of them, and out of the way of them.”

“There isn't any romance in towing that



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dismasted hulk over the stormy sea. Can't you give me an opportunity to do a big thing, and place the fair strangers under everlasting obligations to me?"

"Can't accommodate you just now; but you may crawl on that tow-line to the sloop, and then, if you can persuade one of the ladies to jump overboard, you may go in after her."

"But that's dangerous."

"Slightly."

"Can't we get out the mizzento'-quarter-boat, and bring them on board?"

"I think they will not care to get into a boat while it is jumping about. Let them alone, Ben, and we will drag them into smooth water before dark."

"But we don't know who or what they are. Have you the name of the sloop?"

"I have not; but I can afford to wait."

"You are knocking all the romance out of the thing."

"There is none in it to knock out. The people on board of the sloop are a party who went out to sail; the mast of the yacht went by the board, and they could not get back to

the place they started from. That's the whole of it."

"But didn't the fellow say he wanted to go to Belfast?"

"You are right, Ben, for once. Let us be patient, and we shall know all about the matter in a few hours."

"It is terrible to be within ten fathoms of two ladies, without knowing whether they are pretty or not," added Ben, with a very long face. "I should like to show them what a glorious deck-hand can do in the way of making himself agreeable."

"You shall have the chance before dark."

Ben went to sleep in the forward cabin, and for three hours more the Ocean-Born tugged away at the tow astern of her, her speed considerably diminished by the added work required of her engine. At four o'clock Captain Brandon relieved the mate at the wheel. For the last two hours, at this time, Manhegin Light had been in plain sight. The island on which it is located is of considerable size, and rather high. At five the steamer came up with it. On the shelf in front of the captain, "Blunt's Coast

"Pilot" lay open at page 242. Neil had read up the matter relating to the island, and he decided to go to the southward of it. He ran the yacht near enough to the shore to throw a biscuit upon it; and here the water was as smooth as far up the river. Gradually slowing down, he stopped the boat, so that the sloop should not run into her.

"Hullo, Ben! Bear a hand here!" shouted the captain.

"What's broken?" demanded Ben, springing to his feet.

"Your slumbers. We will lower a boat, and board the sloop now," replied Neil.

One of the quarter-boats, which were swung in on the davits, high enough to allow any one to pass under them, was dropped into the water. Ben and the captain pulled to the sloop.

CHAPTER III.

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE SEA FOAM.

BEFORE the quarter-boat of the Ocean-Born could reach the sloop, all on board of the latter had come on deck. It was a day in August, but the north-west wind rendered the weather quite cool at sea, though the sun, even at five o'clock in the afternoon, was warm under the lee of the high island. The boat came alongside the sloop, and Neil Brandon stepped on board of her, followed by Ben Lunder. Both of the Philadelphians touched their caps politely, and bowed to the ladies, of whom there now appeared to be three, instead of two, all of them still in their teens.

“I beg your pardon, ladies and gentlemen, but may I speak to the captain of this yacht?” said Neil.

“Captain Ned Patterdale,” said one of the

young men, introducing another, who stepped forward.

“The yacht belongs to me, and I am in charge of her,” said Ned Patterdale, bowing.

“Captain Brandon, commander of the steam-yacht Ocean-Born, of Philadelphia,” interposed Ben, introducing his friend.

“Captain Brandon, I am glad to know you,” added Ned, extending his hand. “I may say I am particularly glad to know you, under present circumstances.”

“And I heartily reciprocate the sentiment,” said Neil, shaking hands with the captain of the sloop. “What yacht is this?”

“The Sea Foam, of and for Belfast.”

“You have been unfortunate.”

“Very unfortunate; and this fact enables us to appreciate your kindness.”

“Nothing can afford me so much pleasure as to assist the unfortunate,” said Neil, glancing at the rest of the party.

“Captain Brandon, allow me to introduce my party,” added Ned, as he turned to the ladies, who were all bundled up in shawls and water-proofs. “This is my sister, Miss Nellie Patterdale”

Captain Brandon took off his cap, and bowed low.

“Miss Minnie Darling; and I may add that she is the president of the Dorcas Boat Club,” added Ned.

Neil properly represented Philadelphia gallantry.

“Miss Kate Bilder, boat-leader of the Lily Club.

The captain did honor to the teaching of his Philadelphia dancing-master, who had years before instructed him how to bow gracefully to a lady. Mr. Ben Lunder was introduced in like manner to the ladies.

“Captain Brandon, Mr. Ramsey, better known among us as Don John, of the firm of Ramsay & Son, boat-builders;” and the captain and Ben shook hands with him. “Don John is the builder of the Sea Foam.”

“And the maker of that unfortunate mast that went by the board,” laughed Don John.

“But I shall prove by and by that it was not the fault of the spar or its maker, that it failed us in a trying moment,” interposed Ned, who then presented the rest of the party—

Prince Willingood, Morris Hollinghead, and Dick Adams.

“Captain Patterdale, I did not come on board to draw out your thanks, or even to gratify my own curiosity in regard to the yacht or her party,” continued Neil, “but simply to invite you on board of the steamer, where I think you can all be better accommodated, but especially the ladies. Allow me to place my after-cabin at their disposal.”

“Thank you, captain; and in their behalf I shall accept the invitation,” replied Ned; “for they have been tossed about since six o’clock this morning, and more than one wave has broken into the cabin where they were. They are all cold and wet.”

“Ocean-Born, ahoy!” shouted Neil.

“On board the sloop!” replied Berry Owen.

“Back her alongside!” added Neil.

“Ay, ay, captain.”

“What steamer is that, captain?” asked Ned.

“The Ocean-Born, of Philadelphia,” answered Neil; “and she is entirely at your service. I hope you will all come on board, for it is fifty miles to Belfast, if my reckoning is correct.”

“Thanks: we shall be happy to accept your kind invitations, though it will be necessary for one of us to remain on board to steer.”

“But we will now lash the Sea Foam alongside the steamer, so that you can pass from one vessel to the other without difficulty. I take it we shall have smoother water now,” added Neil.

“Yes; we shall be under the lee of the land,” replied Ned.

“I shall need a pilot for the bay, for I know nothing at all about it.”

“We can furnish you just five pilots for these waters, for all of us are perfectly at home in the bay.”

“I prefer one pilot to five,” laughed Neil.

“Then Don John is your man.”

“I am at your service,” said the boat-builder, as the Ocean-Born came alongside the Sea Foam.

The three young ladies were shivering with the cold, for, before they could be induced to allow themselves to be shut up in the cabin, they had been wet through. A fire had been made in the stove in the cook-room, forward,

of the Sea Foam; but the sea had carried away the piece of funnel above the deck, and the water rolled through the hole into the stove, putting out the fire and filling the cabin with smoke and gas. Morris Hollinghead, who was the cook for the cruise, had been unable to practise his vocation for the want of a fire; and the bill of fare for breakfast and dinner had been "hard tack" and cheese, with cold water. The "soft tack" and other stores had been washed with salt water.

Neil and Ben politely assisted the ladies on board of the steamer, and conducted them to the after-cabin. The blinds had been opened, and steam let into the heating apparatus, so that the cabin was already warmed to eighty degrees.

"What a magnificent cabin!" exclaimed Minnie Darling, as she entered it.

"This is the ladies' cabin, and we seldom open it except when we have ladies on board. Here is a state-room, with two berths and a divan," continued Neil, opening the door of the room. "No one will enter the after-cabin except upon your invitation, ladies."

“Isn’t it elegant!” ejaculated Kate Bilder.

“And as warm as toast!” added Nellie Patterdale.

“When it is too warm, you can turn this little wheel in the radiator. I will leave you now. We shall have supper in about an hour in the forward cabin. Shall I close the blinds before I go?”

“Thank you: do so, if you please.”

The captain closed the blinds, and retired, shutting the door behind him. The young ladies were as private and as comfortable as they would have been in their own houses; or they would have been if they could have changed their wet clothing for dry.

The fenders were put over the side, and the Sea Foam was securely lashed to the steamer; and, after the boat had been hoisted up and swung in, the Ocean-Born went ahead. Though the young men from the Sea Foam were wet, they were used to it, and did not mind the cold. They looked over the steamer with interest, and then dried themselves off in the fire-room.

Neil had instructed Peter Blossom, the cook, to get up the best supper he could for the party;

and Mr. Blossom was doing his "level best" under these orders. The forward cabin had been heated, and the captain and Ben were entertaining their guests there, except Dick Adams, who was at the helm of the sloop.

"I could not make out what you were for a long time after I heard the gun you fired," said Neil, alluding to the events of the day. "I saw no mast or sail, and I could not understand how a row-boat happened to have a gun on board big enough to make so much noise."

"The Sea Foam belongs to the Belfast Yacht Club, and most of the craft have the regulation gun on board," Ned Patterdale explained.

"But how happened you to lose your stick?"

"It was no fault of the stick, I assure you," added Neil, glancing at Don John. "The Sea Foam broke adrift the other day, and ran into the bridge above the city. She struck it between the piles, and took all the strain on her mast, and broke it half off just above the deck. I had an iron band put on it, and the ship-smith said it was stronger than before."

"You were off on a long cruise; that is, a long one with ladies on board, with no better

accommodations than you had for them," suggested Neil.

"The run from Belfast to Portland is about a hundred miles. When I went down, we sailed at four o'clock in the morning, and arrived at six in the evening—fourteen hours. My father is a member of the Portland Yacht Club, and, as what is mine belongs to him, he entered the Sea Foam for the regatta which took place yesterday afternoon. My sister and the other girls wanted to see the race, and we were glad to have them go with us, for I was sure we could make the run, with a decent breeze, between sun and sun; and we did. The girls staid at my uncle's house in Portland the two nights, and saw the race from a steamer."

"What luck had you?" inquired Neil.

"The wind was rather light yesterday for the Sea Foam, which is a heavy-weather boat; but we took the second prize in our class. That was better than we expected in that breeze; so we were all satisfied. We were the first in of our class, but lost the first prize on allowances. I turned out at four o'clock this morning, and finding that a smashing breeze was

blowing, I did not get the girls on board till six o'clock, for I thought I could make the run in twelve hours or less. We had the wind free; and having girls on board, I put a single reef in the mainsail. When we were clear of the islands, the wind piped fresher and fresher. About eight o'clock, when we were twenty miles out, I began to think about putting another reef in the mainsail. I asked Don John to take a look at the mast, and he started to do so. Just then a heavy flaw came, and before he could get out of the standing-room, snap went the mast. It dropped over the side, and hung to the stump by the splinters, held by the jib-stay shrouds and sheets. The yacht heeled over to leeward, so that the girls screamed, and I was afraid she would fill, for the companion-way was open, and the fore-hatch not fastened."

"You were in a tight place."

"We were. I wanted to save the sail, if I could; but Don John cut away the mast with a hatchet, and we cleared away the wreck as well and quickly as we could. The jib-stay parted at the mast-head, so that we saved the jib. The sloop righted then; but she rolled

terribly in the trough of the sea, as she drifted rapidly to leeward. The girls were awfully frightened, though they are braver than girls generally are on the water. We tried to keep her head up to the sea with the oars, but without success. Don John then tried to rig a jury-mast, by lashing the two oars together. We got it up and bent the jib on the boat-hook as a yard. We had hardly set the sail, when the jury-mast snapped. About this time we made out your steamer with the glass. We fired three guns before you put about and headed for us."

"We had to take in sail; but I headed for you as soon as I made you out," added Neil.

"I know you did; and you could not have heard the first guns we fired. We were happy when we saw the steamer headed for us, as you may well believe.

"And I was happy to think I could help you."

"You have a sailor's heart, Captain Brandon; and I hope you will remain some time at Belfast," added Ned. "We shall do all we can to make your stay pleasant."

“Thank you; but I am going up the Penobscot as far as Bangor. I intended to stop at all the principal towns, for we have a month of vacation before us.”

“The Yacht Club and the Dorcas Club have planned an excursion up the river, and we should be glad to go with you; but of course we can't beat up stream with your steamer.”

“How many yachts are going?”

“Only six have agreed to do so.”

“Then I can tow you up. But pray what is the Dorcas Club? I don't quite understand that,” said Neil.

“The Dorcas Benevolent Society is an association of twenty-five young ladies who sew for, and otherwise help, the poor and needy of our city,” continued Ned. “They have done a great deal of good that no one else would have thought of doing. When they took a fancy for rowing, some of the wealthy men of the city, including Don John here—”

“I am not one of the wealthy men of the city,” interposed the boat-builder.

“But you gave the Dorcas Club a boat.”

“One I had built during the leisure of a winter, when I had nothing else to do.”

“Don John gave a boat, Mr. Jones gave a boat, and others gave money to buy boats. Now the Dorcas Club have five four-oar boats, in which they do the most graceful rowing you ever saw.”

“We must stop two weeks in Belfast,” said Ben Lunder, rubbing his hands. “Young lady boat-clubs! The honey-pots are upset upon us by this fortunate adventure! Bless you, Captain Patterdale, for carrying away the fore-sky-sail-mast of your royal yacht! Twenty-five young ladies in boats!”

All hands laughed heartily at this sally. The topic was changed, much against Ben’s wishes, for the guests wanted to know more about the Ocean-Born and those who sailed her. Nearly all we have given the reader was imparted to them on this subject.

“Der subber ist ready!” shouted Karl, when he had brought in all the dishes from the galley.

“Twenty-five young ladies, in five boats!” exclaimed Ben; “rowing gracefully! smiling sweetly! Who ever heard of such a thing? Shade of the stu’n-sail-boom! I bathe my

weary spirit in sweet visions of the future!"

"Miss Bilder is the leader of the Lily," added Ned.

"Builder of sweet castles in the air!"

"Der subber ist ready!" shouted Karl, impatiently. "I dinks you don't petter dalk all night, ven der shickens must get gold. I goes to der door der gabin, and dells der ladies der subber ist ready. I guess you don't petter stay here ven dey must stop in der gabin. Dey don't go dill you gomes for dem."

"Right, Karl!" and Neil, Ned, and Ben went for them.

They were escorted to the forward cabin. Karl, with some assistance from Mr. Peter Blossom, the artist of the galley, had set the table in the most elegant manner. The cook was not satisfied to remain in the galley after he had cooked the supper; and, putting on a clean white jacket, had come into the cabin, ostensibly to wait on the table, but really to witness and enjoy his triumph.

The bill of fare included broiled chickens, beefsteak, mutton chops, with toast, muffins, lady-cake, ladies' fingers, and other nice things

especially prepared for the ladies. Peter had done his best, as he was instructed to do, and the effect was immense. The guests were duly and properly astonished at the variety and elegance of the table.

“You live like nabobs,” said Ned Patterdale, who was seated on Neil’s left, while Nellie was on his right.

“It would be acting a lie to pretend that we make such a spread as this at every meal,” laughed Neil. “Mr. Peter Blossom, our cook, who has the most profound respect for the ladies, got up his bill of fare for this great occasion. Shall I give you some broiled chicken, Miss Patterdale?”

“If you please,” replied she.

“Miss Minnie, darling,” said Ben Lunder, who was seated opposite the president of the Dorcas Club, “may I—”

“Now, Mr. Lunder,” interposed Minnie, blushing, “I wish to say that you are perpetrating a very old and a very stale joke. I am the victim of my name; but I banish every gentleman from my presence who presumes to put a comma between my first and last name.”

“Good Neptune, whose son I am! I will banish every comma from my speech!” exclaimed Ben, amid the laughter of all the company.

“May I be allowed to ask your name, Mr. Lunder?” continued Minnie.

“Certainly: Benjamin Lunder.”

“Precisely so: B. Lunder,” laughed the president of the Dorcas Club. “Perhaps you will not object to banishing the period, which, doubtless, you use in writing your name, and changing the capital L into a small one. How will it read then?”

“B—lunder, Blunder,” added Ben, rubbing his head.

“Which describes your case exactly, Mr. Lunder.”

“Good!” shouted the captain; and the others applauded the hit.

“I think I will not banish the period,” added Ben, ruefully, “only the comma.”

“I guess you don’t petter say noding more,” said Karl.—“Do you dinks you don’t petter have some shickens, Miss Tarling?”

“Thank you, Mr. Schnaffer. On the contrary, I think I will have some, but not more than

one," laughed Minnie. I suppose you are a sailor, Mr. Lunder."

"O, yes, yes; I'm a sailor; salt as a red herring," replied Ben. "But it has taken a whole week to pickle me."

"Then you enjoy the sea?"

"O, very much: I take to it as a duck to a mud-puddle. I have a sort of intuitive knowledge of things salt and nautical. The high and mighty captain of the Ocean-Born reposes the most implicit confidence in my marine judgment and skill. Why, I had not been on board two minutes before he sent me out on the mainto'-gallant spanker-boom, to take a double reef in the fore-royal bobstay!"

"What a treasure you must be! I hope the captain appreciates you."

"O, he does! And he has the grace to acknowledge that he could not get along without me. The Ocean-Born would have gone to the bottom in this cruise if I had not been on board. Why, only this morning, when the wind was blowing blue blazes, the captain was blowing up all hands, and the engineer was blowing off steam —"

“See here, Ben! that is hardly fair,” said the captain, shaking his head. “You are giving these ladies, whose good opinion I value more than life, the impression that I am a scold; that I blow up the hands; whereas I never do anything of the sort. I never blow up the crew.”

“I grant the fact.”

“You said I was blowing up all hands.”

“You have spoiled my figure of speech,” replied Ben, solemnly.

“I haven’t blown off steam to-day,” added Gerald Roach.

“All right; I stand corrected,” answered Ben. “May I trouble you for the starboard side-bone of a chicken, wing-and-wing, captain?”

“You were about to tell us what you did only this morning, Mr. Lunder,” interposed Minnie.

“True, I was; but my figure of speech was scuttled, wrecked, foundered, run ashore, dismasted, just to accommodate a few insignificant facts; and what can a fellow do without his little figure of speech?” replied Ben, blankly.

“I don’t know that I ever heard a fib called

a figure of speech before ; but go on, Ben," said the captain.

"Very likely you will pick me up again, if I do. I was trying to show the necessity of having a thorough sailor, like myself, on board. I remarked that it was blowing blue blazes: I omit the rest of the figure in deference to the sensitiveness of the captain and engineer. We had three reefs in the toplights, the star-board tacks in the carpet, the skysail furled, and everything going by the board a lumber brig had lost overboard. You can judge by this the imminent deadly peril of the Ocean-Born. At this critical moment, the captain sent me aloft on the mainto'-gallant bowsprit, to take out the kinks in the mizzen-royal smoke-stack. Very likely the captain will deny it. The steamer was saved, and here we are."

"It is not necessary to deny anything in that story, Ben," added the captain; "and I am sure the ladies will admire your skill and daring."

"Steamer ahoy!"

The hail came from the port side.

"On board the sloop!" replied Berry Owen, who was at the wheel.

“Anybody lost?” shouted some one; and those at the table saw several yachts.

“No,” replied Berry.

This answer was followed by hearty cheers from different directions.

“Five sloop-yachts like the Sea Foam in sight,” said the mate to the party.

The news of the dismasting of the Sea Foam had been telegraphed to Belfast, and the yachts had come down to cruise after her.

CHAPTER IV.

BOUNDING BILLOW BEN.

THE party in the forward cabin of the Ocean-Born had finished their supper, when the steamer was hailed by the yacht squadron, and were listening to the nautical talk of Ben Lunder. They all went on deck, except Neil and Don John, who entered the pilot-house to relieve Berry Owen.

“This is part of our yacht fleet,” said Don John. “Here is the Skylark on our port side, and she is Commodore Montague’s yacht.”

Berry Owen had already rung one bell, and the steamer had nearly lost her headway. A boat was putting off from the Skylark, and presently it came alongside.

“You have had hard luck, Ned,” said Commodore Montague, whilom “Little Bobtail,” as he leaped on the Ocean-Born.

“No; on the contrary, I have had good luck in falling in with this steamer.”

“Bad and good, then, for it was certainly unfortunate to have your mast carried away,” added the commodore, as he greeted the Belfast party on board.

He was then introduced to the officers of the Ocean-Born, whom he regarded with no little interest and curiosity.

“We did not expect to see you, commodore,” continued Ned Patterdale.

“We had a tremendous excitement in the city, when a despatch came from Portland that the Sea Foam had been wrecked,” replied Robert Montague.

“How in the world did they know anything about it in Portland? We were dismasted at least twenty miles to the eastward of Cape Elizabeth,” added Ned.

“A party that started for Seguin, but had to put back because it was so rough, reported you. They arrived at noon. Of course your family were terribly alarmed. Your father telegraphed to his friends in Portland to send a steamer out after you.”

“I saw a sail-boat making towards Portland,” said Don John.

“I am sorry the news got to Belfast,” added Ned, much troubled. “I suppose they are still worrying about us.”

“Of course they cannot have heard from you. The fellows in the Yacht Club were so uneasy that we decided at once to go on a cruise in search of you,” continued Ned.

“Our first business, then, ought to be to make a telegraph station,” suggested Neil. “We shall hardly get to Belfast before midnight, towing the yacht, with the tide against us. We had better put into Rockland.”

“I thought of that before; for, as the breeze has been fresh all day, we were probably expected to arrive by five or six o’clock. But I did not like to ask you to vary your course, captain,” said Ned.

“Rockland it is,” replied Neil.

The commodore of the yacht squadron bade the party good night, and returned to the Skylark. The fleet filled away again, headed up the bay, and the steamer proceeded on her course. The young ladies were very much dis-

turbed by the knowledge that their friends at home were worrying about them, and they were not in condition to enjoy the wild talk of Ben Lunder; but before nine o'clock the Ocean-Born arrived at Rockland. Ned Patterdale went on shore, and sent off his despatch as follows: "Dis-masted; picked up by steam-yacht Ocean-Born; all well; having a first-rate time; home to-morrow morning: answer." Ned was not obliged to wait long for a reply, for his father and mother were both at the telegraph office, anxiously waiting for futher intelligence.

"Thank God you are safe; all well at home *now!*" was the answer; and Ned hastened on board with it.

The young ladies were very much relieved by this message from the loved ones at home, and their spirits rose wonderfully after they had read it. The after-cabin was brilliantly lighted; Nellie played on the Chickering upright piano, — the gift of Madam Brandon, — and Ben Lunder sang his choicest songs; for he was a good singer. But the girls were very much fatigued after the labor and excitement of the day, and Neil considerably induced his companions to

retire at an early hour. At his suggestion, Ned had telegraphed that the party would not return till the next morning, so that they and their friends at home might sleep in peace. Except Prince, who was steering the Sea Foam, and Don John, who was the pilot of the Ocean-Born, all the guests turned in about ten o'clock, when the steamer was off Camden. Berry Owen had his watch below, while Neil remained in the pilot-house with Don John. At half past twelve the captain let go the anchor off the boat-builder's wharf in Belfast. In another half hour every soul on board was asleep.

As early as five o'clock in the morning some of the people on board of the steamer were stirring; but it was seven o'clock when the young ladies appeared, and eight when Neil and Don John turned out.

The beautiful steam yacht had been discovered by the people on shore, and a score of boats had visited her before breakfast. The morning meal was almost as elaborate as the supper on the preceding evening, and it was heartily enjoyed by the party.

“Now, Captain Brandon, we must go on

shore, or our folks will be worrying about us again," said Nellie Patterdale, as they retired from the table. "We are ever so much obliged to you for your kindness."

"O, no. I am the party obliged, Miss Patterdale," gallantly replied Neil. "I am sorry to have you go; but the boats of the steamer are at your disposal."

"And your humble servant, also," added Ben Lunder. "I hope I shall have the pleasure of navigating you to the blessed shore which is to receive you, in the mainto'-gallant quarter-boat."

"Thank you, Mr. Lunder."

"I pull the foreto'-starboard oar."

"All right, Ben. You and I will pull the ladies ashore," added Neil.

"Thanks, noble captain! There is a party headed for the steamer," replied Ben, pointing to a boat in which were a lady and two gentlemen.

"My father and mother!" exclaimed Nellie.

"And my father," said Kate Bilder.

In a few moments the boat was alongside. Ned and Nellie were affectionately greeted by their parents, and Captain Bilder folded Kate

in his arms, exhibiting the most intense emotion as he did so. The latter had been in New York for a week, and had only returned the day before, just in time to hear the alarming intelligence concerning his absent daughter. Though he had been away a week, he seemed to display more emotion than the occasion called for. Captain Bilder was very pale and haggard, and it was evident to all that he had been suffering intensely, though it did not as yet appear that he had any greater cause for anxiety than the recent peril of Kate.

The visitors were duly and properly introduced to the officers of the steamer, after the first affectionate greetings had been exchanged. Then Ned and Nellie related their startling adventures at sea, and mentioned the handsome manner in which the shipwrecked party had been entertained on board of the Ocean-Born. Of course Captain Patterdale and his wife were very grateful. So, doubtless, was Captain Bilder; but he did not say so, and seemed to be rather absent-minded.

“Why don't you say something to the captain of the steamer, father?” said Kate, mortified by his silence.

“I beg your pardon, but I am very grateful for all the service you have rendered to my daughter,” added Captain Bilder, with sudden energy. “I am sure no one could appreciate your kindness more than I. But the fact is, I am in trouble just now. If you will excuse me, Captain — Captain —”

“Captain Brandon, father,” Kate interposed, helping him out.

“Brandon!” exclaimed Captain Bilder, with a start.

“Captain Neil Brandon,” interposed Ben Lunder.

“Neil Brandon!” repeated Captain Bilder. “Where did you get that name?”

“From my father,” replied Neil.

“What was his name?”

“Neil Brandon.”

“Where is he now?”

“He died twelve years ago.”

“It is very singular!” mused Captain Bilder.

“Where did he live?”

“In Philadelphia.”

“It’s the same name; but it can hardly be the same man.”

“The same as what, sir?” asked Neil, curiously.

“When I went to sea I had a mate of that name.”

“My father went to sea.”

“Indeed! It may have been the same. He was a good sailor. But, if you will excuse me, Captain Brandon, I will go on shore with Kate.”

“I hope we shall see you on board again, Miss Bilder.—And you, too, sir,” replied Neil.

“I’m afraid not.”

“Why, what’s the matter, father? How strange you seem to-day!” exclaimed Kate.

“I am in very great trouble, my child; but I am sorry only for you. I dare say you can visit the — the — the steamer again.”

“The Ocean-Born, father,” added Kate. “Isn’t it an odd name?”

“Ocean-Born!” exclaimed Captain Bilder, with another start.

“That is the name of the yacht, sir,” Neil explained.

“Ocean-Born! Why is she called by that name?”



“BRANDON!” EXCLAIMED CAPTAIN BILDER. Page 77.

“It was a fancy of my own,” answered Neil. “My friends liked the name, and so we christened her.”

“But why did you call her so?”

“For two reasons. We got the idea of a steam yacht when we were on the ocean, off Cape May; and therefore the idea was ocean-born. The other reason is, that I was born at sea, and sometimes my mother called me the Ocean-Born.”

“Very strange!” said Captain Bilder.

“Very strange, indeed!” added Kate, who seemed to understand her father, if no one else did.

“I don’t see anything very strange about it,” laughed Neil.

“If you will excuse us, Captain Brandon, we will endeavor to see you again. I have much to say to Kate now,” continued Captain Bilder, as he walked towards the gangway.

The father and daughter walked down the gangway steps into the boat, and the man at the oars pulled them ashore.

“What is the matter with Captain Bilder, father?” asked Nellie Patterdale, as soon as they had gone.

“He has been speculating in stocks for the last year, and to-day he is a ruined man,” replied Captain Patterdale, sadly shaking his head. “About a year ago he lost a considerable portion of his property by the failure of his brother in Baltimore, though he had enough left to afford him a handsome income. Instead of reducing his expenses, which were rather extravagant, he attempted to regain what he had lost. In order to save what he had invested, he was compelled to imperil all he had. The chances were against him, and when the current set the wrong way, everything he had went by the board. Even his house and furniture are mortgaged for all they are worth.”

“I am sorry for poor Kate,” said Minnie Darling.

“And we are all sorry for Captain Bilder,” added Captain Patterdale. “He is a noble-hearted, generous man, and everybody regrets his misfortune. At fifty, without a dollar in the world, he must commence life anew.”

“I hope Kate won’t have to leave the Dorcas Club, we shall miss her so much,” said Nellie.

After Captain Bilder's misfortunes had been fully discussed, the visitors from the shore were shown over the steamer; and they bestowed many commendations upon the elegance and convenience of her accommodations. Ben Lunder had something to say all the time, and Captain Patterdale, senior, was rather pleased with his humor, encouraging him by laughing at his travesty of nautical terms.

"This is the mizzen to'gallant fo'castle," said Ben, as the party descended to the apartment where the deck-hand was quartered.

"It seems to be a very comfortable place," replied Captain Patterdale.

"Very comfortable, sir, except when the steamer rolls entirely over, like a log in a mill-pond, as she did early this morning; and then it makes a fellow's head swim, as it did mine, though I am a sailor from the heel of my bobstay to the crown of my sky-scraper. I occupy the foreto'-port berth on the mainto'-starboard side."

"Precisely so, Mr. Lunder," laughed the old ship-master. "One can readily identify it from your description."

“Well, any one who has been to sea can, though it might bother a land-lubber,” added Ben, scratching his head. “Before I went to sea, I used to get terribly mixed with the sea slang in the dime novels. It takes an old salt like me to understand and reel ’em off. I can do it now, though sometimes it takes all the half-hitches out my jaw-tackle to get ’em off.”

“How long have you been to sea, Mr. Lunder?” asked the captain.

“It’s about four days now, I think. I haven’t overhauled my log-book, but I believe it was four days this morning.”

“You have made remarkable progress in that time, for I have known old men, who had been at sea forty years, that could not talk half as salt as you do,” added the ship-master.

“But I give my whole mind to it, sir. I am the deck hand of the Ocean-Born, a place of great responsibility, as you are aware; and I give my undivided attention to the duties of the position. But the fore-royal scuttle gapes for our exit.”

The visitors returned to the deck. By this time the boat which had conveyed Captain Bil-

der and Kate to the shore had returned, and the Patterdales began to make their adieus. All the officers were engaged to dine at the elegant mansion of the retired ship-master.

“I depend upon seeing you, Mr. Lunder,” said the captain; “and I hope you will bring your nautical vocabulary with you.”

“I shall, certainly; in fact, I can hardly express myself without it now,” replied Ben. “But, I beg your pardon, we were to have the honor of pulling the ladies ashore in the main-to’-gallant quarter-boat. I wish them to see how well I can handle the foreto’-starboard oar.”

“Your vanity shall be gratified, Mr. Lunder,” interposed Minnie Darling.

“Thanks.”

“But it seems a little anomalous to call a deck-hand *Mr.* Lunder,” laughed Captain Patterdale.

“I am only called so by lollipops and land-lubbers,” replied Ben. “The old salts on board never call me *mister*—do they, Neil?”

“Never.”

“I am Bounding Billow Ben; but, as this name is as long as the coach-whip of the foreto’-bowsprit, they call me Ben for short.”

Captain Patterdale and his wife embarked in the shore boat; and when it had pulled away, the starboard quarter-boat was hauled up to the steps.

“Allow me to h’ist you in, Miss Darling,” said Ben, politely.

“No, I thank you, Bounding Billow Ben,” replied she. “I prefer to h’ist myself in.”

“I beg your pardon; but I only used the nautical expression for ‘assist,’” added Ben, as she took his offered hand.

“I must say I don’t think the expression is well chosen, when addressed to a young lady.”

“I acknowledge the error of my briny tongue; and I repent in ash-cloth and sashes.”

The ladies were seated in the stern-sheets, and the captain and deck-hand took their places on the thwarts.

“Where, O, where is the weather-mizzen row-lock?” asked Ben.

“Made fast with a lanyard there,” replied Neil.

“By the weather or the lee lanyard? Be explicit, great captain. Is it the skysail lanyard, or the foreto’-mizzen lanyard?”

“There it is,” added Neil, pointing to a string leading down from the rail to the ceiling.

“I see it not. I see the foreto'-royal yard, the main-yard, the back-yard, and the front yard; but I don't see any lanyard.”

“You don't know what a lanyard is, Ben,” laughed the captain. “That string that comes out of the hole for the rowlock.”

“That's not kind of you, Neil,” exclaimed the deck-hand, fixing a lugubrious gaze upon the captain. “It is not kind of you to challenge my knowledge of sea things before these ladies. I am an old sea dog, crusted all over with salt, and my tongue has been in the pickle for four days. It's cruel! it's ungrateful! Where would you have been, if I hadn't stood by the foreto'-backstay, when the main-royal moon-raker went by the board?”

“True, Ben. Forgive me.”

“Freely, great captain. To err is human; to forgive is the highest duty of an old ocean monster like me, who has sported for four days in the eel grass and among the dolphins. Lot's wife was only a little salt compared with me. Now I'll top up this lanyard, and bend on the weather rowlock.”

Ben inserted the rowlock, and shipped his oar. He was one of the college rowists, and certainly he did not lack in skill. He and Neil pulled very well together; but they had hardly gone a length from the steamer before Ben dropped his car, stood up in the boat, and elevated both hands.

“My heyes! Shiver my topsail boom!” exclaimed he.

“What’s the matter, Ben?” demanded Neil, rather impatiently.

“Dowse my tarry top-lights! Break my benders, and mash my mizzen to’-gallant mud-hook! Grind my ground-tackle, and slush down my starboard tacks!” roared the deck-hand.

“What ails you, Ben?”

“Don’t you see? Open up your dead-lights, and glance out of your port peeper.”

At this moment, three boats of the Dorcas Club, which had been concealed by the steamer, dashed up to the Ocean-Born, with their oars up. Ben, being in the bow, had seen them first, and filled the air with his mongrel slang.

“Here are three of our boats!” said Minnie Darling.

“Three of them!” ejaculated Ben. “Otto of roses! essence of peppermint, and extract of new-mown clover! Mine eyes have seen, and mine heart is gladdened!”

“There’s the Undine,” said Nellie.

“Oon-di-neh!” gasped Ben. “Bright Paracelsist vision! Haste to her ere she sinks beneath the glittering wave!”

“Why, what’s the matter, Bounding Billow Ben?” laughed Minnie.

“Five nymphs of the sea, and all in the same boat! Five Undines come up from the shadowy deep to ravish our mortal senses!”

“And the Fairy!” said Nellie.

“The Fairy! O, my! Rained down from Cloudland!”

“And the Psyche!” added Minnie.

“Psyche! Hold me down, Neil. I am Cupid.”

“Stupid, you mean,” replied the captain.

“Both — stupefied by the nymphs that dawn upon our earth-born eyes.”

Certainly the club boats were beautiful; and in the deck-hand’s estimation the young ladies, dressed in their uniform of blue, with their

saucy straw hats, turned up on one side, were infinitely more beautiful. They came alongside the quarter-boats, anxious to hear about the wreck of the Sea Foam. Neil and Ben were introduced, and shook hands with the whole fifteen in the boats. The story was told by Nellie, and the three clubs dashed away again.

“All the boats will be out at three o’clock this afternoon,” said Minnie.

“Then I shall go up finally and forever,” groaned Ben. “See them! They look like Fairies, Undines, and Psyches.—Is this sea water under us, Miss Darling?”

“Certainly it is.”

“I didn’t know but it might be cream, nectar, honey, an ocean of Lubin’s extracts, or something of that sort. Of course those boats are made of sugar.”

“I think not: they would melt if they were.”

“I shall melt as it is,” replied Ben, bending to his oar. “How they go it, like a boom through a bobstay!”

In a moment the boat was at the wharf, and the young ladies were assisted up the steps.

“Good by,” said Nellie. “But we shall see you at dinner.”

“ We shall call upon all the ladies who have been our guests before we leave,” replied Neil.

“ You must not leave for a week yet. You must go with us on our excursion up the river.”

“ I shall be glad to do so.”

The boat pulled back to the Ocean-Born, and all hands hastened to dress for dinner.

CHAPTER V.

THE LOST CHILD.

NEIL BRANDON and Ben Lunder were soon ready to dine in the elegant mansion of Captain Patterdale, though the deck of the Ocean-Born was crowded with visitors from the shore, who had come off to see the beautiful craft. The cabins were thrown open to their inspection, and every attention was bestowed upon them by the officers and crew. The Sea Foam had been towed to Don John's wharf early in the morning, and the boat-builder and his men were hard at work making a new mast for her, so that she could join the cruise of the clubs up the river.

"I beg your pawdon," said a young man wearing a white "stove-pipe" hat, stepping up to Ben Lunder, as he came out of the cabin, dressed in black for the great occasion of the day.

The stranger was a young man of not more than nineteen. He was dressed in fashionably shaped garments, though one skilled in the draper's art would have seen that the dry goods of which they were composed were of the cheapest material. The style was in the cut, rather than in the quality of the goods. The coat, pants, and vest were of a very light color—a cross between yellow and white. At a little distance they looked as if they were made of light-colored chamois skins. He wore white socks with patent leather shoes, and on his white “stove-pipe” hat was a weed not more than three inches wide, worn because it was the fashion, and not because he had “lost any friend,” or had any to lose. His neck-tie was of glaring red, “stunningly” ample, and as prominent to the view as a red light on a snow-bound coast. He wore an immense vest chain, which, however, was composed of base metal; and in genteel society the owner never pulled out the second-hand silver watch attached to it, purchased at a pawn-broker's for four dollars and twenty-five cents. Of course, the impression produced by this young gentleman when

he dawned upon the vision of the beholder was tremendous. And yet he was a young man of great aspirations.

“I beg your pawdon,” said he, politely touching his white hat to the deck-hand of the Ocean-Born.

Ben surveyed him from head to foot; and residing most of the year in New York city, he knew the genus well.

“Well, my hearty, what can I do for you?” he replied, in a voice which seemed to come from the depths of his lower stomach.

“Am I wight in supposing that you belong to this—aw—this ship?” inquired the “swell,” with an effort.

“You aw—quite wight. I am the foreto’-starboard deck-hand of this ship. My name is Benjamin Lunder, otherwise Bounding Billow Ben, at your service. Who are you, my hearty?”

“I beg your pawdon: allow me to pwesent my cawd:” and the young gentleman gracefully offered the paste-board, which was big enough to be an invitation to a grand diplomatic ball in Paris, Vienna, or Berlin.

“Arthur McGusher, with Hewlins and Heavy-

bones, Dry Goods, forty-nine twenty-eight Broadway, New York," said Ben, reading from the card. "Aw, then you are a doo-wum-aw, Mr. Gush-aw?"

"No, saw; I am not a dwummaw, if by this wawd you mean a commawcial twaveller, as we call them in our house. I am a salesman, saw."

"Glad to know you, Mr. McGusher. You look all right and tight about the toplights. I suppose you want to ship as a boiler-heaver or a lobster-boy?"

"No, saw," protested Mr. McGusher, with a slight blush, and no little indignation in his tones. "I have no desiaw to ship."

"I am glad of it, for we are all full just now."

"I only wish to make an inquiwy."

"An inquiwy!" exclaimed Ben. "What's the use of making one, when you can buy them ready made? We have nineteen of them stowed away in the mizzen-run, with the main royal hatches battened down over them."

"I beg your pawdon; I spoke of an inquiwy," interposed the visitor.

“So did I, my hearty. You can’t play that on your uncle, who is an old salt, pickled down in four days of hard sea service,” added Ben, shaking his head.

“I beg your pawdon; I only wish to ask a question. Do you —”

“A question! You said you wanted to make an inquiry. I beg *your* pardon, but you must speak in plain English to us old salts. We haven’t much larnin’ in shore things! ‘To be, or not to be,’ — that’s the question.”

“Not exactly my question, Mr. — Mr. —”

“Bounding Billow Ben; that’s my name; and when I sneeze the salt spray flies.”

“I beg your pawdon, Mr. Bounding Bennow Bill,” said the visitor, with a soft smile.

“Bounding Bennow Bill! S’death, sir! Do you mean to insult me?”

“I beg your paw —”

“My paw shall fall upon you like a hurricane upon a flying-jib topsail, if you trifle with my name. I am a sailor, sir! I was cradled on the foamy brine — four days ago.”

“I weally beg your pawdon.”

“All right; now heave ahead, my hearty.”

“ I beg your pawdon, but — ”

“ You did that once before. Now clear away your ground-tackle, let go your stunsail bobstay, overhaul your jib-boom, clap a jaw-tackle on your fore-stoppers, and let go that question,” blustered Ben.

“ I beg you paw — ”

“ Stung in hays again! Good by, Mr. McGusher. It's no use. Your yarn is longer than the hitch of the foreto'-bobstay;” and the deck-hand moved towards the accommodation steps, where the rest of the dinner party were waiting for him.

“ I beg your pawdon — do you — ”

“ Don't do it again, you beggar!”

“ Make an end of it, Ben,” shouted Neil, on the quarter.

“ Do you know Captain Bilder, Mr. Bounding Billow?” said the visitor, desperately.

“ Bravo, Mr. McGusher! You have achieved it, like a good ship rolling into port with her sheets shaking, and her stunsail boom flying alow and aloft. Captain Bilder?” mused Ben.

“ Do you happen to have the other half-hitch of his cognominal appellation?”

“ I beg your — ”

“ Come, now, don't! That's played out; it's no longer original.”

“ I did not quite undawstand you.”

“ Stand by with your ear ports open tight. You spoke of Captain Bilder. I asked for the other half-hitch of his cognominal appellation? ”

“ His what? ” gasped Mr. McGusher, aghast!

“ His other half-hitch — the complementary portion of his cognominal appellation, you know.”

“ Weally, Mr. Bounding Billow — ”

“ It's no use; if you won't answer me, I can't keep the high and mighty captain of the Ocean-Born waiting for me.”

“ I don't undawstand you, Mr. — Billow.”

“ O, you don't! Well, I want Captain Bilder's sky-scraper boom; the fore-hitch of his main-royal cognomen; the fore-royal smoke-stack of the after-mizzen boiler. Do you understand that? ”

“ I confess I do not; I am no sailaw; ” replied the visitor, peacefully giving up the conundrum.

“ I see you are not. What's Captain Bilder's other name? ”

“O, Wichard!” exclaimed Mr. McGusher, smiling as sweetly as a rose in June, when Ben’s meaning dawned upon him.

“Wichard! Begins with a W—does it?”

“No, saw; not at all; Wichard begins with an R.”

“O, Richard! Richard’s himself again, as he ought to be if his name ever was Wichard. Captain Bilder was on board the Ocean-Born, but he hauled his wind, let go tacks and sheets, and bore away.”

“Bore away?” queried the visitor. “That means that he—”

“Precisely so, Mr. McGusher. You understand it perfectly,” added Ben, moving off.

“Bore away?” repeated the inquirer.

“Just as you do,” replied Ben, as a Parthian arrow.

“You don’t petter wait all day, Pen, ven we goes to meet mit die ladies—don’t you?” said Karl, as the deck hand leaped into the boat.

“Such a swell!” laughed Ben, as he took his place at the oar. “Now heave ahead at your weather skysail oar, Karl.”

The boat pulled for the shore, leaving Mr.

Peter Blossom, dressed in his best clothes, in charge of the steamer. He was abundantly competent to do the honors of such an occasion; and he was as polite as half a dozen French dancing-masters.

“I beg your pawdon, but can you tell me where I may find Captain Bilder,” said Mr. McGusher, addressing the cook.

“He has gone on shore,” replied Mr. Blossom.

“You will find him at his house,” said one of the visitors, indicating the locality of the captain’s residence.

Mr. McGusher called his boatman, and embarked for the shore. As the party from the Ocean-Born will do very well at the elegant mansion of Captain Patterdale without any attention from us, we will go with the New York swell to the residence of Kate’s father; or rather we will go a little in advance, leaving him to find his way as best he can by inquiring.

Captain Bilder had told Kate all about it; that he was absolutely ruined in fortune; that he had lost everything, and was not worth a

single dollar. He must give up his fine house to his creditors, sell his horses and carriages, and move into a humble tenement. Kate heard him with no little emotion; but she was a brave girl. She realized how much her father was suffering; how it grieved him to tell her that she could no longer live in an elegant house, ride behind a pair of horses, or even a single one. Her only thought was to comfort her father, and she told him she didn't care a straw for herself; she was only sorry for him. Full of hope and courage, she was ready to grapple with the situation, which her age and experience did not fully fit her to understand.

“I can teach music, teach a school, or do something else to support myself, father,” said Kate.

“It hasn't come to that yet, Kate, for I am still able to support you,” replied Captain Bilder, with a faint smile. “I have lost all my own property, but I have lost that of no other person. I am still an honest man, and my friends have not lost confidence in me. When I had lost all, I did not run in debt. When I have sold the horses, carriages, and furniture

we no longer need, I hope to be able to pay all I owe in this city. Then I shall be a free man, though a poor one."

"I am glad it is no worse," added Kate.

"It is bad enough; but I am still an honest man, and I shall pay every dollar I owe."

Some people would have regarded the honest captain as a sort of fanatic, because he paid the debts incurred in his speculation, rather than cheat his creditors or continue his operations after all his means were gone. No doubt he was a remarkably honest man for these degenerate times.

"What shall you do, father?" asked Kate.

"I shall go to sea again after I have closed my affairs here, or as soon as I can get a ship," replied her father. "I am not an old man, and I hope to retrieve myself yet. I must find you a good place to board, and I hope you will make the best of our altered circumstances."

"O, I shall, father! You need not worry about me."

"I shall be happy if you are, my child," added the captain, wiping away a tear, for he felt that the blow fell almost entirely on his daughter.

He was old and tough; she was young and tender, and had been brought up in affluence and luxury. It would be hard for her, and he wept only for her sake. They talked longer about the future, but at last the conversation turned upon the steamer which had brought Kate to her home.

“You said you used to call your little boy the Ocean-Born, father,” said Kate.

“I did, sometimes, as a pleasantry. He was born on the China Seas. I named him after my best friend, who was part owner of the ship in which I sailed; and his initials were those of ‘Ocean-Born,’” replied Captain Bilder. “However, anybody else may have used the term as well as I. It was more strange that the young man in charge of the steam-yacht should have had the name of my mate.”

“It is, certainly, very odd; and he says that Neil Brandon was his father’s name, as well as his own.”

“Perhaps his father was my mate,” mused Captain Bilder. “He was a good man in the main, but violent and revengeful at times. I will inquire into the matter when I see the young man again.”

“I have not heard you speak of my little brother for years, father,” continued Kate.

“You know the story, my child,” replied her father, with something like a shudder.

“Not the whole of it; or, at least, I have forgotten part of it,” she added; and perhaps the incidents of the steam yacht had given her some new idea.

“It is a very sad story, and the loss of the little boy was one of the most afflicting experiences of my whole life. It was only equalled at the death of your mother, when you were only three years old.”

“Won’t you tell me all about my little brother once more, and I never will ask you to do so again, for I know it is very sad to you?” asked Kate.

“Perhaps it is well that I should repeat the story to you, for I must go to sea again in a few weeks.”

Kate shuddered, for her father meant that he might never return, though he did not say this.

“I wish you to know all the facts in the case, and when you have time, I wish you would

write them down, and let me correct the paper before I go away."

"I will, father. I will take notes as you go along," added the daughter, seating herself at the little cabinet desk in the library, where she wrote her school exercises and her letters.

"Your little brother's name was Oscar Blake Bilder," the captain began. "He was born, as I said, on the China Seas. I could give you the latitude and longitude by referring to my old log-books. You were born in New York, when Oscar was two years old. Your mother was never willing that I should leave her, even for a few weeks; but when I was to make a voyage around the world, she insisted upon going with me. My last voyages were in the *Coriolanus*. I owned half of her, and Oscar Blake the other half, and your mother went with me in her when you were only eighteen months old. She had a nurse for the children, whose name was Marguerite, a French woman, whom I engaged in New Orleans, where I loaded the *Coriolanus* with cotton for Liverpool. She was a capital nurse, and we thought everything of her.

“ The mate of the ship was Neil Brandon. I shipped him in New York, and never knew where he belonged. I had a large, roomy cabin, and we were as happy at sea as we should have been on shore. Brandon had been my mate for two voyages before this one, and I had every confidence in him. He was the best mate I ever had till Marguerite came on board, and I had often told him he should be the master of the *Coriolanus* as soon as I left her, which I intended to do after this voyage. I soon discovered that he was enamoured of the nurse, who was always on deck with the children in fine weather. She was about twenty-five years old, and a very good girl indeed. The mate began to neglect his duties, and Marguerite to be less careful of the children. Between them both I was afraid that some accident would happen to you and your little brother. I sharply reproved Brandon; he did not take my rebuke kindly, but was sulky, cross, and indifferent about his duties. Finally, I removed him at Hong Kong, putting in his place the master of an Indiaman who had lost his ship in a typhoon. Brandon staid about the ship till we were ready

to sail for home, and insisted upon returning in her. I told him he could make the voyage only as a seaman. He only desired to be near Marguerite; and this was the very thing I could not permit, for I felt that his presence endangered the lives of my children,—as your mother was then an invalid. I took him before the consul, and formally discharged him for insubordination and gross neglect of duty. I left him at Hong Kong, and though I never saw him again, I learned that he had arrived in New York three days before me when the *Coriolanus* reached that port. Before we parted, he swore he would ruin me.

“Captain Waters, who had come from China with me as my mate, wanted a ship, and I decided to give him the *Coriolanus* at New Orleans, where she was to load with cotton for Liverpool. I was obliged to go to New Orleans in order to settle up my business there. I wanted to leave your mother and the children in New York, but she would not think of a separation even for a month. She was in better health at sea than on shore, and felt quite at home in the cabin. During our stay in the great city, Mar-

guerite was absent nearly every evening, and I have no doubt she met Brandon. We had a fine trip to New Orleans, but I saw that your mother was rapidly failing, and I was in a hurry to return to our home in New York, where I could obtain the best medical attendance for her. She preferred to go by steamer to Cincinnati, and we started.

“I had the two best state-rooms on the boat. Your mother and I had one, and you were with us; and the other was occupied by Marguerite and your little brother. On the first night of the trip, I was awakened at midnight by a shrill scream from the nurse. I rushed into her room, and found her crying, groaning, and tearing her hair like an insane person. Finally, she told me that your little brother was gone. She was nearly distracted, and so was I, for I could not make her tell me what had happened. I had seen my little boy in his berth at eight o'clock, and kissed him — it was the last time. After a while I wrung it out of Marguerite that she had got up to shut the door of the state-room, — for the evening had been intensely hot, and I had told her to leave it partly open.

When she went to his berth to put more clothes on him, she found the boy was not there; and then she had screamed, she was so terrified. She had no idea what had become of him. She had retired herself at about ten o'clock, just as the boat was leaving a wood-yard, where it had stopped for half an hour to 'wood up,' and had immediately dropped asleep. The chill air, caused by a change in the weather, had waked her, she said; and this was all she knew about the matter.

"I called the captain, and I think every person on board was aroused by the search instituted for the little boy. He certainly was not on board of the steamer. The captain ran back to the wood yard where the boat had stopped. There was nothing there but the cabin of the woodman, and he had not seen the child, or any one else except the deck-hands of the steamer. Your little brother had either left his room and fallen into the river, or some one had stolen him. I shall not attempt to describe the anguish of your mother in her feeble condition, or my own sufferings as I thought of my darling boy. We left the boat when she arrived at

Baton Rouge, the next morning, and I obtained a steamer with a force of twenty men, in order to renew the search. Not to dwell on the details, I spent a fortnight on the river. There was not a white man or a negro within twenty miles of that wood-yard who was not seen and questioned; but no clew whatever could be obtained to the lost child.

“I returned to New York only when the alarming condition of your mother’s health absolutely required; but I employed the best detectives in the country to continue the search. I thought if the boy had been drowned, his little form might be found; but it never was. If he had been stolen, it had been done in order to obtain money of me; but I was ready to give all that was asked to recover my darling child. I watched with this hope for years, but I have never heard anything to encourage me.”

“What do you think became of him, father?” asked Kate, breathless with interest.

“I have to believe that he was drowned, and that his little body was carried out to sea by the swift current, or, or—or that something else happened to it,” replied Captain Bilder,

with a shudder ; but he meant that it had been consumed by the fishes.

There was a pause for some time ; but at last the captain went to a bock-case and took from a drawer an envelope.

CHAPTER VI.

THE LONG-LOST.

“**W**HAT became of Marguerite, father?” asked Kate, as Captain Bilder seated himself in the arm-chair, with the envelope in his hand.

“Shortly after our return to New York, your mother died,” replied her father. “Her grief at the loss of her little boy aggravated her disease, so that the skill of the doctors was unavailing. She died a month after her arrival in the city. We had a house and Marguerite remained to take care of you. I employed a Mrs. Banford as my housekeeper, who came to Belfast when I bought this place. She lived with me five years. But I suppose you do not remember her.”

“No, father, I do not.”

“Marguerite came here with us; but she was

not contented, and wanted to go back to her friends in New Orleans. She was a faithful nurse, and I desired very much to retain her. I could not blame her for the loss of my little boy, for she seemed to be almost as much grieved as the child's mother. The door of the state-room was left open by my own order, and I could only blame myself. Marguerite would not stay in Belfast, and I had to consent to her leaving. She left for New York with the intention of going to New Orleans. I suppose she did; but I never heard a word from her from that day to this."

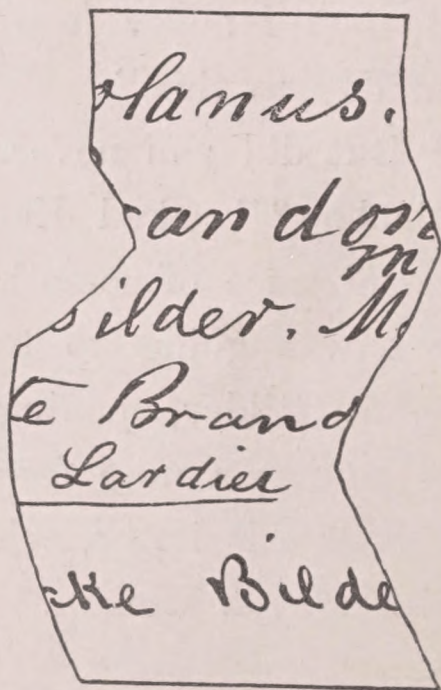
"But did you never hear anything about the little boy?" asked Kate, who had an indistinct remembrance of something.

"I was going to tell you, my child," added Captain Bilder, opening the envelope in his hand, and taking a note from it. "Ten years ago I received this letter, which appears to have been written by a woman. I will read it to you.

"CAPTAIN BILDER: Your little boy was not drowned. He is still liveing. Some time he might go to you. He is well brought up. He lives with rich folkes, who love him verry

much. They will do everything for him. He thinks his father is dead. I said some time he might go to you. I do not know as he will. If he does, he will give you one of three peaces of a card, which have six lines of writing on it. I send to you the middle peace of the card. Your son will fetch to you the left hand peace. On your son's peace it is written where you will get the third peace. Your son may never go to you. If he does go, you will know it is your son by the first peace of card, which just fits your peace.'

“There was no signature to this note, and it was evidently written in a disguised hand. It was penned by an illiterate person, or by one who pretended to be so. A few words are spelled wrong. Here is the piece of card which came in the letter,” continued Captain Bilder, as he handed the piece of paste-board to Kate.



It was irregular in its shape, as may be seen in the diagram. It had been cut in the three

pieces after the six lines had been written upon it, and was cut so as to divide most of the words and some of the letters. When the other parts should be produced, it would be impossible to make any mistake in regard to their identity.

“I see the six lines of writing,” said Kate, with the most intense interest.

“Yes; and I can supply the words and letters which are on the other parts of the card,” added her father.

“The first line is the name of your ship — ‘Coriolanus;’ the next is ‘andon.’”

“Neil Brandon, without a doubt; and the ‘m’ under it is the first letter of the word mate.”

“The third line must be your name, father; but there is another m after it.”

“Yes, a capital, the initial of ‘Master.’ The fourth line is not so clear. The second word is ‘Brandon,’ and the ‘te’ is the end of ‘Marguerite.’”

“Then the mate married the nurse?”

“I suppose he did. The fifth line has only a single word, underscored, which was Mar-

guerite's last name. The word 'formerly' may be before it, or something implying the same thing. If the card means anything, we must infer that Marguerite Lardier was married to Brandon."

"But were they married, father?"

"I don't know. She never said a word to me or your mother about Brandon, after he was discharged. Whether she saw him in New York, while we were there, I have no means of knowing. When this letter came to me, ten years ago, I had a long talk with Mrs. Banford about it, for she was my housekeeper then."

"Where is she now?" asked Kate.

"She went to California to live with her brother, about a year after this letter came. I have never heard a word from her or of her."

"The last line is written back-handed," added the daughter.

"That must be the little boy's name in full — 'Oscar Blake Bilder.' Whoever wrote this card knows all about me and my affairs."

"Who do you think it was, father?"

"I can form no idea. After the search I made on the Mississippi River, I can hardly

believe the boy was stolen, as the letter and card imply that he was. At first I was inclined to think it was a scheme to extort money from me. But as no one has yet appeared with the first part of the card, I concluded long ago that it was a heartless joke by some enemy, who knew the story of my life."

"Perhaps Marguerite wrote the letter," suggested Kate.

"She had no motive for doing so."

"Possibly she had. Do you know her handwriting?"

"I never saw any of it. I don't even know that she could write."

"This card indicates that she became the wife of Neil Brandon, your mate," continued Kate. "He may have induced her to write it."

"It may be. And I am confident that the one who wrote the note also wrote the card; for, though the hand is disguised, certain letters are just alike in both."

"You said Neil Brandon swore he would ruin you if he could," added Kate.

"I am ruined; but he did not do it."

"But perhaps he stole your little boy."

“I have thought of that before; but I can hardly reconcile the deed with what I know of the man, or with the facts of the case. Perhaps he was wicked enough to do it; but if he had been near the Mississippi, I think the detectives would have obtained some clew to him.”

“A young man at the door wishes to see you, sir,” said a servant, at the door of the library.

“Who is he?” asked Captain Bilder.

“I don’t know, sir.”

“Tell him I am busy, and can’t see him now,” added the captain.

The servant retired, but presently returned with Mr. McGusher’s ample pasteboard in her hand.

“This is the young man’s card, he says; and he has come all the way from New York to see you on very important business,” said she.

“Arthur McGusher,” added Captain Bilder, reading from the card. “He seems to be a drummer. But send him in, for I believe I have finished my story, Kate.”

“A drummer? What’s that, father?” asked the daughter; but before the captain could explain, Mr. McGusher was shown into the room.

“I beg your pawdon,” the young gentleman began, with an extensive flourish and a very reverential bow; “have I the honaw to addwess Captain Bilder?”

“That’s my name; and you are Mr. Arthur McGusher, I suppose,” added the ship-master, glancing at the card in his hand.

“I have the honaw,” said the representative of Hewlins & Heavybones, with another profound obeisance.

“Take a seat, Mr. McGusher.”

Mr. McGusher took a seat. Possibly he was a student of art, and had critically studied the positions of all the sitting statues, and all the figures in the pictures, though it is not probable that he had done so. At any rate, his posture was not entirely accidental. He arranged himself gracefully in the chair, as though he had practised sitting down in the attic of the cheap boarding-house where he lived. He wore yellow gloves, and carried a light cane. Kate looked at him with the same interest she would have bestowed upon the funny actor in a play; and, in spite of the sadness with which her father’s story had filled her, she was inclined to laugh, or at least to smile.

“Perhaps I had better inform you in the beginning that I am not in business of any kind, as you seem to be a drummer,” said Captain Bilder, when the visitor had adjusted himself to his own satisfaction in the chair.

“Not a dwummaw, saw—I beg your pawdon,” promptly interposed Mr. McGusher. “I do not wait upon you as the wepwesentative of the commawcial house in which I have the honaw to be engaged. My business is entirely pawsonal and pwivate.”

“Well, sir, what is your business?”

“I will pwoceed with it without any unneces-sawy delay. You had a son, Captain Bilder.”

Kate was startled, the ship-master frowned, and the visitor paused to note the effect of his sudden announcement.

“Who told you I had?” demanded the captain.

“One who knows, saw.”

“Who was he?” added Captain Bilder, sharply, for he regarded the young man’s answer as an evasion.

“I beg your pawdon; I don’t know, saw,” replied Mr. McGusher, rather disturbed by the sharp tone of the ship-master.

“You don’t know! Somebody told you, but you don’t know who!”

“I beg your pawdon; I didn’t say somebody *told* me. I received the information in a lettaw signed ‘One who Knows.’”

“An anonymous letter.”

“Anonymous, if you please, saw. I do not know who wote it. I did not wite it.”

“Where did you get it?”

“I found it in the stoaw one morning thwee weeks ago. It was addwessed to Mr. Awthur McGushaw which is my name.”

“Did it come to you by mail?”

“No, saw; it came by pwivate hand; at least, there was no post-mawk on it. The lettaw was a most extwaordinawy one.”

“You were informed in it that I had a son—were you?” asked Captain Bilder, wondering what the young fellow was driving at.

“Not in tawms, saw—only by infewence. The lettaw infawmed me that *I* was the son of Captain Wichard Bilder; and if I was your son, why, of course, you had a son. I think the infewence was justifiable,” replied Mr. McGusher, whose face wore a triumphant expression.

“The letter informed you that you were my son!” exclaimed Captain Bilder.

“That is pwecisely what it infawmed me,” answered the young man, taking from the breast pocket of his coat the letter. “I have it here, saw.”

“Let me see it.”

“I beg your pawdon: but will you pawmit me to wead it to you?”

“Let me see it first.”

“Will you pawdon me if I decline to do so for the pwesent? This lettaw is a very impawtant one to me.”

“It seems to be a very important one to me, also.”

“I beg your pawdon; but it is my pwopawty, and I pwefaw to wetain it for the pwesent. You are a stwangaw to me, Captain Bilder; though it seems to be dooced odd that one’s own fawther should be a stwanger to him; but I know you to be a vewy wespectable gentleman. As you are a stwangaw I don’t know that you evaw had a son. You have not said you had. If you nevaw had a son, why, of cawse, I can’t be your son, whatever One who Knows may wite to me.”

“Do let him read the letter, father,” Kate interposed, more willing than the ship-master that the visitor should proceed in his own way.

“Thank you, Miss Bildaw—I pvesume I have the honaw of speaking to Miss Bildaw, whom I should be pwoud to acknowledge as my sister,” said Mr. McGusher, with a graceful bow, and a smile as soft as the smiler’s head.

“Go on,” replied the captain.

“If you nevaw had a son, Captain Bildaw, of course it would be a waste of your valuable time for me to wead the letter,” suggested Mr. McGusher.

“I had a son, who is believed to have been drowned when he was four years old,” added the ship-master.

“Not ddowned, saw. I am that son,” said the young man, placing one of his yellow-gloved hands on the place where his heart belonged, and bestowing a look of unutterable affection upon the captain and his daughter.

“Read the letter!” said the ship-master, sternly.

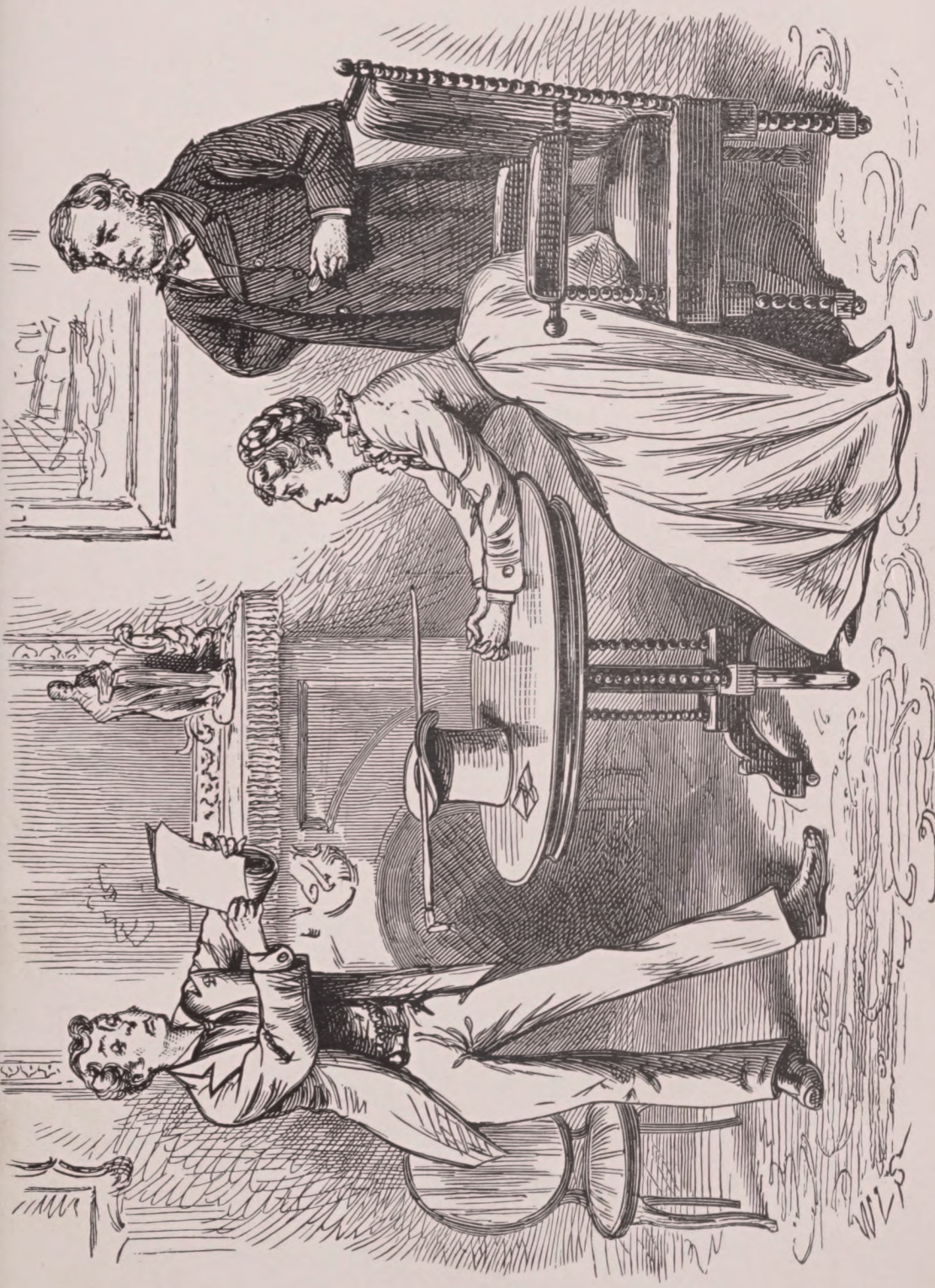
“I will wead it at once,” replied Mr. McGusher, opening the letter, and taking from it something which he placed in his vest pocket.

We shall give the letter as it was written, and not as the young man read it, for it would be quite impossible for dull types to give it any of the eloquent flourish he gave it. Mr. McGusher rose for the effort, and placed his hat and cane on a chair. Perhaps he could not be eloquent in a sitting posture, however graceful it might be. The letter was as follows:—

“MR. ARTHUR MCGUSHER. Dear Sir: I want to do justice to the living and the dead; but I have not the courage to face the indignation of those I have wronged, or to take the penalty of my transgression.

“The man whom you supposed to be your father was not your father. You were stolen from your parents when you were four years old. The one who did this is now dead—has been dead for many years. I am guilty only of concealing my knowledge of the truth. The name of the man who took you from a steamboat on the Mississippi River was Neil Brandon. He has been dead at least ten years. He carried you to England. He and his wife claimed you as their own child. He left you in Liverpool with a man of your name,—Mr. McGusher,—who came to America thirteen years ago. He told me all I know about you; and I ought to have told your real father; but I did not. I am guilty; but I hope to be forgiven.

“Captain Richard Bilder, who lives in Belfast, Maine, is your real father. I send you a piece



MR. MCGUSHER ROSE FOR THE EFFORT. Page 122.

of a card, which you will give to your father when you go to him. He will know what it means. You were stolen from your parents the first night after they left New Orleans. Neil Brandon did it. Your father is a very rich man, and I hope you will be happy with him. It will only be necessary to give your father the piece of card. He will know you are his son by this. I have kept this secret for many years. It has been like a coal of fire in my soul. If you ask how I know that you are the son of Captain Richard Bilder, of Belfast, Maine, I will answer that Mr. McGusher told me so on his death-bed. He said that Neil Brandon gave him a hundred pounds to take care of the boy till he was able to work and support himself. With this money he came to America. He boarded with me (a year, erased), and died in my house. I could not take care of you, and I sent you to the Orphan Asylum. But I have kept watch of you ever since. Some time I may make myself known to you; but I dare not do so yet. All that I have written is true; and I am

“ONE WHO KNOWS.”

Captain Bilder and Kate listened with the most intense interest to the reading of this rambling letter. Kate had suggested before that Neil Brandon might have stolen her little brother in revenge for being discharged from the *Coriolanus*, and thus losing the command of her at a future time. The explanation of the mystery

contained in the letter was plausible to her. Her father was silent, and was evidently weighing and comparing the statements made in the letter.

“I have finished the lettaw, saw,” said Mr. McGusher, who stood ready to throw himself into the arms of the ship-master, and more especially into the arms of his lovely daughter: but there was no demonstration on the part of either of them.

Captain Bilder did not even ask for the piece of the card alluded to in the epistle. He didn't get excited worth a cent. He didn't say a word about “my long-lost son, come to my arms!” Mr. McGusher could not understand his coolness and self-possession. It was not exactly the way a long-lost son ought to be received, in his opinion.

“How old are you, Mr. McGusher?” asked Captain Bilder, after a long silence.

“I don't know, saw. You ought to know bettaw than I,” replied the long-lost.

“How old do you think you are?”

“As neaw as I can figaw it, I am eighteen.”

“Where do you live when you are at home?”

“In New Yawk city.”

“What part of the city?”

“I bawd in Twenty-Second Stweet.”

“How long have you boarded there?”

“About thwee yeaws.”

“Will you let me see that letter?” asked Captain Bilder, extending his hand for the document.

“I beg your pawdon, saw. Some fellow in the Scwipchaw sold his bawthwight for a mess of potash. If his bawthwight was in the fawm of a lettaw like this, he oughtn’t to have sold it for all the potash in the wawld—not if the soap-boiling business was wuined by it. But you are a vewy wespectable pawson, Captain Bilder. If you will give me your wawd that you will westaw the lettaw to me, I will submit it for your inspection.”

“I will give it back to you,” answered the ship-master.

Captain Bilder examined the letter, Kate looking over his shoulder as he did so. It was in a woman’s handwriting, and it was plain that she was a person of some culture, for the spelling was good, and the capitals were rightly

used. The writer was a person of mature age. The repetitions and the rambling character of the letter were evidently intended, and the penmanship was hardly the writer's usual hand. But a person writing such a letter would naturally seek to conceal his agency in the matter.

"This was not written by the person who sent me the piece of card," said Captain Bilder, in a low tone, as he compared the two letters.

"But it is very strange," whispered Kate.

"Very strange; but I can't believe that fellow is my son."

"I don't wish to believe he is my brother," added Kate.

If Mr. McGusher heard any of this conversation, it was not intended for his ear; and, perhaps to avoid anything disagreeable, he sauntered over to a window which looked out upon the garden.

"This letter says you were sent to an Orphan Asylum," continued Captain Bilder, renewing the charge upon the long-lost.

"Yes, saw;" replied Mr. McGusher, resuming his chair in front of the ship-master and his daughter.

“What institution was it?”

“An Awphan Asylum where they take in small children who have no pawents — you know.”

“I know,” added the captain, biting his lip. “But 'what was the name of the institution?”

“The name?”

“Was it the New York Orphan Asylum, the Leake and Watts Orphan House, or the Colored Orphan Asylum?”

“Colored!” gasped Mr. McGusher. “I’m not a pawson of colaw, Captain Bildaw.”

“Was it either of the other institutions I mentioned?” demanded the ship-master.

“I don’t know, saw,” replied the long-lost, blankly.

“You don’t know?”

“I do not, saw. That lettaw is all the infawmation I have on the subject.”

“How long were you in the asylum?”

“I have no means of knowing.”

“Don’t you remember anything about it?”

“I wemember nothing about it, from which I infaw that I was taken from the institution at a vevy tendaw age.”

“Very tender, I should judge. In a word, Mr. McGusher, I wish to test the truth of the statements in this letter.”

“You are vewy cwitical, Captain Bilder.”

“Critical!” exclaimed the captain, angrily. “Do you think I am going to accept a monkey like you as my son on no better evidence than this letter?”

“Monkey! Is this the weception to give a son, when he comes home to the patawnal woof!” exclaimed Mr. McGusher, utterly disgusted.

“Again: this letter says your father is a very rich man. I want to say now that I have lost all my property. I am not worth a dollar in the world. If you should prove to be my son, which I grant is possible, you will have to go to work, as I must, and earn your own living.”

Mr. McGusher opened his eyes, and looked more disgusted than ever; but, concluding that the last appalling statement of his “long-lost father” was a joke, intended to test his filial sentiment, he did not retire from the field.

CHAPTER VII.

MR. MCGUSHER'S BAD MEMORY.

“CAPTAIN WICHARD BILDER, of Belfast, Maine, wich or poowah, you are my honawed fawther!” exclaimed Mr. Arthur McGusher. “I feel it in my blood and bones. It can’t be othawwise.”

“Perhaps it can.”

“Impawsible! If you are pooaw, so am I. Though I have seen bettaw days, I have been cwaddled in the lap of povawty. I know what it is to suffaw for the want of an opewa ticket. I know what it is to wear a pair of spwing twousaws late in the autumn. I know what it is to see fawst hawses, and not own them. I know how a pooaw man feels when he passes Delmonico’s up-town house.”

“It is very affecting, Mr. McGusher,” said Kate, solemnly.

“My fawther, if thou art pooaw, I will wawk with thee and faw thee!” gushed the long-lost.

“Very well, my boy; I shall go to sea, and I think you had better go into the fo’castle, crawl through the hawse-hole, as I did. I’ll make a sailor of you.”

“In the fo’cawstle! The smell of the taw would make me sick. But—”

“Never mind that now. I should like to look into your antecedents before I acknowledge you as my son,” interposed Captain Bilder.

“Had your long-lost son no mawks on his pawson? no mole under the left ear? no bawth-mawk on his right shouldaw?”

“Not a mark, that I know of; but his nose was entirely different from yours.”

“Have you no po’twait of the little one?”

“None.”

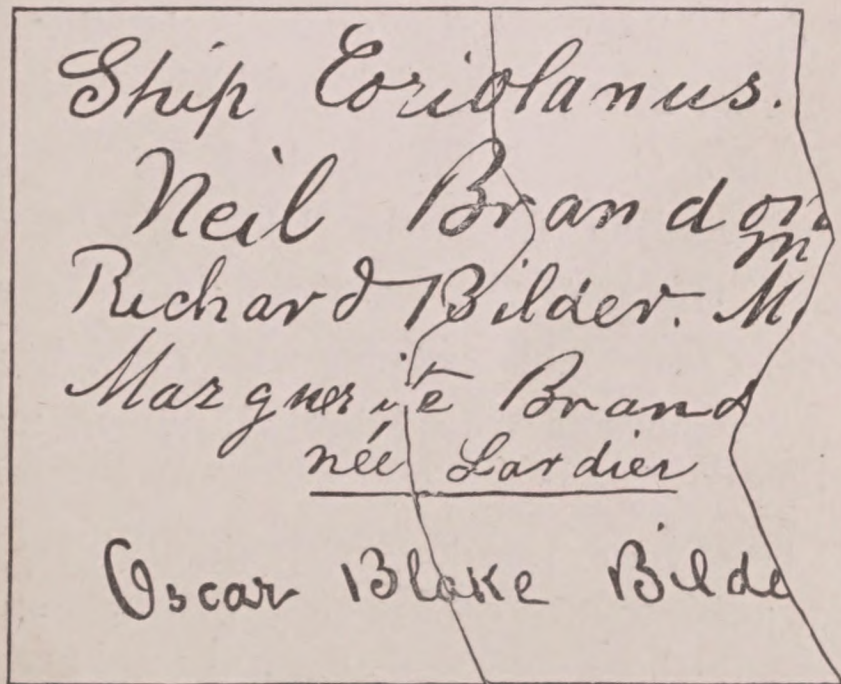
Mr. McGusher seemed to derive new strength and encouragement from these answers, and his face bore no expression of disappointment at the acknowledged absence of any means of identifying the long-lost.

“I must have changed in fawteen yeaws,” he added.

“Of course; though the shape of one’s nose undergoes no great alteration. Have you the card alluded to in the letter?” asked Captain Bilder.

“I have the card;” and Mr. McGusher took the pasteboard from his pocket.

He laid it upon the table. It was the left-hand piece, and the ship-master placed the middle part by the side of it. The edge of the one exactly fitted the irregular edge of the other. The material of both portions was the same; the writing was identical; and the words and letters



divided where the card was cut fitted each other perfectly. Captain Bilder and Kate were very

much surprised. The middle portion of the card had come into the ship-master's possession ten years before. After the lapse of this long period, the second piece had come, fully answering the description of it contained in the letter enclosing the first.

"Turn the left-hand piece over, father. The letter that came with the middle piece says the name of the person who had the right hand piece would be found on the back of the one your son was to bring to you," said Kate.

Captain Bilder turned the part indicated, and found an address written upon it, in the same hand as the first letter.

" 'Borden Green & Co., Bankers, New York,' " said he, reading from the back of the card. "Borden Green & Co. were my bankers when I went to sea. This business was certainly managed by some one who knew all about my affairs."

"I beg your pawdon, Captain Bildaw, but the business has not been managed at all. I know pawsitively nothing about the mattaw except what I have lawned from this lettaw. I have seen no pawson, spoken to no pawson," protested Mr. McGusher.

“Are you quite sure of that?”

“Do you doubt my wawd?” demanded the long-lost, with dignity.

“If I don’t doubt your word, I can’t take it in a case of this kind,” replied Captain Bilder, decidedly.

“Is it pawisible my wawd is wawth so little?”

“I don’t know what is possible; and I don’t know that I care. If you can tell me of what Orphan Asylum you were an inmate, I may take the trouble to look the matter up,” said the ship-master.

“But, saw, I don’t know. I have no maw ideaw than yawself. You see, I don’t wemembaw anything about the institootion,” Mr. McGusher explained.

“You don’t remember?”

“No, saw: that pawt of my existence is all a blank.”

“How long since you left the asylum?”

“How can I tell, Captain Bildaw, when I don’t wemembaw the asylum at all?”

“How long have you boarded in Twenty-Second Street?”

“Thwee yeaws, saw.”

“And you think you are about eighteen years old now?”

“I infaw it fwom the lettaw.”

“My son, if living, would be eighteen.”

“Then that must be my age,” added the long-lost, complacently.

“You were stolen when you were four years old, the letter says.”

“I believe it, saw.”

“You were taken to England, and left with a man by the name of McGusher,” continued Captain Bilder, referring to the letter.

“Yes, saw. How many times have I wead this intawesting fact!”

“And McGusher brought you to America thirteen years ago?”

“Undoubtedly, saw.”

“How old were you then?”

“Five, saw,” answered Mr. McGusher, after studying a little while upon the problem.

“Can’t you remember what happened when you were five years old?”

“Not an event, saw.”

“I can, and that is fifty years ago.”

“Then yaw memowry is bettaw than mine.”

“Very well. After you came to America, it appears that the man who had you in his care boarded with the writer of this letter till he died. They seem to have been well acquainted; and we will suppose that he had lived with her one year when he died.”

“I beg your pawdon; but it might not have been thwee months,” Mr. McGusher interposed, evidently feeling that he ought to dispute the position of the captain.

“I see that ‘a year’ is erased in the letter.”

“If it had been a yeaw, she would not have ewased it.”

“Perhaps it was not just a year; it may have been more or less; but ‘One who knows’ would not have written it if it had not been about that time. Call it a year. How old were you then, Mr. McGusher?”

“Six, I suppose,” replied the long-lost, rather vacantly, for he could not see where this line of reasoning would come out.

“Exactly so, Mr. McGusher. Now, can’t you remember when you were six years old?” asked the ship-master, sharply.

“Not a single thing, saw. I have twied to

wecall the events of those yeaws, but I have twied in vain. It is all a blank to me."

"Very singular! I don't think another such a case ever occurred. No matter. Now, I suppose you staid in the Orphan Asylum some time — perhaps till you were twelve, say."

"Impossible, Captain Bildaw. I should wemember it if I had."

"I should say so. But you seem to have an exceedingly bad memory for a young man of eighteen. Say two years, then, which would make you eight when you left."

"But I think I can wemember when I was eight," suggested the long-lost.

"O, you can! What and where were you then?"

"It is all vewy dweamy. I can only wecall the fact that I was a living being then."

"Your memory is most astonishingly dull."

"But it is pawsible, and even pwobable, that I was not at the institootion maw than a few months. Childwen aw often taken from that sawt of place when they aw only six or seven yeaws old. You see, people who have no childwen of their own go to these institootions and

take childwen to bwing up. They always take the pwettest and most pwomising childwen; and it is pwobable I was taken befoaw I had been in the asylum maw than a month or two."

"Ah, Mr. McGusher, very likely. I had not taken your beauty into consideration before."

"Well, Captain Bilder, a man's beauty is no ccredit to him. He can't help it;" and the long-lost stroked his downy mustache.

"I am afraid we must admit that you were taken from the asylum when you were only six, Mr. McGusher."

"I have no doubt of it, because, you see, if I had staid thaaw a yeaw or two, I should have wemembawed it."

"I'm not so sure of that. But never mind the asylum. You have boarded three years in Twenty-second Street?"

"Thwee yeaws, saw."

"Where did you board before that?" asked the captain quietly, as he looked out the window.

"Before that?" repeated Mr. McGusher.

"Yes: where did you board four years ago?"

"Faw years ago?"

Possibly Mr. McGusher had not prepared

himself for examination in this important era of his personal history. At any rate, he hesitated.

“You don’t answer me,” said the captain.

“I was thinking. Faw yeaws ago.”

“Certainly you can tell where you boarded or lived before you went to your present place,” added Captan Bilder, sharply.”

“O, is that what you mean? I lived in the countwy faw yeaws ago, replied Mr. McGusher, as cheerfully as though a new revelation had suddenly come to his darkened mind. “I lived in the countwy faw yeaws ago.”

“What country?”

“Ha, ha, ha! Pwetty good!” laughed the long-lost. “I only meant that I did not live in New Yawk. You see, I didn’t live in the city, but I lived in the countwy. That was the ideaw I meant to convey. I wesided in the wuwal distwicts.”

“Precisely so; I fully comprehend you, Mr. McGusher. You lived in the country, and not in the city.”

“Exactly so! I couldn’t have expwessed it bettaw myself.”

“Very well; we are making some progress.”

“Yes, saw; some progwess we aw making. But you see, Captain Bildaw, it is not always easy to see what a fellow means. You see, a fellow may use the wawd countwy to mean the wuwal distwicts, when he don’t mean the city; or he may mean Asia, Africa, or some of those places so faw off that it makes a fellow’s head swim to think of them.”

“I understand: your explanation is very lucid. You lived in the country, as distinguished from the city. Now, perhaps you can inform me precisely where you lived.”

“Of cawse I can,” replied Mr. McGusher, promptly. But the question seemed to bother him. “It is the easiest thing in the wawld to tell whaw I lived.”

“Why don’t you tell me, then?” demanded the ship-master.

But Mr. McGusher still hesitated, and appeared to be considering the questions that would follow his answer, or the consequences of giving to himself a “local habitation and a name.”

“You see, I have been in the city only thwee

yeaws. I went into the lawge mawcantile establishment of Messrs. Hewlins & Heavybones as a boy, and wose to my pwesent position," added the long-lost; but he was evidently thinking of something else.

"Perhaps you will be willing to inform me where you lived before you went there."

"Sawtainly, saw; with pleasaw," answered Mr. McGusher. But he did not do it. "When I went to the lawge mawcantile —"

"I understand that part of your story perfectly. You went there, and rose to your present position, which is very creditable to your ability, and illustrates the triumph of genius, perseverance, and industry. Now, will you tell me where you lived?"

"Weally, it is so long since I left the place, that I have almost forgotten the name of it."

"I am afraid you have quite forgotten it."

"No, saw. The place was Goshen; not the Goshen mentioned in the Scwipchaw, but Goshen in the State of New York. It is in Owange County, on the Ewie Wailwoad, seventy miles fwom New Yawk City; population ovaw thwee thousand; and they make much nice buttaw

there. I daw say you have hawd of Goshen buttaw, Captain Bilder," said Mr. McGusher.

"I think I have."

"You see, that isn't the kind of buttaw they use in cheap bawding-houses. They keep cows out there."

"Indeed!"

"Fact, saw. I've seen them myself. The cows give milk, and —"

"I shall not dispute any of your facts. But I should like to ask with whom you lived in Goshen."

"With whom? You want the man's name, I suppose."

"Yes, if you happen to remember it: if you don't, it's of no great consequence."

"Of cawse I wemember it. How could I live with a man, and not wemember his name?"

"Sure enough! But your memory has played you some shabby tricks. Please to give me the name before you forget it."

"I shall nevaw fawget it. It would be quite impawsible to forget it."

"What was it, then?"

"I lived with Mr. Chessman," answered the

long-lost; and he evidently gave the name with many misgivings as to the result.

“Chessman. Thank you. Do you remember his first name?”

“Yes, saw; his first name was Amos; his second or middle name was Pewy; and his whole name was Amos Pewy Chessman.”

“Amos P. Chessman, was it?”

“Yes, saw.”

“Excellent! Write that name down, Kate, before Mr. McGusher forgets it; also the town, county, and state.”

Kate seated herself at her desk, and wrote the address in full.

“You see, Mr. Chessman didn’t live wight in the village. He was a fawmer, and had a fawm outside of the village. You see, they don’t have fawms in the village,” Mr. McGusher explained.

“Don’t they? Well, that’s odd!” laughed Captain Bilder. “Does Mr. Chessman live there now?”

“No, saw; he does not live there now.”

“Where does he live?”

“You see, he don’t live anywhaw, now.”

“Don't live anywhere?”

“No, saw; he's dead now.”

“That's unfortunat for him, if not for the rest of us.”

“It was dooced unfawtunate. He died of a tewible disease—the hydwohobia. You see, that's the disease they get when they are bitten by dogs.”

“Just so. I've heard of the disease.”

“You see, Mr. Chessman had a dog. I got that dog when a puppy.”

“You mean when the dog was a puppy,” suggested the ship-master.

“To be suaw. I got that dog when a puppy. Of cawse the dog was a puppy. I never was a puppy. Puppies don't go on two legs, and talk, and smile, and think, and have bwains.”

“Sometimes—all but the brains. But never mind the dog, Mr. McGusher. Mr. Chessman died—poor man!—of hydrophobia?”

“He died after I left his house. I did not witness his painful stwuggles.”

“You were spared that, fortunately. Did Mr. Chessman have a family?” asked Captain Bilder.

“Yes, saw—a wife and faw childwen.”

“Of course they still live on the farm in Goshen.”

“No, saw, they don’t live on the farm in Goshen,” replied the long-lost, with refreshing promptness. “When Mr. Chessman died, his wife couldn’t manage the farm; and they had to sell it to pay the debts.”

“I’m sorry for that. But what became of the family?”

“They went to Owegon, where Mrs. Chessman had a bwother. I don’t know what pawt of Owegon; I only heard that she had gone to Owegon.”

“I hope she found a good home in Oregon; but it’s of no consequence to the present inquiry whether she did or not, or even that she went to Oregon. Of course, if I write to my friend, Borden Green, the banker, who has a country place, for aught I know, in Goshen, he will be able to ascertain all about Mr. Chessman and his family.”

“I’m afwaid not,” replied Mr. McGusher, evidently somewhat disturbed by the suggestion. “You see, Mr. Chessman did not live in the village.”

“That’s of no consequence. Green will find where he lived, if it was within ten miles of the village.”

“But Mr. Chessman only lived there a shawt time.”

“Never mind ; if he lived there at all, and died there of hydrophobia, some one will remember him.”

“Pawsibly.”

“I am very much obliged to you, Mr. McGusher, for this information ; and in a week or two I shall, doubtless, be able fully to confirm all you have stated.”

“I hope you will,” replied Mr. McGusher, rather blankly.

“I suppose Mr. Chessman took you from the Orphan Asylum.”

“Weally, I don’t know, saw.”

“You never happened to hear him or his wife state any such circumstance ?”

“Nevaw.”

“Mr. Chessman appears to have been in debt when he died, so that his farm had to be sold. If he had four children of his own, why did he take a child from the asylum ?”

“Weally, I don’t know that he did take a child from the asylum,” protested the long-lost, warmly.

“You don’t remember that part of your history. You lived with Mr. Chessman, and you were in the asylum; but it does not appear how you passed from one to the other. How long were you in Goshen?”

“Only a shawt time.”

“But as long as Mr. Chessman lived there?”

“I suppose so.”

“Where did he live before he moved to Goshen?”

“Weally, I don’t know the name of the place. It was in the countwy.”

“But you must have been fourteen years old when you left that place.”

“Certainly I knew the place; but it was an odd name. I shall think of it in a moment,” added Mr. McGusher, pounding his head, which seemed to be at fault, and deserved the castigation. “Ah! I have it! Gwillingham; that was the place. It is dooced odd that I forgot it for the moment.”

“Gwillingham?”

“Grillingham,” suggested Kate, who had noticed his shabby treatment of the rolling and trilling letter of the alphabet.

“That’s it, Miss Bildaw; thank you. Gwillingham was what I said.”

“Where is Grillingham?”

“Weally, I couldn’t tell you much about the place. I could descwibe it; but I hawdly know where it is, except that it is in Sullivan County.”

“It’s of no consequence where it is. I am entirely satisfied with the information you have given me. My friend, Borden Green, the banker, will look up the case for me.”

“Yes, saw; and he has the piece of cawd which will complete the evidence,” added Mr. McGusher.

“And you really believe you are my long-lost son?”

“Do I believe it? I know it! I have always felt that I belonged in some highaw spheaw than I was in. I have aspiwations for something highaw and noblaw than I have evaw seen,” said Mr. McGusher, with an appropriate gesture.

“We will leave the matter where it is for the present. But, as I told you before, I am a poor man; and if you are my son, you must go to work, as I shall,” added the ship-master.

“I beg your pawdon; but, don’t you think that the pieces of cawd settle the question?”

“They are strong evidence; but in a matter of so much importance I desire to be sure.”

“Quite pwoper, Captain Bildaw. But in my own mind I have not a doubt, since you have the piece of cawd. I beg your pawdon; but might I see you alone for a moment?”

Kate left the room at this hint.

“I beg your pawdon; but, as thaw can be no doubt that I am your long-lost son, might I beg the favaw of the small loan of one hundwed dollaws?” Mr. McGusher proceeded.

“You have come to the wrong man for money. I have none,” replied the captain.

“My salary is small — only five dollars a week; and it will hardly suppawt me. I have not money enough to pay my expenses in Belfast while you are investigating the case.”

Captain Bilder declined to advance any money, if he had any to advance; but he invited Mr.

McGusher to the hospitality of his house while he continued to occupy it. Whatever he believed in regard to the claim of his guest, he desired to trace that remarkable letter and card to their source. In another hour, the long-lost was at home in the paternal mansion.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE GRAND REVIEW.

THE dinner party at the mansion of Captain Patterdale was a pleasant occasion; but Kate Bilder's absence was very much felt by the guests, for she was a very pretty and a very lively girl. As the wind had been very light, the yacht squadron did not arrive from their cruise below till noon, but in season to make arrangements for a grand review of all the yachts and boats of both clubs, which was to include an excursion to Turtle Head. The Ocean-Born was invited to participate, and Neil Brandon tendered the use of her to the clubs for the invited guests. Nellie Patterdale called upon Kate Bilder, and found both her and her father quite cheerful, in spite of their reverses. As Mr. McGusher was present, he had to be introduced, and had to be invited to the review.

“It will affawd me unbounded pleasyaw to be pwesent, Miss Pattawddale, and sun myself in the smiles of the beautiful young ladies of the pawty,” said Mr. McGusher, placing his right hand upon his heart, and bowing till his form was almost doubled.

As Captain Bilder wished to see more of the captain of the Ocean-Born, he consented to be a guest, and Kate promised to take her place as leader in the Lily. At three o'clock the party invited were all on board of the steamer. The five boats of the Dorcas Club were pulling about near Don John's wharf, and the yachts, with their mainsails hoisted and their anchors hove up to a short stay, were lying near the shore. A gun from the Skylark, the commodore's yacht, announced the commencement of the first part of the programme, which was the review of the boats of the Dorcas Club. The occasion was in honor of Captain Neil Brandon and the officers of the Ocean-Born, who had rendered such important service to members of both of the clubs.

The Dorcas, Lily, Fairy, Psyche, and Undine were the five boats of the Dorcas Club. In each of them were five young ladies, all dressed in

the uniform of the club. The leader sat in the stern, with the tiller-ropes in her hand. The boats dashed out from the shore in a single line. The girls pulled the measured man-of-war stroke, but the beautiful barges moved at great speed. They were about a boat's length apart, and preserved their distance with wonderful precision.

The clubs had had a great deal of practice; and, as all of them were deeply interested in the sport, their manœuvres were almost perfect. They pulled out a considerable distance from the wharf, and, at a signal from the leader of the *Dorcas*, the fair rowists "held water" till the boats lost their headway, and then wheeled them, as on a pivot, quarter way around, so that they all faced towards the steamer. In this position, the rowers "tossed oars."

The *Ocean-Born*, with steam on, lay at the wharf, where she had hauled in to receive the invited guests. These consisted of about a dozen ladies and gentlemen, who were seated on the hurricane deck. Mr. Arthur McGusher was among the number, but he did not seem to be exactly satisfied with his position. In the first place, he wanted to be with the "enwaptuwing

young ladies," and not a single one of them was on board of the steamer. In the second place, Mr. Ben Lunder, the tarry deck-hand of the Ocean-Born, had actually disputed his passage from the wharf to the deck of the vessel, till Captain Bilder vouched for him as one invited by Nellie Patterdale, and, after this, manifested a vicious tendency to pick upon and make fun of him; to confuse and confound him with sea slang which he could not understand.

Neil Brandon and Berry Owen were in the pilot-house, and Ben — having ceased for the moment to torture the "dry goods swell," as he irreverently insisted upon calling Mr. McGusher — was on the forward deck, ready to cast off the fasts when the order should be given. As the club boats pulled out from the shore, Ben clapped his hands in rapture; and his demonstration was quite excusable.

"Roses and posies!" he yelled, at the top of his lungs.

"What's the matter, Ben?" demanded Neil.

"Hold me down!" added the deck-hand, seizing the anchor, as if to add something to his gravitation.

“Let go, Ben!” said the captain.

“I dare not; I shall go up if I do,” replied he, hugging the anchor desperately, to the great amusement of the people on the hurricane-deck.

“Cast off the fasts, Ben!” continued Neil; “we must follow them.”

“Ay, ay, sir!” roared Ben, with a voice from his stomach, as he slacked off the hawser. “Where those briny divinities lead, I will follow. — Oblige me by casting off that foreto’bobstay,” he added, to a man on the wharf. “Thank you, sir. — All clear forward, high and mighty captain.”

Neil rang the bell to back her, so as to throw the steamer’s head out from the wharf. Another stroke stopped the engine, the after-fast was cast off by Karl, and the boat went ahead slowly. Ben coiled up the hawser he had hauled in, and there was no more work for the deck-hand to do till the steamer made another landing. He then mounted the hurricane-deck, to the terror and dismay of Mr. McGusher, who was making himself as agreeable as possible to the ladies of the party.

As the Ocean-Born approached the line of boats, three long whistles were sounded, to acknowledge the complimentary tossing of the oars. She then steamed entirely around the line, and finally took a position between them and the shore, in accordance with the programme.

At the signal from the leader of the Dorcas, all the oars dropped into the water as one, and the boats pulled in single line around the Ocean-Born. When this manœuvre was completed, the boats suddenly whirled, and darted off, five abreast. It was done so prettily that all on board of the steamer and the yachts applauded heartily.

“That was well done,” said Captain Patterdale, clapping his hands vigorously.

“Well done?” added Ben Lunder, who stood near him. “That is too mild an expression. It was artistically done! It was ravishingly done! It was celestially done! It was perfectly done! Why, shiver my flukes, I shall be sent to the Insane Asylum if I look at those divinities much longer.”

“That would be the appwopwiate place for you,” added Mr. McGusher, who could not resist the temptation to say this, for he had not

forgiven the deck-hand for torturing him twice before.

“And what would be the appropriate place for you, my jolly biscuit-nibbler?” demanded Ben, who, not being protected by a rhinoceros hide, had been pierced by the arrow; “what but the Retreat for Idiots and Feeble-Minded Persons?”

“You are impertinent,” replied Mr. McGusher, turning red.

“Better be crazy than an idiot, especially when one’s brain is turned by a vision of loveliness,” added Ben, turning to the boats again.

“You are impawtinent, saw,” retorted the long-lost, angrily.

“I have rowed in the college boats for two years, but I never saw any such pulling as that, Captain Patterdale,” added Ben, regardless of the swell’s anger. “I mean I never saw anything so graceful and precise.”

“Do you mean to say I am cwazy?” demanded Mr. McGusher, placing himself in front of the deck-hand.

“No sir; I don’t mean to say so. It would be quite impossible for a fellow without brains

to be crazy. You are not crazy. You are not capable of being crazy. It requires a capital stock of brains to enable a fellow to become crazy. You are not crazy; and you are in no danger of being crazy. I remarked that *I* might be sent to an Insane Asylum, not you. Now my hearty, sheer off; take a reef in your mainto'-gallant smoke-stack, top up your fore-r'yal-boom!"

"You made a wemawk, saw," blustered Mr. McGusher.

"I did; and, shiver my skysail-ports, I'll make another! I don't know you, sir and I never quarrel with a person to whom I have not been introduced;" and Ben walked away with Captain Patterdale.

The long lost concluded to bottle up his wrath for the present, and retaliate upon his persecutor at a more convenient season. The club boats came about, and pulled towards the steamer "by twos," the *Dorcas* leading. For half an hour they continued to perform their evolutions, which have been fully described in another volume. When they had finished them, the boats formed in a single line, and tossed

oars. Again the Ocean Born steamed around them, all hands vigorously applauding.

At another gun from the Skylark, all the sailing-yachts weighed their anchors and hoisted their jibs. The wind was light, and it was not possible for them to make over three knots an hour. The boats then formed "by twos," with the Dorcas in front, and started for Turtle Head. The yachts had taken position, three on each side of the boats, while the Ocean-Born kept behind them, so as not to stir up the water in which they pulled. The steamer barely turned her screw, so slowly did the procession move. Berry Owen had taken the helm, and Neil was on the hurricane-deck, doing the honors of the ship to the guests.

"Who is the young man that commands this steamer?" asked Captain Bilder of Gerald Roach, as they met on the hurricane deck.

"His name is Neil Brandon," replied Gerald.

"Who was his father?"

"His father was a very rich man, who died about twelve years ago."

"How old is the captain?"

"Eighteen, sir," answered Gerald.

“Of course, then,” Captain Bilder reasoned, “the father of the young commander could not have been the mate of the *Coriolanus*, for he was not married at that time, and could not have a son eighteen years old at the present time.”

This settled the question in his mind, and he made no further inquiries in regard to the matter. But it was rather odd that there should be another Neil Brandon who had followed the sea, that his son, like the lost child, had been born at sea, and that he should be called the “Ocean-Born.” Captain Bilder was satisfied that his old mate could not have died, twelve years before, very rich, for he never seemed like a money-making man. He had never heard of him in command of a ship, and he doubted whether he ever rose above the position of mate.

In a couple of hours the procession arrived at Turtle Head, where the steamer and the yachts anchored, and the young ladies of the boat clubs landed. The Yacht Club flag was flying on the club house, and several members were on duty there. Among them was Morris Hollinghead, who had made a fish chowder for

all hands. The guests were landed as fast as they could be, and the chowder was served at once.

“Ah, Miss Bildaw, I have been enwapchawed at the sight of the boats, and the faiaw beings in them,” said Mr. McGusher, as soon as he could find her whom he hoped soon to call his sister. “It was a delicious sight.”

“I’m glad you liked it,” replied Kate.

“I never saw so many pwetty young ladies togethaw in all my life.”

“Indeed!”

“Nevaw!”

“How did you like the rowing?” asked Kate.

“The wowing? The wowing was sublime. How could it fail to be when the young ladies waw so chawming?”

“I don’t think the charms of the young ladies make good rowing,” replied Kate.

“Well, now, I do. I don’t know how to wow myself, and pawhaps I’m not a judge; but I want to lawn to wow. Will you lawn me, my deaw sistaw?”

Kate’s face flushed when he called her his sister. She was indignant at his presumption.

She did not believe she was his sister, and Captain Bilder was satisfied that Mr. McGusher was not his son. The father and daughter had fully considered the claim of the "long-lost," and he was only countenanced for the time being in order to discover who had given him the letter, and supplied the information written upon the parts of the card. Mr. McGusher saw the flush upon Kate's cheek, and realized that he had made a mistake.

"I beg your pawdon," said he, bowing and touching his white hat. "I suppose I am not to call you sistaw for the pwesent; and I will not do so again. Will you lawn me to wow, Miss Bildaw?"

"I think you can find a better teacher than I should be."

"I'm suaw I could not," protested Mr. McGusher. "But I have not the pleasyaw of the acquaintance of these young ladies. Will you favaw me with an intwoduction to them?"

"To all of them?" demanded Kate.

"All of them, if you please."

"Most of them seem to be occupied just now; but as opportunity offers, I will introduce you."

“Miss Bilder, allow me to offer you a dish of chowder,” said Ben Lunder, who appeared at this moment with two bowls of the article.

“Thank you, Mr. Lunder. I am as hungry as a wolf,” replied Kate, accepting the offered dish.

“That is precisely my own condition,” replied Ben; “and as I see the ladies are all helped, this other dish will just fit my case.”

“I beg your pawdon, Mr. Lundaw,” interposed Mr. McGusher; “it was hawdly polite to intewupt a convawsation between this lady and myself.”

“Nor to offer her chowder when she was hungry?” laughed Ben. “I beg your pardon, Miss Bilder, if I have intruded.”

“You have not. I was half starved, and I wanted the chowder. I am grateful to you for coming when you did. Mr. McGusher did not bring me any chowder—”

“I beg your pawdon, Miss Bildaw,” interrupted the long-lost. I supposed the waitaws would bwing it.”

“We have no waiters. But, Mr. McGusher, I promised to introduce you to some of the



“Miss Bilder, allow me to offer you a dish of Chowder.” Page 162.

ladies. I will make a beginning now.—Mr. Lunder, will you hold my dish till I return?”

“Certainly.”

Kate conducted Mr. McGusher to an elderly maiden lady, and formally introduced him to her. She was old, and she was very homely; but then she was good enough to be one of the salt of the earth. As soon as Kate had done her part, she fled, leaving Mr. McGusher very much disgusted; and we must do the maiden lady the justice to say that she was hardly less disgusted.

“Your friend is determined to quarrel with me, Miss Bilder,” said Ben, as he gave her the dish of chowder again.

“My friend!” exclaimed Kate.

“Your father said he was staying at your house.”

“He is; but we are not responsible for him. I think he is the most absurd young man I ever saw.”

Mr. McGusher stood by the maiden lady, and saw Ben chatting with Kate. He had come between her and himself, thus adding another offence to the catalogue of his sins. He was

mad; he did not like to be cut out by any one, and especially not by his tormentor. But he did not see how he could help himself at that moment. He escaped from the ancient maiden as soon as he could, quite as much to her relief as his own. As all the young ladies seemed to be occupied with their own friends, he could only walk about; but he kept one eye on Kate Bilder all the time, in order to step in as soon as Ben should seek another companion. He would insist that she should redeem her promise to introduce him to the young ladies. When the chowder-eating and the coffee-drinking were disposed of, a meeting of both clubs was called to consider the proposed cruise up the river, and the officers of the Ocean-Born were invited to be present and take part in the discussion. Commodore Montague called the assembly to order.

“The first business, ladies and gentlemen, will be to choose a chairman, or a chairlady,” said the commodore.

“I nominate Commodore Montague,” interposed Ned Patterdale.

“Really, ladies and gentlemen, I—”

“Those in favor of the commodore will say, Ay.”

“Ay!” shouted all the rowists and yachtmen.

“It is a unanimous vote, for no one is expected to vote the other way,” added Ned, laughing.

“I thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for your kind consideration; but I was about to suggest the name of Captain Neil Brandon for chairman, as a proper compliment to be paid to our distinguished guest. But, since you have placed it out of my power to do so, I have no choice but to submit.”

A round of tumultuous applause followed this announcement.

“Perhaps you will allow me to decline, even now.”

“I beg you will not, Mr. Commodore,” said Neil, rising, his face crimson with blushes. “I have had no experience as a presiding officer, and I should certainly decline to serve.”

After some talk, the commodore consented to retain his position. He made quite a speech, in which he set forth the obligations of both clubs

to the officers of the steamer for the service they had rendered in rescuing several members from a very disagreeable, if not a very perilous situation.

“I need not tell you, ladies and gentlemen, that Captain Brandon, his officers and crew, have fully discharged the first and highest duty of a sailor, in going so promptly to the assistance of our friends, and giving them the help they so much needed. I am sure that we all feel under personal obligations to them for the service they rendered our members, and for the very hospitable and courteous treatment extended to them on board of the Ocean-Born. I speak for all of you when I tender to Captain Brandon, his officers and crew, our best wishes for their future prosperity and happiness.”

The conclusion of the speech was received with wild applause.

“And now I have the pleasure of introducing to you Captain Neil Brandon, of the Ocean-Born, who, doubtless, desires to respond to your hearty expression of good will,” added the commodore.

“Mr. Chairman,” Neil began; but he was

interrupted by another hurricane of applause. "I thank you, Mr. Chairman, and you, ladies and gentlemen, for the very pleasant and kind words you have spoken. It was a very great satisfaction to me to assist our friends in the Sea Foam, after their accident; but we don't claim any credit for simply doing our duty. I am no speech-maker, Mr. Chairman, and if you will excuse me, I will call upon my friend Ben Lunder to speak for me."

"Lunder! Lunder!" shouted the boys, and the girls clapped their little white hands, and waved their white handkerchiefs.

"I have the pleasure of introducing Mr. Ben Lunder," added the commodore.

"Mr. Chairman, I am very happy to respond to anything relating to our noble profession as sailors. I am a sailor, Mr. Chairman, as you are aware; and, as you are all sailors, including even these bewitching female old salts, you will be able to appreciate me. Yes, sir! I am a sailor from the fore-royal-bobstay to the mizzen-to'gallant-keelson. Every particle of blood that flows through these weather-stained veins of mine is as salt as sea-water. In regard to the little

service we were able to render some of your people, it is not worth mentioning. What was it, Mr. Chairman? Why, that grand and lofty frigate of the foaming main — the Sea Foam — carried away her fore-skysail knight-heads, and lay a shapeless wreck upon the pulsing billows. Her sky-scrapers had gone by the board; her mizzen-to'gallant-top-knots came down, and the mizzen-royal flukes of the starboard anchor were busted; and there she was! Could we leave her, with her main-to'gallant scuppers sprung? Could we pass her by on the other side, as the publican did the Pharisee, with her main-to'gallant-halyards gone by the board, and the weather-pumps scuttled so they couldn't box the compass? No, sir! I am the crew of that steamer. We worked like sea-dogs, and we helped them out. We would do no less, and we couldn't do more. Mr. Chairman, in behalf of the officers and crew of the Ocean-Born, — especially the crew, — I am yours, truly."

CHAPTER IX.

MCGUSHER *versus* LUNDER.

BEN LUNDER'S speech was heartily applauded, and so, indeed, was that of every one who spoke or attempted to speak. It was the "era of good feelings." The complimentary part of the proceedings having been disposed of, the arrangements for the up-river excursion were considered and adopted. A time was fixed to start, and the meeting dissolved.

When Ben got up to make his speech, Mr. McGusher approached Kate and placed himself by her side, intent upon regaining the ground he had lost. All the boys laughed at Ben's "nauticals," and most of the girls knew enough about vessels to appreciate the absurdity of his remarks. Everybody was amused except the long-lost; and Ben could say nothing to provoke a smile from him. He was determined not to be amused.

“Those wemawks aw vewy silly, Miss BILDaw,” said he, in a low tone.

“Now I think they are very funny,” replied Kate. “I think Mr. Lunder is a splendid fellow.”

“Do you, indeed?” groaned Mr. McGusher. “I think he is lacking in bwains.”

“Excuse me; but I should like to hear him,” added Kate.

The long-lost was obliged to be silent after this hint. In his eloquence Ben had stepped forward a few steps from the rock where he had been seated at Kate's side, and Mr. McGusher, who was prominently developed on each side of his face, took the place which had been vacated. As Ben was working up his peroration, he unconsciously backed up to the rock again, not aware that his late seat had been occupied by another. As he finished, he bowed, and, without looking behind him, dropped into his former position. He was considerably excited by his oratorical effort, and bounced rather heavily into Mr. McGusher's lap. Either out of respect to the lady at his side, or because his brow was fevered by the misfortunes of the hour, this



BEN STRUCK UPON THE CROWN OF THE TILE. Page 171.

gentleman had taken off his white stove-pipe hat, and placed it upon his knees. Ben struck upon the crown of the tile, crushing it down as flat as a pancake.

Ben instantly sprang to his feet again, when he realized the mischief he had done. Possibly he feared, in the confusion of the moment, that he had sat down in Miss Bilder's lap. The mishap was greeted with roars of laughter from the boys and the girls; and doubtless some sides ached, and some of the party were in danger of choking to death with their mirth, when Mr. McGusher held up his damaged tile, which looked very much like one of those telescopic hats which shut into a box only two inches deep.

"Do you see what you have done?" demanded Mr. McGusher, as he sprang to his feet, with the crushed hat in his hand.

"I see; and, in its present condition, I admit that yours is a shocking bad hat," replied Ben, good-naturedly, as the tile was not his own.

"You have cwushed my hat," wailed the long-lost.

"What did you get into my seat for? I didn't

know you were there ; and it was not my fault," laughed Ben.

"You did it on pawpose! You intended to insult me! You have insulted me thwee times befaw to-day," howled Mr. McGusher.

"All right my hearty," said Ben, moving towards the seat on the rock which the swell had vacated.

But Mr. McGusher was not to be flanked a second time, and he dropped into the place by Kate's side.

"You have wuined my hat," he continued, trying to restore it to its former shape.

"See here, my jovial biscuit-nibbler, if I am to blame, I'll buy you a more decent hat than that one ever was ; and I will leave it to any three gentlemen here to say if it was my fault or yours. I suggest Captain Bilder and Captain Patterdale as two of the referees, and they may select the third."

"That's fair!" shouted the yachtmen.

"I will apologize into the bargain," added Ben ; "and that will be the most humiliating part of the business."

"Referees!" shouted the boys, who expected some fun to come out of the hearing.

Mr. McGusher was compelled to submit to the popular will; and after the meeting the trial of the case was to take place. But it was past seven o'clock when the plan for the excursion was adopted; and it was time to return to the city, especially as there was a shower coming up in the west. But the long-lost was not permitted to enjoy the place he had stolen by the side of Kate. She seemed to be rather partial to Ben; at any rate she enjoyed his funny speeches; and when Mr. McGusher resumed his seat, she abandoned her own, and walked away with the "old salt" to a bench which was not occupied, where they remained till the close of the meeting. The long-lost felt that his "sister" was abusing him, and he was determined, as soon as his position was established, that Kate should treat the marine monster as he deserved.

"Miss President of the Dorcas Club," said Neil, when the meeting was dissolved, "I am afraid there will be a shower before you can pull back to the city."

"It looks like one," replied Minnie, anxiously. "And it will be half past nine before we can reach home."

“I think you had better go up in the steamer,” added Neil.

“What shall we do with our boats?”

“We can put them on our hurricane deck.”

“I should be very glad to go up in the Ocean-Born.”

“I am afraid we shall not get back to-night with the yachts,” said Ned Patterdale. “There is not a breath of wind.”

“I will tow you up; and if it rains we can all stay under cover,” replied Neil.

“We don’t care for the rain,” laughed Ned; “but we rather like the arrangement, for there will be some fun in that trial.”

“I can tow two of those yachts on each side, and the other two astern,” added Neil.

All the party were informed of the plan, and the invited guests and members of the clubs were embarked in the steamer. Two of the yachts were then lashed on each side of her, and hawsers from the other two were passed to her stern. But it was found that the club boats could be better carried upon the decks of the yachts, as no sails were to be set, and they were carefully taken out of the water, so as not to

strain them, and cradled in convenient places. The anchor of the Ocean-Born was weighed, and the bell to go ahead was sounded. Martin Roach had stirred up the fires in the furnaces, so that she had plenty of steam for the heavy tow she had undertaken. The ladies' cabin was open, and one of the ladies was playing a waltz on the piano. Groups in various parts of the deck were singing, and no livelier party was ever gathered than that on board of the Ocean-Born.

The trial was to take place in the forward cabin, where the referees opened the session soon after the steamer started. Dr. Darling had been chosen as the third referee. Ben and Mr. McGusher were summoned to the tribunal, whereof the doctor was the presiding officer, by the choice of his fellows. The cabin was crowded to its utmost capacity, and those who could not get in stationed themselves at the doors and windows. Perhaps no one but Mr. McGusher regarded it as a serious proceeding, and he had some fears that it might afford his tormentor an opportunity to torture him.

“Gentlemen, this is a Court of Reference to

try the case of — What's his name?" asked Dr. Darling, opening the proceedings.

"Mr. Arthur McGusher," replied Captain Bilder.

"Mr. Arthur McGusher *versus* Mr. Ben Lunder, alias Bounding Billow Ben," continued the doctor. "Both of the parties were strangers to most of us till to-day, and therefore we shall be able to deal impartially with both of them. Mr. McGusher appears to be the plaintiff, and brings this suit to recover the value of one white hat, encircled with a black weed, according to the fashion of the day — or perhaps I should say, the fashion of the extremists. I don't know the value of it, but perhaps that will appear in the evidence. — Mr. McGusher, will you take the stand?"

Mr. McGusher took the stand, which was the end of the table opposite the chairman of the referees.

"Your name in full, sir?" Dr. Darling proceeded.

"Arthur McGushaw," replied the plaintiff, doubtfully, for the case opened rather formidably.

"Your residence?"

“New Yawk city.”

“How old are you?”

“Eighteen.”

“Do you consider that you have attained the age of discretion?”

“The age of discwetion? Goodness gwacious! I should hope so.”

“How much do you weigh when you are fat?”

“I don’t know,” replied the long-lost, almost discouraged by the choking laughter of the spectators.

“This is important.”

“What odds can it make how much I weigh?” demanded Mr. McGusher.

“It is not usual for courts of justice to be questioned. How much do you weigh?”

“I don’t know.”

“Have you never been weighed in the balance, and found wanting?”

“No, saw.”

“How old did you say you were?”

“I said I was eighteen.”

“Just eighteen?”

“Yes, saw.”

“Eighteen now?”

“Of cawse I’m eighteen now. I nevaw was eighteen befaw. How could a fellow be eighteen befaw he is eighteen?”

The company laughed at this answer. Mr. McGusher believed he had made a point, and he enjoyed it. He was encouraged.

“Eighteen now?”

“Of cawse.”

“How old shall you be when you are twenty-one?”

“I don’t know,” replied the long-lost, who was, perhaps, thinking of the point he had made; but his answer produced a roar of smiles.

“You don’t know?”

“How old shall I be when I am twenty-one?” repeated Mr. McGusher, putting his whole mind to the question. “Of cawse I shall be twenty-one when I am twenty-one.”

“That may be true in your case,” added Dr. Darling, looking very wise. “Now, will you please to state your view of the unhappy difficulty between Mr. Lunder and yourself.”

“It is soon told, saw. Seeing my fwiend, Miss Bildaw, seated on a wock —”

“On a what?”

“On a wock,” replied the long-lost, with emphasis.

“On a wock?” repeated the examiner. “What’s that?”

“On a wock! Don’t you know what a wock is?”

“I do not,” replied the doctor, shaking his head, and looking very much puzzled. “On a wock?”

“On a wock! On a big stone!” said the plaintiff, desperately.

“O! on a rock! I beg your pardon. I understand now. Proceed, if you please. Miss Bilder was seated on a rock.”

“Miss Bildaw is my fwiend, and I seated myself at her side, as I think I had a pawfect wight to do, if the lady did not object.”

“Then Miss Bilder did not object?”

“She did not. Then Mr. Lundaw sat down in my lap, and cwushed my hat. That’s the whole of it.”

“Where was Mr. Lunder when you seated yourself at Miss Bilder’s side?”

“He was standing up.”

“What was he doing?”

“Making what he called a speech.”

“What he called a speech. What did you call it?”

“It was hardly an ovation or a hawang. I call it nonsense,” replied Mr. McGusher, candidly.

“But —

“‘A little nonsense now and then
Is relished by the wisest men.’”

“You did not relish the nonsense, Mr. McGusher?”

“No, saw, I did not.”

“Are we to conclude, therefore, that you are not to be classed among the wisest men?”

“I am not a fool, an idiot, to welish such stuff as that was.”

“Then those of us who did enjoy it are to be considered fools and idiots — are they? That will do, Mr. McGusher. You may step down.”

“I don’t mean to say that,” protested the long-lost.”

“Mr. Lunder will take the stand,” added the doctor.

Ben took the stand.

“Your name sir?”

“B. Lunder, O. S.”

“O. S. Old style?”

“No, sir; old salt.”

“Your occupation?”

“Seaman.”

“How long have you been to sea?”

“Four days — perhaps five now, counting to-day as one.”

“Had the measles?”

“Yes, sir — had ’em good.”

“Fighting weight?”

“One hundred and twenty-one pounds, eleven and one half ounces, Avoirdupois.”

“Now state if you please, your view of the difficulty between Mr. McGusher and yourself.”

“The principal difficulty lies in Mr. McGusher’s inability to appreciate my speeches,” laughed Ben.

“The facts in the case, if you please.”

“I was sitting with Miss Bilder on the rock, when I was called upon by the high and mighty commander of the Ocean-Born to make a little speech. He had eaten so much chowder himself that he was too full for utterance, and I had

to utter for him. I beg to remind you, Mr. Chairman, that I am an old salt by profession. Lot's wife was a first cousin of mine. The first duty of a sailor, sir, is to obey.

‘Theirs not to make reply;
Theirs not to reason why;
Theirs but to do and die,’

or make a speech; and, with becoming modesty, it was a capital speech, in my opinion, whatever Mr. McGusher may say or think.”

“Thats so!” shouted the spectators.

“Order in the court!” said Dr. Darling, pounding on the table most vigorously. “Go on, Mr. Lunder.”

“I was seated by Miss Bilder, on the rock. Etiquette required that I should stand when I made that speech. I did what the immortal General Warren told the Bunker Hillers to do when he said, ‘Stand! the ground’s your own, my braves.’”

“I am not so sure I should have had the courage to stand, if I had thought I should lose my ground on the rock by doing so. But I did stand. Milton says,—

‘They also serve who only stand.’

“It was my duty to stand, Mr. Chairman. My

commander had ordered me to stand. I rose, Mr. Chairman; I rose modestly and gracefully to obey the order of my great commander. As 'the rose is fairest when 'tis budding,' I budded upon that audience. I rose, and though there were onions in the chowder, 'a rose by any other name would smell as sweet.' I rose and made my speech. Under the fiery inspiration of the moment, I waxed eloquent. I depicted the wild scene upon the stormy ocean, when the mad waves dashed savagely over the helpless Sea Foam, when the bob-scuttle had gone by the board; when the angry tide twisted the cleats, cat-harpings, bowlines, bobstays, dead-eyes, dead-lights, and dead reckoning into half-hitches, when —"

"Do you intend to repeat your speech, Mr. Lunder?" asked the doctor.

"If the court particularly desire it, — yes, sir."

"Nothing but the want of time prevents the court from particularly desiring its repetition."

"I should be happy to oblige the court at another time then. I only intended to show how it was that I waxed eloquent. As I waxed, I took a step forward, as great orators do

unconsciously when stirred by the fires of eloquence. Of course, Mr. Chairman, as I orated, I was unconscious of the movements of the plaintiff. I could see nothing but the sea of upturned faces before me; and I did not see Mr. McGusher take the seat which I had vacated but a moment before. When I finished I sat down, and as the plaintiff was in my seat, I sat down in his lap, and squashed his hat. How could I know, sir, that the plaintiff had surreptitiously and flagitiously taken my seat?"

"Did you consider that the seat belonged to you?"

"As much as though I had foreclosed a mortgage upon it. Consider the circumstances, Mr. Chairman. I was freely lavishing my eloquence upon the company. I was laboring for the information and entertainment of the party. If I used my shining talents for this purpose, should I suffer for it? Should I lose my seat for it?"

"No! No! No!" shouted the young men.

"Certainly not; and of course, Mr. Chairman, you will decide in favor of the defendant."

"You may step down, Mr. Lunder," added

Dr. Darling. "Have you anything further to say, Mr. McGusher?"

"I have, sir. I don't wish to quarrel with Mr. Lundaw, and I'm willing to accept his apology," replied the long-lost.

"When he makes one, you may," added Ben.

"The court will settle that question," interposed the doctor. "The law applicable to this case, may be found in Shakespeare's play of *Much Ado about Nothing* — 'Sits the wind in that corner?' Metaphorically, Mr. McGusher is the wind, and 'that corner' is the rock. It is admitted that Mr. McGusher sat down on the rock; and 'sits the wind in that corner.' Lundaw had not abandoned that seat. If he had deliberately got up, and gone off, like a gun, he might thus have relinquished possession of it. But he did not go off like a gun or otherwise, and not having relinquished possession of it, the seat was his, both in law and equity; and according to Shakespeare, standing up in front of his seat to make a speech, in obedience to the order of his superior officer, and in answer to the call of the company, does not amount to a relinquishment of the seat. He had vacated it only

for the moment, at the call of the crowd. Now, if he had got up to make that speech with the evil and vicious intent and purpose of inflicting his remarks upon the company, as some ill-bred persons do, the case would have been different, and he would have voluntarily relinquished his seat, both in law and fact. Lunder was, therefore, still in legal possession of the seat, though not in actual bodily possession of it, at the precise instant when McGusher took possession of it. A tenant cannot be said to have abandoned the house he hires, to have relinquished possession thereof, because he temporarily leaves it to go to the corner grocery for a cent's worth of milk. My associates agree with me that this is sound law. The law being thus indisputably clear, it only remains to consider the facts, upon which there is no material disagreement. The seat belonged to Lunder; McGusher took it; in other words, he took what did not belong to him, and what did belong to Lunder. McGusher is at fault. This court finds for the defendant, and sentences McGusher to apologize to Lunder for taking his seat."

"Who pays for my hat?" demanded Mr. McGusher, amid roars of laughter.

“The court decides that the hat was *particeps criminis* in the act of the owner. “It was in the place of Lunder, where it had no right to be. The hat was crushed because it was an intruder, like a mosquito in the boudoir of a lady! ‘Truth crushed to earth shall rise again;’ but hats never,” said Dr. Darling.

Mr. McGusher was not satisfied with the decision of the referees, but there was no appeal. He refused to apologize, however, and gazed ruefully at his twisted and misshapen hat.

The rain was falling in torrents when the Ocean-Born with her heavy tow arrived at the city; but all the party were under cover, and continued to have a jolly time till the weather permitted the ladies to go to their homes. Ben Lunder walked home with Kate Bilder, and spent the evening at the house. Mr. McGusher was disgusted, and at an early hour retired to his room. He did so only to get out of the way of his tormentor, who would not insult him, or even take any notice of him.

Mr. McGusher was troubled; his hat was spoiled, and he had hardly ten dollars in his pocket — not more than enough to pay his ex-

penses to New York. He must buy a new hat; he could hardly go into the street with the crushed tile on his head. He was worried about his financial prospects. He walked the room. As he passed the bureau on which stood his lamp, he saw a letter, the corner of which was thrust into the side of the looking-glass frame. It had evidently been placed there where it could be seen, perhaps as a reminder that something was to be done with it at a future period. Raising the lamp, he read the address: "MRS. MARY J. BANFORD." From the character of the stamp upon it, he judged that the letter had been sent some years before.

Mr. McGusher took the letter from its place. He looked at it for some time, and then he opened it, being very careful not to tear the envelope. He wet it, and worked upon it for ten minutes before he got it open. He took the contents from it, and found in the sheet of note paper it contained two five hundred dollar bills. Whether or not he knew Mrs. Banford, to whom the letter was addressed, and whether or not he expected to find so much money in the letter, does not yet appear.

CHAPTER X.

THE SHADOW.

MRS. BANFORD, to whom the letter which Mr. McGusher had opened was addressed, had been Captain Bilder's housekeeper many years before. This letter had come after her departure; and as her address was not known, her employer could not send it to her. As the captain had told his daughter, he had heard nothing from her since she left.

Mr. McGusher was careful to see that the door of his room was securely fastened before he opened the letter. Of course he was fully aware that his proceedings were not at all regular. It is hardly probable that he would have taken the trouble to open the letter, if he had not expected to find money in it, for the want of it at that time was the sore need of his existence. He looked at one of the bills, then at

the other, and finally at both together. He never had so much money in his hand at one time before. They were large bills; in fact, too large to suit his purpose, for they were not available for use in their present form, and he hardly dared to ask any person in the city to change one of them, lest it should subject him to suspicion.

He read the letter in which the money was enclosed; but he did not seem to be much interested in it. It contained but a few lines, and no signature was attached to it. If he knew anything about the valuable epistle, he certainly did not obtain his knowledge from the letter itself. He transferred the money to his wallet, and returned the letter to the envelope. He stuck down the flap again, and placed it where he had found it, in the looking-glass.

Mr. McGusher was a rich young man now. His conscience did not appear to smite him for what he had done; and perhaps the only thing that worried him was the difficulty of changing the large bill. He had a certain amount of low cunning, which rendered him extremely cautious; and before he went to bed he had decided to

take the steamer the next morning for Bangor, where he could change the bills into a more available currency, without being suspected.

Mr. McGusher felt very rich. He could "cut as wide a swath" *now* as any of the young fellows on the Ocean-Born or the yachts. The thousand dollars in his pocket filled his head with visions of fast horses, elegant suppers, and a good time, while the money lasted. By the time it was gone, his "long-lost father" would be ready to take him to his arms, and allow him three thousand dollars a year or so for his personal expenses. This was what the young man thought, from which it will be inferred that he did not "take any stock" in the poverty of Captain Bilder. He suspected that the shipmaster was a shrewd man, who pleaded poverty to save himself from imposition. Mr. McGusher went to bed, when he had decided what to do, and possibly he went to sleep, after a while, though his suddenly-acquired riches rather disturbed the equilibrium of his little brain.

Before ten o'clock Ben Lunder bade Kate adieu, and returned to the Ocean-Born. I am not quite sure that Ben slept before the small

hours of the morning, for Miss Bilder was a very pretty girl, and a vision of her sweet face haunted his brain. He thought it all over as he lay in his bunk in the fore-castle of the steamer; and he rather flattered himself that she had been pleased with him, that she had been more partial to his society than to that of others. He had heard of her father's financial disaster, but he did not care a straw for that. He liked Kate, and he did not ask whether she was rich or poor.

If Miss Kate was similarly affected, she had no time to indulge in a vision of the young collegian, the "old salt," for her father began to talk to her as soon as Ben had gone; and the conversation was so interesting and important that they staid up till after midnight.

"This McGusher is a ridiculous spooney," said Captain Bilder, when he was alone with Kate. "I have been ashamed of him all the afternoon."

"Why did you ask him to come to the house, father?" added Kate, rather reproachfully. "He has been hanging about me like a leech, and I hate the sight of him. I tried to treat him de-

cently till he made such a fool of himself. Are we to have him in the house for a week or two?"

"I hope not, though we may not stay in the house ourselves many days longer," replied the ship-master, rather sadly.

"I should almost be willing to leave it, if I could get rid of Mr. McGusher. You don't think he is — he is — my brother — do you, father?" asked Kate, with something like a shudder, for certainly it was better to have no brother than such a one as the long-lost.

But she did think it would be "so nice" to have such a brother as Mr. Lunder, so noble, so funny, and so handsome!

"I don't think he is your brother, Kate. If there is anything in parental instinct, I am very sure he is not my son," answered the captain, with a faint smile. "Your brother's eyes were blue, and this fellow's are gray. His nose is entirely different from my little boy's, that is, in shape. Little Oscar's nose was Grecian, like yours and mine, while this puppy's is a pug nose. No, Kate, I know he is not my son."

"Then why do you encourage him, father, by

taking him into your house, and allowing him to go into society with us?"

"I will tell you, Kate. I do it because I want to ascertain his connection with other parties. I wish to investigate this card business. The part which came to me ten years ago exactly corresponds with the part brought by this young cub. It seems to me that if any one intended to impose upon me ten years ago, as the first letter and piece of card led me to suppose, he would hardly have waited so long for the fruits of the enterprise. I have thought of it all the afternoon; but I can make nothing of it. If this young fellow had blue eyes and a Grecian nose, and had not been such an utter simpleton, I should certainly have believed he was my son. Of course the two parts of the card came from the same person, though the tone, style, and writing of the two letters are entirely different. I have written to Borden Green & Co., to ask if they have the third piece, and for any information they can give me in regard to the matter."

"Did you tell him to inquire about the Chessman family in Goshen?" asked Kate.

“I did not; for Borden Green has no country place in Goshen.”

“Didn’t you say he had?”

“No, not exactly. I only suggested the idea, to see what effect it would have on the idiot; and I am satisfied there is no such family as the Chessmans. I think the little villain made up his story as he went along, or that somebody else made it up beforehand, and he committed it to memory.”

“Perhaps Mr. McGusher is honest, after all, father. Somebody may have sent the letter to him at his place of business, with the card in it,” suggested the daughter.

“Hardly, Kate,” replied Captain Bilder, shaking his head. “If he had told me a straight story in regard to himself, I might have believed it; but there was an evident intention, manifested in all his answers, to cover up his past history. But it is a very easy matter to trace out the other parties in this trick; for I am satisfied it is a trick, and that there are other parties interested in it. If they had known that I lost my property, they would not have taken all this trouble. They think I am still wealthy, and

that this young cub will get a part of my estate. It is a flimsy scheme, and any sensible person would have seen that it could not succeed."

"But what are you going to do father?"

"I am not in condition now to do much of anything," replied Captain Bilder, sadly. "If I were as well off as I was a year ago, I should employ a 'shadow'—"

"A what?"

"A shadow—a private detective. They call them shadows in New York. A man to dog McGusher till he discovered his associates and learned his history. But I can't afford to pay five dollars a day for a detective now; and I must do it myself, or get some friend to do it for me. I was thinking of this young Mr. Lunder."

"He would be glad to do it, father," added Kate. "But then he is not going back for several weeks yet."

"I must go to New York after I have arranged my affairs here, and I will attend to it myself. I have the big card he sent in to me, so that I can easily find him."

It was after midnight when this conversation

ceased ; but even at this late hour, Captain Neil Brandon had not yet "turned in." In his capacious state-room there was a desk at which he sat writing, when the clocks on the churches of the city chimed twelve. Half an hour later, he had finished the long letter to his mother, and began to read it over, making the necessary corrections with his pen as he did so. Though there was nothing that will be strange or startling to the reader in this letter, we feel obliged to quote a portion of it.

"MY DEAR MOTHER: I mailed a short letter to you this morning, announcing our safe arrival at Belfast. I wrote that we had rescued a party in a dismantled yacht, out of sight of land, on the ocean ; but I had not time to give you the particulars of the affair, for I was very busy with our guests on board." (Then followed a full account of the discovery of the Sea Foam, and of the subsequent events of the voyage up the Penobscot Bay.) "One of the young ladies on board of her was Miss Kate Bilder, a beautiful girl of sixteen. Ben was delighted with her, and I think he is a little sweet on her. She is the only daughter of a retired ship-master, who has lost all his property by 'being too honest,' some people say. But of course I don't believe that was the reason, for an honest beggar is better than a wealthy rogue." (Then came a description of the rest of the rescued party.)

“In the morning Captain Bilder, Kate’s father, came on board, with some other people. He seemed to be absent-minded; but this was explained by the misfortune which had just overtaken him. He seemed to be startled when my name was given to him; and I thought he expressed more surprise at the name of the steamer than the occasion seemed to justify. He asked me about my father and mother. When I told him my father was a sailor, and that I was born at sea, he appeared to think it was very strange, though he did not say why he thought so. I was rather curious to know why he was so astonished, and I shall ask him or Kate about it when I have an opportunity.

“To-day we had a splendid excursion to a place called Turtle Head, less than an hour’s run from Belfast.” (Here were inserted a full history and description of the Dorcas Club.) “Captain Bilder and Kate were both with us, and a spooney from New York city, by the name of Arthur McGusher, a regular swell; and Ben picks upon him awfully. Captain Bilder did not say anything to me about my father or the Ocean-Born; but he asked Gerald Roach about my parents and my history. I was so busy looking after the party we had on board, that I had no opportunity to ask him any questions; but I shall probably have a chance to do so to-morrow.

“We have planned a grand excursion up the Penobscot to Bangor, with the Dorcas Club and the Yacht Club. We shall start in a day or two. In the mean time we are doing splendidly. The houses of all the good people of

Belfast are open to us, and we have no end of invitations to dinner, to tea, to pass the evening; and they even propose to get up a ball in honor of the officers of the Ocean-Born. Think of that, mother! We are something, down here! The people can't do enough for us, and we can't accept a tenth part of the invitations we receive. Ben is as funny as ever, and immensely popular with everybody except Mr. McGusher." (An account of the trial in the fore-cabin of the steamer came next.)

"Now, my dear mother, you see what a good thing we made of it by coming to Belfast. I don't think I ever met people I liked so well. As you know, I didn't think of coming to this city, and for some reason or other I thought you did not wish me to do so. But I am glad we did come this way, instead of going up the other side of the bay, and stopping at Castine. We may go there on our way down. I shouldn't have come to Belfast if it hadn't been for towing the Sea Foam here. As the party on board of her were in distress, you see, I could not decently do anything different, especially as it did not make much difference to us where we went to. It is after midnight, dear mother; so good night.

"Your affectionate son,

"NEIL BRANDON."

The young commander put this long epistle into an envelope, directed it, and it was heavy enough to require an extra stamp. Leaving the

missive on the desk, to be mailed in the morning, he indulged in a long gape, then turned in, and went to sleep, in which condition we are content to leave him till Mr. Peter Blossom rings the first bell in the morning.

Whether Mr. Arthur McGusher slept well or not, he was up at five o'clock in the morning. So was Captain Bilder, from which it may be inferred that his slumbers were disturbed by the memory of his financial misfortunes.

"You are up early, Mr. McGusher," said the captain, as they met in the hall.

"Yes, saw; I am an awly wiser," replied the long-lost.

"I see you have your bag in your hand: are you going away?" asked the ship-master, thinking it possible that his unwelcome guest might have become disgusted with the events of the preceding day, and intended to retire from the field.

"Yes, saw, I'm going up to a place called Bangaw, to do a little business for our house; in shawt, as a dwummaw, saw, though I did not come heaw as a dwummaw," answered Mr. McGusher.

“Do you return to Belfast?”

“Pawsibly, Captain Bildaw. I have delivered the cawd, or, wather, the piece of a cawd, and you have another piece. I don’t know that you wish to see me again. You don’t seem to wecognize me as your long-lost son, though I bwing the vewy best of pwoof that I am your long-lost son.”

“I wish to investigate the matter a little, before I decide finally.”

“To be suaw, as much as you please. I will wetawn in a day or two, to lawn yaw final decision.”

Mr. McGusher left the house, and walked down to the steamboat wharf. Captain Bilder did not like to lose sight of him. He desired to know if the young man wrote any letters, and if he did, to whom they were addressed. The long-lost had declared that he had not money enough to pay his expenses during his proposed stay in Belfast; and it seemed very strange that he should make a trip to Bangor, especially if it was true that he was on his vacation, as he alleged he was. Possibly his confederates in the scheme were in Bangor. Still

thinking of the matter, he left the house and walked down to the wharf. Waiting there to take a passage in the steamer, he discovered a young man who was under great obligations to him for certain favors extended to him in better days, and who fully recognized his debt of gratitude.

“Good morning, Captain Bilder,” said Monroe, as they met. “Are you going up to Bangor?”

“No; but I wish I could, for I have important business.”

“Can I do anything for you, captain? If I can, I shall be very glad to do it, as you know. I am going off on a little vacation, and it does not make much difference to me where I go.”

“Thank you, Monroe. You can render me a great service,” replied Captain Bilder, earnestly.

“Then I hope you will let me render it. I thought I should stay a day or two in Bangor; and nothing would afford me more pleasure than to spend it in your service.”

“Thank you. I haven’t time to explain the nature of the business to you, for the steamer

is just coming in; but I can tell you exactly what to do, and will show you what it all means at another time."

"I don't desire to know any more than is necessary to enable me to do the business you require of me," replied Monroe.

"I can do that. Do you see the young man in light clothes, with his hat badly jammed, and with a bag in his hand, standing by the capill of the wharf?"

"I see him: he is a regular swell; and I have seen him before," laughed Monroe.

"I want to know all he does, and whom he meets, in Bangor. If he writes any letters, I particularly wish to know to whom he addresses them. I want the address in full."

"I will do the best I can," answered the volunteer shadow; "and I think I can accomplish all you desire."

"Don't let him see you speaking to me; if he does he will be suspicious, perhaps. Let me have your information by mail as fast as you obtain it."

"I will not fail to do so," said Monroe, as they separated.

The steamer had already made fast to the wharf, and the passengers in waiting went on board of her. The "shadow" overtook Mr. McGusher, and followed him to the saloon. The latter, with a very magnificent air, gave his bag to a waiter, and then went to the breakfast table, where the meal was in process. Monroe kept close to him, and took the next seat at the table.

"May I twouble you for the buttaw?" said Mr. McGusher, as the meal proceeded.

"Certainly, sir; with pleasure," replied Monroe, with an exuberance of politeness which won the heart of the swell.

"It is a beautiful day for a trip up the river," the shadow ventured, a little farther along, to say.

"Vewy beautiful; and it's a fine wivaw, I'm told," answered Mr. McGusher, very graciously for a young man with two five-hundred dollar bills in his pocket.

"Not so fine as the Hudson, or even the Kennebec; but it's a very pleasant sail up to Bangor. You seem to be a stranger in these parts."

“ I am a stwangaw. Do you weside in Bangaw? ”

“ No sir; in Belfast. I am the book-keeper of a bank there; and I'm off just now on a little vacation.”

“ Just my case: I'm on a vacation. I'm a stwangaw in Bangaw. Can you tell me which is the best hotel thaw? ”

“ The Bangor House is as good as anything east of Portland.”

“ Then I shall go thaw. One must have a good hotel, you know, or thaw is no fun in a vacation.”

“ Quite right, Mr— Mr— ”

“ Mr. Arthur McGushaw, with the house of Hewlins & Heavybones, New Yawk city, at your sawvice,” replied the long-lost, producing one of his big pasteboards, as if to verify his statement. “ And I have the honaw to addwess Mr.—

“ John Monroe.”

“ Thanks, Mr. Monwoe. Now we know each othaw pawfectly.”

Mr. McGusher was very much pleased with his new acquaintance; and before the steamer arrived at Bangor, they had cemented what ap-

peared to be an everlasting friendship. Monroe made himself exceedingly agreeable; and, fully understanding the man with whom he had to deal, he judiciously flattered him, and not only permitted, but encouraged him to believe that he was the most important personage who had visited the State of Maine for a long time. Indeed, they were so much in love with each other, that they took a large room together at the hotel.

“I have come down heaw to have a good time, and I’m going to have it,” said Mr. McGusher, when they had taken possession of the handsome and pleasant apartment.

“Right, McGusher! That’s just my case,” replied Monroe.

“I have plenty of time and plenty of money, added the swell.

“Unfortunately, I have more time than money. I can’t afford a very extravagant bat.”

“Nevaw mind, my boy. I’m glad I met you, and I have money enough for both of us.”

Ordinarily, Monroe, who was really a high-toned fellow, would have objected to such an arrangement; but in the present instance he did not.

“Monwoe, my deaw fellow, I’m in a little twouble, just now,” said Mr. McGusher, as they were about to leave the room. “When I left New Yawk, I dwew five hundwed dollaws from the bank wheaw I had deposited my hawd awnings. They paid me in one bill. Having a five-hundwed dollaw bill is almost as bad as having no money at all.”

“Not at all: you can change it at any bank,” replied Monroe. “I know the bank people here, and I will get it done for you.” And he did get it done; but he asked the teller to mark the bill, and hold it as long as he could.

In the afternoon, the long-lost wrote a couple of letters, one of which he enclosed in the other. He directed it to “Mrs. Mary McGusher, Goshen, Orange Co., N. Y.” It was mailed in the office of the hotel, but the address was promptly noted in the memorandum-book of the watchful Monroe.

By dinner time the next day Captain Bilder knew that his “long-lost son” had changed a five-hundred dollar bill at Bangor, and written a letter, enclosed in another, directed to “Mrs. Mary McGusher, of Goshen, N. Y.

CHAPTER XI.

TWO IMPORTANT LETTERS.

“**I** DON'T like to leave you all alone, father,” said Kate Bilder, on the day the cruise of the clubs up the Penobscot was to be commenced.

“I shall be so busy for the next few days, that you will not see much of me, and I think you had better go with your friends,” replied her father, who wished her to go, and was unwilling to have her sacrifice the pleasure of the excursion, when she could not assist him by doing so.

So it was decided that she should take her place as leader of the Lily. As some of the girls were poor, it had been decided that the expenses should be paid from the club treasury, in which there was a surplus, after paying for the last boat they needed.

It was Tuesday morning, several days after Mr. McGusher had started for Bangor. Monroe wrote every day in regard to the swell's movements, but no further information of any value was obtained. The young exquisite was spending his money with as much haste as the circumstances would permit. He drove fast horses, and ate and drank the best the hotel afforded.

When the mail came that day, it brought several important letters, two of which deserve a notice before we start with the clubs. One was addressed to Captain Bilder, and was post-marked at Goshen, N. Y.

"Whom is that from, father?" asked Kate, as she handed him the letter.

"I'm sure I don't know. I'm not aware that I know any person in Goshen. That's where McGusher said he used to live," replied the shipmaster, as he opened the letter.

"Perhaps it is from some friend of Mr. McGusher," added Kate, deeply interested.

"Very likely it is," continued Captain Bilder, as he read the letter, and a smile played upon his face.

"What is it, father?"

“I will read it to you. It is really very funny under the circumstances.”

“CAPTAIN R. BILDER. My dear Sir: In reply to your letter, addressed to Borden Green, Esq.,—who has requested me to give you the information for which you seek,—I would say, that Mr. Arthur McGusher is well known in Goshen as a very respectable and highly intelligent young man. He was brought up in the family of Mr. Amos P. Chessman, who died nearly three years ago, with hydrophobia, having been bitten by a mad dog, and suffered terribly before he gave up the ghost. Before his death, however, Mr. Arthur McGusher—who exhibited very great commercial abilities, was well educated, and of elegant manners—was placed in the large mercantile house of Hewlins & Heavybones, 4928 Broadway, New York. I have made some inquiries in that part of the town where Mr. Chessman lived,—for his farm was not in the village of Goshen. I found several persons who knew the family well. They all said Mr. Chessman had taken Mr. McGusher from an orphan asylum in New York city, when he was six or seven years old. They had no means of knowing how the child happened to be in the asylum, but it was there, and Mrs. Chessman thought it was too pretty to stay there.

“I have answered your letter at the earliest moment possible after I had made the necessary inquiries.

“Yours truly, for Borden Green,

“T. K. BUNKER.”

“GOSHEN, July 28, 187-.”

“There, Kate, what do you think of that?” laughed Captain Bilder, when he had finished the reading of the letter.

“I don’t understand it, father,” she replied.

“Well, I think it is not difficult to understand.”

“You told me you should write no letter of this kind to Borden Green.”

“And I did not.”

“Then who is T. K. Bunker?”

“He is a myth, like Amos P. Chessman and his family.”

“Where did that letter come from?”

“It was sent from Bangor to Goshen, to be re-mailed there.”

“That is very strange.”

“Not at all. Mr. McGusher wrote this letter himself.”

“Why, father!”

“It is a very plain case. I understand it perfectly; quite as well as I should if Mr. McGusher had confessed to me exactly how he did it—the simpleton! He does not know enough to cover his own tracks.”

“But father, that letter may be genuine.”

“Impossible, Kate! Do you remember how it began — ‘In reply to your letter addressed to Borden Green.’ I haven’t written any letter to Borden Green on this subject; only to the firm in New York, inquiring about the third piece of the card. Mr. McGusher was doubtless satisfied that I had written such a letter to my former banker at Goshen, and has prepared his reply to it. He has overreached himself. If I had really written such a letter, he might have known that Borden Green would also answer it, and thus assure me that this letter is a fraud; at least, I suppose so, though he may have had some means of preventing such an exposure.”

“I didn’t think Mr. McGusher was smart enough to play such a trick,” added Kate.

“It is anything but smart; on the contrary, I think it is rather stupid. He set a trap which he was sure to fall into, in any event. If I wrote no letter, he betrays himself to me; if I did write one, Borden Green will betray him to me. It is about as broad as it is long. But I haven’t given you all the information I have obtained, Kate.”

“I thought you had told me everything, father.”

“I did tell you everything up to the departure of Mr. McGusher for Bangor,” added Captain Bilder, taking several of Monroe’s letters from his pocket. “You have been away with the boat club so much for several days, or some of the officers of the Ocean-Born have been here when you were at home, that I have not had a chance to talk with you. I like to see you enjoy yourself, Kate, while you may, so I did not say anything to you.”

“What did Mr. McGusher go to Bangor for?” asked Kate, curiously.

“That was the very question which excited my curiosity and interest,” replied Captain Bilder. “He told me he had not money enough to pay his expenses a single week in Belfast, and his fare back to New York. In other words, he asked me for money, which I refused to give or lend him. I thought it was very strange that he should wish to go to Bangor, and that, if his firm sent him there on business, as he says, he was not supplied with money for this purpose. I came to the conclusion that he had a confederate in Bangor, though I am inclined to think now that I was mistaken. A friend of

mine consented to act as a shadow for me, as he was going to Bangor, and these letters contain the result of his investigations. Only two facts in them are of any particular consequence. One is, that he mailed a letter to Mrs. Mary McGusher in Goshen; and this letter enclosed another."

"The one which has just come to you from Goshen?" added Kate, her bright eyes lighted up with intelligence.

"Undoubtedly; and I have no doubt it reached Goshen in thirty hours after it was mailed, and then started for Belfast by the next mail."

"It all looks very plain."

"Nothing could be more so."

"But who is Mrs. Mary McGusher?"

"I don't know; perhaps his mother. But I think we have got hold of something now. This Mrs. McGusher in Goshen is probably his confederate, and will be able to tell me something about the card in three pieces, and the letter I received ten years ago. Probably she wrote the letter which the simpleton brought to me. Monroe gives me another piece of information which is interesting, though it may have

no bearing on this question. Mr. McGusher had a five-hundred dollar bill when he arrived at Bangor."

"Where did he get so much money?" asked Kate, breathless with astonishment.

"That is what perplexes me. Monroe is sure he did not obtain it in Bangor, and he must have had it when he was in Belfast."

"But he told you he had no money, or only a little."

"He does not appear to scruple at telling a lie."

"Where could he have obtained so much money?"

"I am sure I don't know. A young fellow like him, working in a store, don't often have five hundred dollars; and not many rich men are so liberal as to pass out so large a sum to their sons at one time. That fellow needs watching, and I am sorry I am not able just now to keep an eye on him."

The door bell rang at this moment, and the servant admitted some one. It is said that a certain spirit of evil is always near when one is speaking of him. Though this may not be

strictly a fact, it seems to be true that he is sometimes at hand under the conditions named. At any rate, Mr. Arthur McGusher was announced, and presently entered the sitting-room, adjoining the library.

“Good mawning, Captain Bildaw,” said he, flippantly, as the ship-master entered the room, followed by Kate.

He bowed very low, and displayed the most extraordinary politeness to the young lady, who was ingenuous enough to treat him as coolly as her gentle nature would permit.

“Good morning, Mr. McGusher. I hope you are quite well,” replied the captain.

“Nevaw bettaw.”

“When did you return?”

“I wetawned on the boat, yestawday aftawnoon,” answered the swell, assuming a rather lofty air towards his “long-lost father.”

“You conclude, then, not to occupy a room in my house?”

“Yes, saw; such was my conclusion. I was not quite sure that I was welcome in this house, and I took a room at the best hotel. A gentleman of fine feelings don’t like to intwude whaw

he is not wanted, you see," added Mr. McGusher, with a supercilious toss of his head.

"I see; but the room was at your service."

"I was hawdly tweated with the cawjality which a long-lost son might weasonably expect," continued the swell, toying with his incipient mustache. "I thought I had a wight to expect genawous tweatment undaw the sawcumstances. I bwrought abundant pwoof that I was your long-lost son."

"Well, Mr. McGusher, I desired to investigate the matter before I gave a final answer to a question of so much importance; but I am happy to say now that I have the means of doing so without troubling you to remain any longer in this city."

"Indeed!" exclaimed the long-lost, as though this remark was a surprise to him; but he concluded that the 'means' alluded to was the letter he had received from Goshen.

"As you observed to me that your funds were rather short, I am unwilling to subject you to any further expense; for as I told you before, my circumstances are so changed that I am unable to advance you any money."

“Quite unnecessary to do so now. I was shawt, but I telgwaphed to my fawm in New Yawk, and have weceived a wemittance. I desiawed to spend the wemaindaw of my vacation in this state.”

“Of course you can do as you please about that. I have only to say that I am a beggar myself, and I can do nothing for you,” added the captain.

“A beggaw! My deaw fawthaw, all that I have is thine!”

“I don’t mean that I am literally a beggar; only that I have lost all my property.”

“My dear fawthaw, though I was shawt the othaw day, I am no longaw so. Would you do me the favaw to accept a gift or a loan of one or two hundred dollaws?” said Mr. McGusher, drawing his wallet. “I can do it just as well as not.”

“No; I am not reduced to that extremity. I cannot accept charity, or borrow what I may not be able to pay.”

“It would afford me vewy gweat pleasyaw.”

“You seem to be quite flush.”

“I have money enough faw pwesent uses, and a little to help my fawthaw.”

“I don’t need any help just now,” added the captain, rather sharply. “You must have had a large remittance. I heard that you changed a five-hundred dollar bill in Bangor.”

Mr. McGusher turned a little pale, and felt he had been imprudent in offering to produce one or two hundred dollars. And how could Captain Bilder know that he had changed a five-hundred dollar bill in Bangor? for Monroe had not yet returned to Belfast. It was no use to deny it, for the cashier of the bank where the bill had been changed might have furnished the information.

“Yes, saw; I had a five-hundwed dollaw bill. I bwrought it with me from New Yawk. It was the fwoot of my hawd awnings. I did not mean to use it on this twip. I thought my honawed fawthaw would help me out. As he did not, I had to use it,” explained the long-lost.

“I thought you had a remittance from your firm,” laughed Captain Bilder.”

Even Mr. McGusher was willing to acknowledge to himself that he had been remarkably stupid. While he was thinking only how he should account for the five hundred dollar bill, he forgot all about the remittance. It is a fact

that liars almost always trip themselves up, though they do not often convict themselves so glaringly as in this instance. It is not safe to lie, to say nothing of the wickedness of doing so.

“The wemittance was for anothaw pawpose, you see,” the swell added.

“I see,” added the captain, shrugging his shoulders; “but it is hardly necessary to continue the conversation.”

Captain Bilder knew nothing about the firm of Hewlins & Heavybones, 4928 Broadway, but he was afraid that “their representative” in Maine had been guilty of peculation upon them. He felt it to be his duty to inform them of the fact that their *employe* had changed a five-hundred dollar bill in Bangor; and he desired to obtain what information he could in regard to Mr. McGusher.

“Of cawse, I do not wish to continue the convawsation, Captain Bilder, I shall wemain at the hotel, and not twouble you with my pwesence,” replied Mr. McGusher, who doubtless thought this would be a severe deprivation to his long-lost father.

“Certainly; remain there, if you prefer.”

“But I undawstand that the yacht club, and

the Dawcas club are to make an excawsion up the wivaw," added the long-lost, more briskly.

"I should be happy to join them."

"That is their affair, not mine."

"But as yaw son pwesumptive, you would favaw me with an intwoduction to some menibaws of the yacht club, who would be glad to invite me."

"You must excuse me, Mr. McGusher. I have no influence with them," replied the shipmaster, very decidedly.

"Aw, Miss Kate!" said the long-lost, approaching her as she stood at the door, "you pwomised to intwoduce me to all the young ladies of the Dawcas club. I desiaw to join this excawsion."

"I have no authority to invite any one, and I think that the clubs are to have no invited guests," replied Kate, her eyes twinkling with mischief. "The yachts, are all full; but I think there is room in the steamer—the Ocean-Born."

"But that howwid Mr. Lunder—I beg your pawdon, if he is a friend of yours," protested Mr. McGusher.

"He is a friend of mine," answered Kate, warmly; and her face flushed a little.

“I desiaw to go on the excawsion, but not with Mr. Lundaw.”

“I think there is no chance to go except on the steamer.”

“But I have detawmined to go,” added the long-lost, taking the new white hat he had bought in Bangor, from the table. “I think most of the young ladies, when they know me bettaw, would be delighted to have me go.”

Even Mr. McGusher could not help feeling that he had been snubbed by father and daughter—“his fawthaw and his sistaw;” and he took his leave of Kate.

“I beg your pawdon, Captain Bildaw,” he added, turning to her father; “but have you heard from your friend Bawden Gween, at his country place in Goshen?”

“Not from him, but I have a letter from T. K. Bunker, in Goshen, who informs me that you lived in the Chessman family, and that you were taken from a lunatic asylum.”

“A what?” gasped Mr. McGusher. “A lunatic asylum!”

“I beg your pardon— an orphan asylum.”

“Aw! quite anothaw thing.”

“Quite different, I grant. If the statements of this letter are to be relied upon, your story is entirely true.”

“Of cawse it is; and of cawse you aw satisfied.”

“Not exactly satisfied. I have not yet heard from Borden Green & Co. in regard to the third piece of the card. If you are to remain in Belfast, I shall see you in a few days. I must leave you now.”

Mr. McGusher left the house. He could not see why Captain Bilder and his daughter did not take him to their loving arms, and shriek out, “My long-lost son!” “My long-lost brother!” But they did not, though the evidence ought to be enough to satisfy them. Mr. McGusher wished to bask in the smiles of the five-and-twenty young ladies who formed the Dorcas club. He was quite positive that he should make a sensation among them as soon as they knew him—it could not be otherwise; for he was entirely conscious of his blandishments as a lady-killer. He had seen the girls in these boats, and he envied the fellows who enjoyed their acquaintance. Kate could introduce him,

but he was painfully conscious that she was under the influence of that "howwid Lundaw." The wretch had prejudiced her against him, the "long-lost brother." He believed that he fully understood Ben's tactics. Ben realized what a fascinating fellow he — Mr. McGusher — was ; and that was the foundation of his prejudice against him. The long-lost knew that all the ladies in New York were fond of him ; and why should they not be in Belfast — ladies were the same all the world over. Ben wanted to be the shining light among them himself, and he was afraid that one with the personal and social attractions of A. McGusher would pale his star, outshine him, cast him into an eclipse. With this view of the situation, he was determined not to be kept outside of the charmed circle. He had plenty of money in his pocket, and since he could not go up the river with the party, he would go up like a lord. Monroe had informed him that there was a small steamer in the harbor which was sometimes let for parties at fifty dollars a day, which sum included the services of a pilot, engineer, and cook. His next business was to find and engage this steamer.

So much for the letter which Captain Bilder received, and the events which immediately followed it. Captain Neil Brandon also received an important letter on the morning the clubs were to start for Bangor. It was from his mother; and with the letter in his hand he retired to his state-room to read it. Some extracts from it are necessary to the development of our story.

“I did not wish you to go to Belfast in your steamer, for reasons which I cannot now explain, though I cannot find fault with you for so doing, under the circumstances,” wrote Madam Brandon. “It was your duty to save and to assist those who were in distress, and I know the noble heart of my boy. But I am sorry you went there; at least, I am sorry you did not leave the place as soon as you finished your business there. . . . You wrote me a great deal about Captain Bilder and his daughter. They are the very persons whose acquaintance I was afraid you would make, if you went to Belfast. For reasons which I cannot explain now, I do not wish you to have anything to do with them. Now, my dear boy, I wish to appeal to you as your mother. You will do what

I desire, and without asking any questions. *I want you to have nothing more to do or say to the Bilders.* You must leave Belfast as soon as you get this letter, and at once close your acquaintance with them. Of course I do not expect you to be rude or ungentlemanly towards them; only to keep away from them, and keep them away from yourself. It would worry me into my grave, if I thought you would not heed my wishes in this matter. But my dear boy will do just what I ask of him—I know he will.

“One thing more, dear Neil: you must be sure and not say a word to Captain Bilder or his daughter about what I have written; not a word nor a hint that I have asked you to avoid them. I am very much troubled about this matter. I did not sleep a wink last night after I read your letter, and I am strongly tempted to start at once for Belfast myself, in order to be sure that you heed what I say; and as it is, I may go to Bangor in a day or two, in order to meet you there when you arrive. Now, my dear boy, do not neglect your mother’s solemn request, and when I see you again, I will explain everything.”

“That’s very odd!” exclaimed Neil, when he had finished the letter. “Why is my mother afraid of Captain Bilder and his daughter?”

He read the letter again and again, but it afforded no clew to the motive of Madam Brandon’s extraordinary request.

CHAPTER XII.

UP THE PENOBSCOT.

PERHAPS because it was not considered just the thing for so many young people to go off alone, Captain Patterdale and Dr. Darling volunteered to accompany them, going as passengers in the steamer. Several of the parents of the girls had objected mildly to the arrangement, fearing that some of the young men or the young ladies might be a little too wild if they were entirely unrestrained by the presence of any older person. Captain Patterdale insisted that they needed a business agent, and he went in this capacity, while Dr. Darling's services were absolutely required as a physician and surgeon, in case of accident or sudden illness to any member of the party.

The distance to be accomplished was about forty miles, and it was not yet decided whether

the boat clubs would row the whole distance or not. The fair rowists were to do as they pleased; but most of them were so ambitious that they desired to pull the whole of the way, especially as the excursion was to be one continuous frolic. The Ocean-Born was at anchor off Don John's wharf, and at ten o'clock her steam was up, ready for a start. The members of the boat clubs were gathering on the pier, near the boat-house, each with a small bag or bundle containing the few needed articles for the journey, and a water-proof. They were to encumber themselves with no extra dresses; the blue flannel uniform was to answer for service in the boats, and for parties on shore, if they went to any. All the shore arrangements were to be made by Captain Patterdale, and the members did not even know what they were to be. The bags and bundles were stowed away in the boats, though Neil Brandon offered to carry them on board of the steamer.

One after another the beautiful barges shot out from the wharf, with their colors flying, until all of them were in line outside of the Ocean-Born. All the yachts that were to par-

ticipate—six in number—were ready to trip their anchors and run up their jibs.

Captain Neil Brandon was in the pilot-house of the steamer, ready to start the boat, for she was to follow the fleet of the Dorcas Club. As the Lily darted past the Ocean-Born, Kate Bilder waved her handkerchief to him, and he returned the salute by swinging his cap. He could not help thinking of what his mother had written to him; and he permitted Ben Lunder, who was on the forecastle, to indulge without a comment in more extravagant demonstrations. Why should his mother wish him to shun the Bilders? Both the father and the daughter were held in the highest esteem and regard in the city, even in spite of the loss of fortune which had overtaken the ship-master. What had Captain Bilder done? Certainly the fair Kate could have done nothing wrong. He had never heard his mother mention the Bilders before, and he did not know that she had ever been in Belfast.

In this connection Neil could not help thinking of his first interview with Captain Bilder, in which that gentleman had manifested so much surprise when he mentioned the name of



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his father, and also at the name of the steamer. He recalled the questions which the ship-master had asked him, and he was convinced that there was some sort of a relation between Captain Bilder and his mother. Madam Brandon had entreated him to leave Belfast at once, and avoid the Bilders. He was not to speak to them, but he was enjoined not to be rude to them. Perhaps Neil was not entirely satisfied with the character of his obedience to his mother, though he was now on the point of leaving Belfast. Certainly it would be rude for him, now that the arrangements were all made, to back out, especially as he could give no reasonable excuse for doing so. He would avoid Kate as much as he could without being rude to her; but it must be acknowledged this was not so difficult a task as it would have been for Ben Lunder. Neil was particularly glad that he had not been called upon to avoid the fascinating Minnie Darling, for he had spent most of the evenings of his stay at Belfast in her father's house.

“A gun from the foreto'-gallant forecastle of the Skylark!” shouted Ben Lunder. “Stand by the main-royal mud-hook! Stand by your top-

sail toggle-joints! Tip up your topping-lifts! Bobble to your bolt-ropes!"

"What's the matter, Ben?" asked the captain.

"A gun from the yacht of the mighty commodore of the squadron."

"I heard it; I'm not deaf."

"Only a little blind in your starboard ear. There go the yachts like a moon-raker in a hurricane. Booms and bobstays! They go it as lively as a dolphin-striker paddling his own canoe in a nor-nor-wester."

"Let fall!" was the signal from the Dorcas, and the oars of the five club boats dropped into the water as one. "Give way together!" And off went the beautiful craft abreast of each other, the girls pulling a gentle stroke, which gave them a speed of about three miles an hour.

"Ah, what is this earth but paradise! especially the watery part of it?" exclaimed Ben, clasping his hands to emphasize his rapture. "Bless them! beaming like silver stars on my dewy toplights!"

"Call all hands, Ben, to get up the anchor!" shouted Neil from the pilot-house.

“All you starboardlines, ahoy!” yelled Ben. “Break for the forecastle and heave up the anchor!”

Martin Roach was the first to respond to this call, and placed himself at the little donkey engine on the forecastle. Though the anchor was not so very heavy, it would have been a long and hard job for the four young fellows who were available for this duty to heave it up by hand. As only two, or three at most, could be spared for this task when only the four owners were on a cruise, in the Delaware, the donkey engine had been provided for this and other heavy work. Several turns were taken in the cable over the drum of the windlass, the young engine puffed, and in a moment the anchor was at the hawse-hole.

“Anchor’s aweigh!” said Martin.

Neil rang one bell, and the Ocean-Born went ahead slowly. Ben and Berry Owen washed the mud from the anchor with an old broom, and it was hoisted up on an iron fish-davit by the engine, and then lowered to its usual resting-place on the forecastle. The cable was coiled away neatly by the deck-hand, the planks swept

off, and everything was made as tidy as a lady's parlor. There was no more regular work to be done for the next two or three hours.

“Well, Ben, how do you feel to-day?” asked Captain Patterdale, as the deck-hand ascended to the hurricane-deck, where the two passengers were seated.

“In good order and condition, like a ship ready for a long voyage,” replied Ben. “I stowed away a full cargo of mutton chops, broiled ham, fish-balls, fried cunners, omelets, boiled eggs, scrambled eggs, and a few other delicate notions, for breakfast this morning, and I feel as though I could keep tolerably cheerful till dinner time, though I shall be ready to take off the hatches for lunch by meridian.”

“Do you call that a full cargo?” laughed Captain Patterdale. “I should think you would wish to eat something for your breakfast.”

“I do, as a rule. This ballasting the ship with live geese feathers is not just the thing; still they fill up the vessel from the fore-garboard streak up to the main-royal benders,” replied Ben, soberly. “Ever since I began to go to sea, skotch my sky-scrapers, if I haven't been

hungry, and at almost any time of day or night I can stow away provender.”

“In other words, you need ballast.”

“Exactly so, sir. Ballast is the great moral, mental, and social regulator. Because G. Washington had ballast in the hold, he was able to keep an even keel. G. W. was an old salt, like me. That exciting nautical scene, of which he is the central figure, the crossing of the Delaware, proves that he was a great navigator, to say nothing of the happy manner in which he crossed over from Long Island when things didn't work just right. G. W. ballasted his craft, and it is a memorable historical fact that he was always able to tell the truth on a full stomach. In my opinion, when a committee in Congress intend to investigate a case of corruption, it would be a wise plan to give the witnesses a good breakfast or a good dinner, for a man can tell the truth better on a full stomach than on an empty one.”

“I dare say you are right, Ben; but I have not investigated your philosophy,” added the listener.

“I know I am right, sir. A philosopher don't

amount to anything if he has any doubts about his philosophy."

"The subject is rather heavy for a pleasure excursion," laughed Captain Patterdale. "How fast are we going, Ben?"

"Not over ten knots."

"That's a safe answer."

"I am opposed to loose statements; my stomach is full, and I cannot tell a lie."

"Not over two knots and a half, I should say," added Captain Patterdale.

"Life is a voyage, and we are but the sailors," said Ben, looking as wise and solemn as an owl. "He is a prudent tar who often heaves the log. 'How fast are we going?' That was your conundrum, sir. I shall take it as my first text when I write a sermon. I am fond of nautical figures, you know. My tongue is reeking with salt, and I can't help indulging in sea slang. How fast are we going?" repeated Ben, with a flourish and a gesture.

"About two knots and a half, Ben."

"I was looking to the moral significance of the conundrum."

"O, the sermon?"

“Yes, sir. As I should probably be preaching it to an audience of landlubbers, lollipops, and greenhorns, I should first explain the nautical meaning of the expression. As you are a sailor, I need not do so in your case. I should say to the young man, ‘How fast are you going?’ If you don’t know, heave the log. If you can’t tell how fast you are going, you don’t know how near you are to the sunken ledge of Dissipation. You can’t tell how the shoals of Dishonesty bear. If you haven’t the means of making up your dead reckoning, you may be running for the reef of Destruction. You can’t take the sun when you get out into the fog of Moral Indifference.”

“That will make a very good sermon; but I trust you will see the necessity of heaving the lead in such a dangerous sea as you describe.”

“Heave the lead shall be the text of another sermon, for I can’t afford to put all my subjects into one. The young man must heave the log, and if he don’t go any faster than the Ocean-Born at this moment, he will be in no danger of becoming a fast young man.”

Neil Brandon had given the helm to Berry

Owen, and joined the party on the hurricane deck. He had listened to a part of Ben's speech, and perhaps he was glad to have his friend show that there was something in his composition besides nonsense.

"Der gook dinks you petter told us how much beoples you haf to dinner in der gabins to-day," said Karl, addressing the captain.

"I shall invite the twenty-five members of the Dorcas Club to dine on board," replied Neil.

"No, no, captain!" interposed Captain Patterdale; "you will upset all my arrangements if you do that."

"What are your plans, sir?"

"For the present I must ask you to excuse me, and not get dinner for anybody," replied the managing agent.

"But I intended to feed the ladies on board the Ocean-Born."

"Perhaps you may have the opportunity tomorrow, but not to-day."

Neil submitted, and Karl was not sorry to be spared the labor of setting the table. The breeze was tolerably fresh, and the fleet of

yachts was by this time a mile ahead of the Dorcas Club. The water was rather rough for the boats in this part of the bay, though they were all doing very well. They were now pulling "by twos," with the Dorcas ahead.

"I should think those young ladies would be tired," said Neil, after they had been rowing about an hour.

"They are used to it; but they are advised not to pull over an hour without a rest," replied Captain Patterdale. "Their muscles have been trained; and at the stroke they pull, it is not so hard work as it is to sweep a carpet, run a sewing machine, or even to sew. The air gives them strength, and they don't hurry. A stout boy could pull one of those boats as fast as they are going, and without any great exertion. I am told that those who are still pupils in the High School get their lessons better than before they engaged in this exercise; and certainly their health is much improved."

At this moment the boats stopped to take the rest enjoined upon them. The girls boated their oars, and the Ocean-Born steamed around them, going near enough to engage in a chat with them.

“O that I were a member of that club!” said Ben, as the steamer passed the Lily.

“We will take you as a passenger for a time,” replied Kate Bilder.

“Roses and posies! may I have that bliss?”

“You may.”

The steamer was stopped, and the Lily backed up to her gangway. Ben leaped lightly into the stern-sheets. Captain Brandon was invited to accept a place in the Dorcas, and he did so.

“We should be glad to take a passenger,” said Jenny Waite, in the Fairy.

“Whom?” laughed Captain Patterdale.

“Mr. Berry Owen,”

“But he must steer,” added Neil.

“Mr. Gerald Roach, then.”

The engineer was at liberty then, and took his place on the Fairy.

The boats went off by twos again, and the steamer followed; but it was observed that the three which contained passengers did not keep their places in the procession as well as before.

“Now, really, I don’t feel just right to sit

here, and see four ladies pulling before me," said Ben. "I am like a selfish fly in a sugar-bowl, enjoying all the sweets."

"We are satisfied, and you ought to be," replied Kate. "Do you know how far we are going to-day, Mr. Lunder?"

"I do not; but the high and mighty managing agent has a plan which he keeps to himself. I have never navigated these waters, and I don't know which way the cat-harpings point."

"I hope we shall stop at Fort Point," said one of the fair rowists.

"That is a delightful place" added Kate. "There is a new hotel on the Point."

"How far is it from Belfast?" asked Ben.

"Not more than ten miles."

"We shall be there all too soon," sighed the old salt, as he glanced at Kate. "I may not again be permitted to take passage on this celestial barge, pulled by peris from paradise. What steamer is that approaching?"

"That is an excursion steamer from Belfast. She takes out parties," replied Kate, after glancing at the boat.

“She seems to be headed towards this celestial fleet.”

“Perhaps she is going up to Bangor,” suggested Kate.

Half an hour later, the steamer came up abreast of the fleet of boats, and slowed down so as to keep alongside. It was rather a pretty craft, so far as white, blue, and red paint could make her so. Her name, painted under the front windows of her pilot-house, was the “Monogram.” She was a small screw steamer, with a cabin aft, and a cook-room in her fore-castle. On the hurricane-deck, which was railed in, and provided with seats, walked with folded arms, in solitary grandeur, Mr. Arthur McGusher. He was not to be cheated out of the pleasures of the excursion up the Penobscot by the swinishness of Ben Lunder, to whom alone he attributed his exclusion from the party.

“As I live, there is Mr. McGusher!” exclaimed Kate, as she recognized her “long-lost brother.”

“And he seems to be the only passenger,” added Ben.

At this moment, Mr. McGusher caught the

eye of Kate, and taking off his new white hat, he bowed very low, and flourished with his right hand. Kate nodded to him, but bestowed no further notice upon him.

“Ladies, yaw most obedient! I hope I see you vewy well this mawning,” said the long-lost.

No one in the Lily made any reply. Mr. McGusher descended to the main deck, and took a position near the pilot-house. Seeing Ben in the Lily, he did not continue the conversation. The Monogram then dropped astern, till she was abreast of the Psyche, whose name Mr. McGusher spelled out from his position.

“Chickee, ahoy!” said he, taking off his hat again, and indulging in a tremendous flourish.

Mr. McGusher was not deeply versed in mythology, and had never read the story of Cupid and Psyche. His spelling of the name of the beautiful maiden who became immortal resulted in nothing more classic than “Chickee.” Carrie West, the leader of the boat, made no reply, for she did not know what the gentleman in the white hat meant.

“In the Chickee!” called Mr. McGusher.

“Are you speaking to us?” asked Carrie, when the Monogram came so near as almost to interfere with the movement of the oars.

“I addressed the ladies in the Chickee.”

“The Chickee!” laughed the leader; and her companions screamed with her.

“I beg your pawdon; but what is the name of your beautiful boat?” demanded the swell.

“The Chickee,” answered Carrie. “And we are all Chickees.”

The fair rowers laughed so that they almost lost their stroke.

“You must be vewy fatigued. Allow me to offaw the sawvices of my steamaw to tow the Chickee.”

“No, I thank you,” replied Carrie, smartly.

“Allow me to invite you on board of the Monogwam; and she is entiawly at your saw-vice.”

“No, thank you; but you will oblige me by keeping your steamer a little farther from the ends of our cars,” added Carrie.

Mr. McGusher did not comply with this request, but attempted to continue the parley.

“Oars!” said Carrie, suddenly. “Pull, port; back, starboard.”

The headway of the *Psyche* was checked, and she swung quarter around.

“Oars!” Give way together!” she continued, when the boat’s head was pointed directly from the *Monogram*, and she darted away, to the astonishment and chagrin of the “charter party” of the steamer.

All the other boats did the same thing. The *Ocean-Born*, which had before rung her speed-bell, came up abreast of the *Monogram*, and placed herself between the intruder and the fleet.

“On board the *Monogram*!” shouted Captain Patterdale from the deck of the *Ocean-Born*, as she slowed down abreast of that steamer.

“On board of the *Ocean-Born*,” replied the captain of the *Monogram*, from the pilot house; and the two steamers were hardly six feet apart.

“Captain Post, I will thank you to keep at a proper distance from the boats of the young ladies,” said Captain Patterdale, politely, but in a tone not to be mistaken.

“I only obey orders,” replied Captain Post, who knew that it was not prudent to offend a

man of so much influence in the City as Captain Patterdale.

“Whose orders?”

“The orders of the gentleman who hired the boat.”

“Who is he?”

“I have the honaw to be the gentleman,” interposed Mr. McGusher.

“You are no gentleman! You don’t know what the word means! You have no more right to speak to those young ladies, having no acquaintance with them, than you would if you met them in the street,” said Captain Patterdale, sharply. “Sheer off, Captain Post, and don’t come within hailing distance of those boats. Go ahead, if you please, Mr. Owen.”

The Ocean-Born started her screw and went ahead. The club boat had swung around again, and was laying her course for the mouth of the river. Mr. McGusher was blustering at the captain of “his steamer,” but the Ocean-Born kept between her and the Dorcas Club till they reached Fort Point, where all hands were to remain till the next morning.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE CLUBS AT FORT POINT.

THE Yacht Club fleet was already at anchor off Fort Point when the Dorcas Club and the Ocean-Born arrived. The yachtmen, who were on shore waiting for the young ladies, assisted them to land, and then, taking their boats out of the water, conveyed them to a barn appropriated to their use. The Ocean-Born came to anchor in deep water, and all hands landed except Martin Roach, who was to attend to the engine, and join the party at a later hour. The Monogram, though she had kept at a respectful distance after the admonition of Captain Patterdale, now came in, and running up to the wharf, landed Mr. McGusher, who seemed to be determined to take part in the festivities of the trip, in spite of all the snubbing that could be administered to him.

As soon as the entire party had gathered on the wharf, and in the pretty grove which bordered the river, — for the boats entered the river when they rounded Fort Point, — the young ladies and the young gentlemen began to wonder what was to be done. No one seemed to know what they were to do, or why they had landed at this delightful spot. It was certainly very pleasant; but then it was half past one, a time somewhat later, in this provincial locality, than most of them had been in the habit of attending to the ceremony of dinner, which, in the present instance, after a trip of ten miles on the salt water, was likely to be something more than a mere form.

“Are we to have no dinner?” asked Kate Bilder, at whose side Ben Lunder had placed himself as soon as he stepped upon the wharf.

“Really, Miss Bilder, I don’t know what the arrangements are,” replied Ben, shrugging his shoulders.

“I am hungry as a wolf!” protested Kate.

“Hungry as a lamb! *I* am as hungry as a wolf. Let us have the similies properly placed.”

“Do you mean by that you are any hungrier than I am?”

“ I can't say as to that ; but I haven't tasted a mouthful of food since I ate my breakfast ; and it is now half past one in the afternoon,” added Ben.

“ Your sufferings can be no greater than mine. I have eaten nothing since breakfast. I supposed we should dine in the cabins of the yachts.”

“ Behold, there is a great mystery somewhere ! The high and mighty commander of the Ocean-Born intended to invite all the ladies of the Dorcas Club to dine in the cabin of the steamer. He had gathered great stores of ambrosia, and such ethereal ‘ feed,’ for the occasion, and was about to issue his sovereign mandate to the cook, when the puissant managing agent of the expedition interposed with a veto. It cannot be that Captain Patterdale, who has a human stomach in his corporation, has doomed us to an afternoon of famine.”

“ If he has, I shall rebel, and buy some cookies at a shop, if I can find one,” pouted Kate.

“ But shops are not hopeful in such a place as this ; and we can do better : we will invade

the pantry of the Ocean-Born, where the ethereal provender is stowed.”

“What’s that?” asked Kate, as a band of music, concealed in the grove, suddenly struck up an enlivening air.

“‘There’s music in the air,’” replied Ben.

“All the yachtmen, ahoy!” shouted Sam Rodman, the captain of the fleet.

“Ay, ay!” responded the several crews, as they gathered in an open space near the wharf.

“By order of the commodore, you will form a procession by crews,” added Rodman.

“A procession!” exclaimed Ben. “That’s a prodigious formality.”

“The Dorcas Club will form by clubs,” said Minnie Darling, the president.

“Dear me! we must wear a straight jacket, too,” laughed Kate.

Each yacht had a crew of four, besides the captains; and each had been strictly limited to this number, so that the members of the Dorcas Club could be accommodated, if occasion should require. The crews formed, with the captains in front of them. Rodman placed the commodore, the vice commodore, the secretary,

and the treasurer at the head of the procession. Three yacht crews came next, who were followed by the five divisions of the Dorcas Club, and the rear was brought up by the other three yacht clubs.

“The officers and crew of the Ocean-Born seem to be left out in the cold,” said Ben Lunder, when the formidable preparations for the march were so far completed.

“Not at all,” replied Sam Rodman. “The Ocean-Borns will form a guard of honor for the Dorcas Club. Only six of you seem to be present, and three of you will walk on each side of the young ladies.”

“Thanks, magnanimous captain of the fleet, for putting us in the sugar bowl,” added Ben.

The B. B. Band, which had been mysteriously sent forward in the morning boat, was placed at the head of the procession. Commodore Montague gave the order to march, and the line moved up the gentle slope and through the grove, towards the hotel, which stands on a considerable bluff, with the waters of the bay on one side, and those of the river on the other.

Mr. McGusher witnessed all the proceedings with about the same feeling that a hungry cur looks through the cruel pickets of a fence which separates him from the sleek house-dog feeding upon the well-covered beef bones from a lavish table. Mr. McGusher was conscious of his merits, if no one else was. He knew he could shine in such a company as that which marched like a pageant before him. He could bring to it the graces and brilliancy of the metropolis of the nation. He could fascinate those young ladies with his speech. He could charm those young ladies with his conversation, so that the fairest daughter of the richest and proudest nabob of that Down East City would gladly own his sway. But he had not been invited to join the excursion. He was acquainted only with Kate Bilder; and that miserable Ben Lunder was always near her; even his position in the "guard of honor" was abreast of her. She could introduce him to all the young ladies, and open the gates of paradise to him — and happily to them.

He followed the procession to the hotel, keeping step to the music; but, alas! his heart was

not allowed to beat in unison with those of the members of the Dorcas Club. With eight hundred dollars in his pocket,—he had been compelled to pay for two days in advance for the Monogram,—he was a beggar for the smiles of that bevy of beautiful beings.

The procession marched into the great hall of the hotel, the band playing the grand *finale* of a grand march, and then into the parlors assigned for the use of the party. At the door stood Captain Patterdale and Dr. Darling, like two great ogres at the entrance of an enchanted palace. But the long-lost was so infatuated by this time, that he was superior to any fear of ogres, giants, or dragons; and with easy assurance he stepped up to this gate of paradise. He was about to enter, when the ogres placed themselves in his way.

“This parlor is private,” said Captain Patterdale.

“I beg yaw pawdon; but I wish to speak to Miss Bildaw,” replied Mr. McGusher.

“If you wish to see any of this party, send your card to her by one of the waiters; that’s the proper way in genteel society,” answered the remorseless ogre.

Of course Mr. McGusher was perfectly familiar with the ways of genteel society. He went to the office, wrote his name on a card, and sent it to Kate by a servant. Then he wrote his name on the register of the hotel.

"I desiw the best wooms in the house," said he, magnificently.

"We are quite full to-day, on account of the party which has just arrived," replied the gentlemanly clerk, who did not seem to be very much impressed by the young man's magnificence. "We have nothing left, short of the upper floor, except a suite of rooms on the second floor."

"Vewy well, saw," added the guest, with a nod and a graceful wave of his right hand. "That will ansaw my pawpose."

"It is a large parlor with a bedroom attached, suitable for two persons, and we have to charge fourteen dollars a day for the suite, with board," continued the clerk, who doubtless believed that these terms would settle the question.

"I didn't ask the pwice. I don't object to that. It seems quite weasonable," added Mr. McGusher, with an expression of sovereign contempt on his classic features.

“The lady says she is engaged just now, and cannot see you,” said the waiter, who had carried the card to Miss Bilder. “She says she will endeavor to see you this afternoon.”

“Vewy well,” replied the long-lost, biting his classic lip.

“Have you any baggage, Mr. McGusher?” asked the clerk.

“Baggage! Do you mean to insult me?” demanded the swell, who doubtless knew the rule that “guests without baggage are required to pay in advance.”

“Certainly not, sir,” replied the clerk, obsequiously; for by this time he deemed it possible that the airy guest might be the simple scion of some New York nabob.

“Take out one day in advance,” said Mr. McGusher, selecting a hundred-dollar bill from the notes in his wallet, and tossing it upon the counter with the air of a wounded lord.

“I beg your pardon; you quite misunderstood me,” added the clerk. “I only wished to send your baggage to your rooms.”

“My baggage is on bawd of my steamaw — the Monogwam, at the whawf. Oblige me by

sending a pawtaw faw it," said Mr. McGusher, restoring the hundred-dollar bill to his wallet, satisfied with showing that he had plenty of money.

"The porter shall bring it up at once."

"And now I want some dinnaw," continued the long-lost.

"We dine at one; but we will get some dinner for you."

"Nevaw mind, I will dine with the pawty that just came."

"That is a private party," answered the clerk, firmly.

"At that moment Mr. McGusher happened to turn his head, and saw Captain Patterdale talking with his old friend Monroe, who had "shadowed" him in Bangor.

"Aw, my deaw Monwoe, I'm delighted to see you!" exclaimed the long-lost, rushing in between the two gentlemen, and breaking up their conversation.

In spite of the shade we cast on Mr. McGusher's good breeding in doing so, we cannot help saying that there is no more flagrant violation of the rules of politeness, in social or

business intercourse, than to break in upon the conversation of two or more persons, be they ladies or gentlemen, or both. Better wait an hour, any time, than do it, except in a case of life and death; and then it should be commenced with an apology.

Mr. Monroe, evidently, was not so much delighted. His function as a "shadow" had ceased; and the New York swell was not just the person he would choose as an associate at a sea-side resort; but he took the offered hand of the long-lost, and greeted him rather coldly.

"Dine with us Munroe — won't you?" said Patterdale, as he turned to leave.

"I dined an hour ago, and am hardly in condition to do it again," laughed Monroe.

"Ask him if you may invite a fwiend," said Mr. McGusher, in a low tone.

"Come in and see us, whether you dine or not," added the captain, as he returned from the office.

"Thank you; perhaps I may," replied Monroe.

"Why don't you ask him if you may bwing in a fwiend, my deaw Monwoe?" added Mr. Mc-

Gusher, rather impatiently; for though the Bel-fasters, through prejudice, failed to recognize his merits, certainly Monroe could not be so blind.

“I don’t think I care to invite a friend. Those are all young people, and I am afraid I should not feel quite at home among them,” replied Monroe. “Besides, I have something else to think of. I came over here from Bucksport this morning, intending to remain a couple of days; but there is no room short of the attic for me.”

“My deaw fellow, come to my wooms. I have the best suite in the house, and you shall share them with me,” interposed the long-lost, with enthusiasm. But I wish to dine with that pawty. I have had no dinnaw yet. I desiaw to make the acquaintance of those young ladies.”

“Very well. Go to your room, McGusher. I will speak to Captain Patterdale; and if I find I can get you an invitation, I will call for you in five minutes at your room.”

“If you say yaw fwiend, you can’t leave him, and all that sawt of thing, it will be all wight.”

“I will see what can be done.”

Mr. McGusher went to his rooms, and Monroe

to the parlor, where Captain Patterdale had joined his party. He alluded to his "friend from New York," but he did so with a sort of smile, which seemed to nullify all he said, and reduce his suggestion to a mere form. Captain Patterdale objected to inviting the gentleman from New York; and, strange as it may seem, Monroe did not press the matter. In fact, he behaved like a very cold and indifferent friend. And when the managing agent of the excursion party actually declined to invite the would-be guest to the dinner, Monroe selfishly sat down to the table with the merry party himself, without taking the trouble to inform his friend from New York of the result of his mission.

The feast was very creditable to the hotel, and fortunately the quantity, as well as the quality, was equal to the emergency, for, perhaps, a hungrier company never surrounded a table than the members of the two clubs and the crew of the Ocean-Born. The B. B. Band played, on the veranda, during the dinner, and, though the party was supposed to be private, the guests of the hotel, and everybody else who chose to do so, could look in at the open windows upon the

festive scene. Among the spectators who availed themselves of this privilege was Mr. McGusher; but "he was not happy." He had waited in his rooms for Munroe till his patience was exhausted; and then, with the belief that his friend was treacherous and shabby, he had joined the throng of lookers on. His wounded sensibilities were not healed when he saw Monroe gaily chatting with the young ladies of the Dorcas Club.

When the animal wants of the company had been fully satisfied, Commodore Montague rapped upon the table, and having secured the attention of the diners, introduced Captain Patterdale as the host of the occasion. The captain rose and stated that he had taken the liberty to provide the present entertainment, and others which were to follow, in honor of the officers and crew of the Ocean-Born. He could never express, either by words or deeds, the obligations he was under to the people of the gallant steamer. He should not attempt to do so; and he was content forever to owe a debt of gratitude to such noble and generous friends. But he would not dampen the festivities of the young

people by thrusting the soberness and dignity of age upon them in his own person, and should therefore request Commodore Montague to preside at the table instead of himself.

* After the applause had subsided, Commodore Montague made a little speech. He was sure that no one was younger in heart and feeling than the esteemed gentleman to whom they were indebted for the pleasures of the present occasion. He fully sympathized with their liberal host in his high appreciation of the conduct of the officers and crew of the Ocean-Born, who had behaved like noble and generous sailors, as they were. Every member of both clubs should feel that he was personally indebted to them for the service rendered to their companions in distress; and he trusted that all would remember the conduct of the noble deliverers of the shipwrecked party in the Sea Foam. The tables trembled and the glasses rattled under the applause which followed; and Captain Neil Brandon rose to reply; but it was some time before the demonstration of favor which greeted him would permit his voice to be heard. Neil replied in a very brief and proper speech, in which

he disparaged his own humble efforts to serve the party in distress, and warmly expressed his gratitude for the princely entertainment at which the officers and crew of the Ocean-Born were the honored guests.

Dr. Darling was called upon, and after he had expressed his personal obligations to the guests of the occasion, he invited all the company to participate in certain festivities at the Bangor House, on their arrival at their destination.

“This is to be a jolly time — isn’t it, Miss Bilder?” said Ben Lunder, who had a seat by the side of Kate.

“I should think it was. I had no idea we were to do things so grandly; but then, Mr. Lunder, we might all have been at the bottom of the sea at this time, if you in the steamer had not taken pity upon us. There, Ned Patterdale is going to make a speech.”

Ned spoke very well, though, like most young men when they make off-hand speeches, conned for two or three hours in advance, he was a little stilted, exaggerated, and flowery in his remarks.

“Mr. Commodore, and ladies and gentlemen,”

he said, in conclusion, "I beg the privilege of proposing a toast: The old salt: Pickled in the briny ocean, he will keep till the end of time as the impersonation of what is noble, heroic, daring, and unselfish."

"Mr. Commodore, it is quite impossible," shouted Ben Lunder, springing to his feet, and upsetting his chair, and tipping over several glasses in front of him, in his eagerness.

"I beg the gentleman's pardon," interposed Commodore Montague; "but I must remind him that certain formalities are necessary on these occasions, and that upon me devolves the very pleasant duty of introducing Mr. Bounding Billow Ben Lunder, as the representative of the crew of the steamer Ocean-Born, of Philadelphia."

"Mr. Commodore, I beg your pardon for my unseemly impetuosity; but when the old salt is alluded to in speech, toast, or song, I am there," continued Ben; "and I respectfully submit that I am known so well to this company in connection with this briny appellation, as to need no formal introduction."

"No, no!" laughed the yachtman.

“ Thank you, gentlemen; you know how it is yourselves. I am an old salt, called upon to speak for that saline institution without any — without any — any — (Ben took from his breast pocket a paper, which he unfolded, glancing nervously at the writing upon it) preparation; I find my stomach — my stomach — no — (and Ben took the paper from his pocket and glanced at it) my heart — I find my heart too full for utterance. I am not the first old salt to whom the attention of the people has been directed. There was another old salt, sir, first in war, first in — first in — in — (consulting the paper) peace — first in peace, and first in the arts of seamanship and navigation. Proudly I point to that first old salt in the history of — the history of — of (the paper) the United States. You know him well, Mr. Commodore. His name was George — George — his name was George — George (the paper) Washington — George Washington. He stood at the helm of the ship of — the ship of — of — (the paper) state; the ship of state, Mr. Commodore. In other words, sir, he took his trick at the wheel. He navigated that ship as no other man could navigate her, sir. He knew

when to take a reef in the skysail-boom! He knew when to top up the flukes of the main-royal mudhook! He knew just how much the foreto'-bobbin-stay would bear, and he didn't burst it! He sailed that ship of state with the jib-stay fast to the bowline-hitch, with the jib-tack swelling in the breeze, and the sky-scrappers hauled taut on the weather staysail sheets! He kept her head south-east by no'th, and the grand old craft bowled along like a white cloud through the azure of the canopy below — Below? (the paper) above him; the canopy above him, Mr. Commodore; or like the ship of the desert over the burning sands of the Straits of Magellan!"

At this point of the speech there was an interruption. Mr. McGusher, who, seated on a window-stool, had been gazing with longing eyes upon the party at the table, swung his legs into the room, and dropped upon the floor. Not heeding the piles of dishes there, he came down upon them with a grand smash, which for the moment checked Ben's eloquence.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE COMPLIMENTARY DINNER.

THE smash of crockery which attended Mr. McGusher's entrance through the window into the dining-room attracted the attention of all present, and brought Ben's speech to an abrupt stop. Captain Patterdale, who had kept his eye on the long-lost, had noticed his gradual approaches up to the moment of the catastrophe. Leaving his place at the table, he confronted the intruder.

"What are you doing, sir?" demanded the captain, savagely.

"I beg your pawdon, Captain Patterdale, but I wish to speak to my friend, Mr. Monroe," replied Mr. McGusher, moving towards the head of the table near which his friend was seated.

Very much to the chagrin of Mr. McGusher, Monroe rose from his seat and passed out into the great hall of the hotel.

“He has left the room,” replied Captain Patterdale. “You will find him in the hall.”

“Miss Bildaw was kind enough to say she would see me this aftawnoon, and I will speak to haw before I go.”

“No, you will nct,” answered the managing agent, sharply. “You will leave this room.”

“Do you mean to insult me, saw? Do you know who I am?” demanded Mr. McGusher, straightening up his form.

“No matter who you are—leave this room, or I will call upon the servants to put you out.”

“I am the only son of Captain Bildaw; and Miss Bildaw is my sistaw!”

This might have been a very startling announcement to Captain Patterdale, if the “long-lost father” of the “long-lost son” had not already spoken to the managing agent about him, and requested him to save Kate from any annoyance on his part. Indeed, Captain Patterdale was a confidential friend of Captain Bilder, and knew all about the “long-lost” business. Both of them regarded the gentleman from New York as an impostor and a humbug. But the attention of the landlord had been called to the

disturbance, and he appeared upon the ground. He insisted that Mr. McGusher should go out the window again, as he came in, and with a little gentle force helped him along. The long-lost boiling over with wrath and indignation, hastened around to the hall to confront Monroe; but that gentleman quietly returned to his place at the table as soon as his late friend was hustled out.

“Go on! Go on!” called the yachtmen. “Ben Lunder!” “Old Salt!”

“Really, ladies and gentleman,” said Ben, taking the floor again, “the interruption of an unprepared—unprepared—(the paper) speech is fatal to the higher flights of oratory. I have forgotten where I was, being called upon thus unexpectedly, with nothing particular to say;” and Ben nervously turned the leaves, and looked up and down the pages of the manuscript, which seemed to be an old letter. “Where was I?”

“On the burning sands of the Straits of Magellan,” laughed one of the yachtmen.

“Ah, yes! Thank you. I remember. I was speaking of the ship of state, that gallant old craft, lifting her foreto'-gallant cutwater to the

breeze, with her main royal hatchway braced sharp up, and the bilge water flying like pop corn in a parcher. I was speaking of the skipper of that craft; of that old salt George—George—George—I mentioned the name—George—(the paper)—Washington; George Washington. He saved the ship! With his little hatchet he cut away the booms, bobstays, bowsprits, becketts, bo's'ns, and buntlines, and brought the old craft safe into Portland—Portland?—into—into—(the paper) port; into port. But, Mr. Commodore, I was about to allude to other distinguished old salts, who have honored the profession to which I belong.”

“Go on!” “Go on!”

“There was one down in Tennessee, who navigated that same old ship of state. He was a tough specimen of the old salt. He kept his backstay braced sharp up into the eye of the wind. He was tough as the foreto'-mainmast of a man-of-war! Sometimes they called him Old—Old Hickups—Hickups? (the paper) Old Hickory! They called him so, Mr. Commodore, because he was fond of pea-nuts! His name was Andrew—Andrew—Andrew—”

“Johnson,” suggested Ned Patterdale.

“Andrew Johnson! His name was Andrew Johnson, Mr. Commodore!” continued the orator. “Johnson — Johnson? It seems to me that was not the name. (The paper.) Jackson, Mr. Commodore! His name was Andrew Jackson! He was the captain of his ship, sir. When he was sick he knew enough to heave to, sir. When South Carolina wanted to nullify, he knew enough to lie to, sir. In this respect, sir, he was different from George — George (the paper) Washington; George Washington, sir. History solemnly records that G. W. couldn’t tell a — a — tell a — a — a (the paper) a lie; tell a lie, sir. G. W. could not tell a lie; but he could lie under an imputation, and he did; and Andrew Jackson could lie to, and pour his booming guns into the nullifiers, like a brave old salt as he was. But, Mr. Commodore, time would fail me, and your patience give out, before I could allude to all the old salts to whose honored profession I belong; and I can only mention General Phil — Phil — General Phil — Phil — (the paper) Sheridan; Phil Sheridan, who rode at anchor from Winchester down to the battle-field,

and made a good run of it. Now, Mr. Commodore, permit me to return my — my — my (the paper) thanks; my thanks for the very handsome manner you have treated the crew of the Ocean-Born; and I assure you I shall ever cherish a very grateful remembrance of this occasion, and especially of the Dorcas — Dorcas — the Dorcas — Dorcas — (the paper) Club; the Dorcas Club.”

Ben was heartily applauded for his effort, and rose to bow his thanks, and express his regrets that some slight slips of his memory had caused him to stumble a little in the delivery of his unpremeditated speech. Doubtless the plan of his speech was new at Fort Point, but Ben did not claim to be entirely original in its conception, having adopted it from a similar effort put forth by a member of a club on a festive occasion. Other speeches were made, and most of the young gentlemen struggled to be funny without being entirely successful. At four o'clock the party left the dining-room, and spent the rest of the afternoon in social intercourse, or in such sports as were available.

“Who is the young man that tumbled in at the window and broke the crockery ware, Cap-

tain Patterdale?" asked Neil Brandon, as they met in the hall.

"He is a young exquisite from New York," laughed the captain. "He has more cheek than brains, and as my friend Ben would say, very little ballast in his craft."

"Didn't I hear him say that he was the son of Captain Bilder?"

"But the claim is absolutely absurd. Captain Bilder could not be the father of such a monkey as he is."

"He said that Kate was his sister."

"If Captain Bilder is not his father, it can't very well be that Kate is his sister, for neither the captain nor his wife was ever married more than once."

"But how can the fellow put forward such an absurd claim?" inquired Neil, curiously. "If Captain Bilder ever had a son, he ought to know about it."

"Unfortunately he does know about it. He had a son who is supposed to have been drowned when a child."

"Was he drowned?"

"I am sure I don't know. Captain Bilder

believes he was; at least with about one chance in a thousand that he was not. I heard the story many years ago, but I don't remember all the particulars. I believe the child fell overboard, or something of that sort, on the Mississippi River. At any rate, this Mr. McGusher claims to be that child."

"Is Captain Bilder sure that he is not what he claims to be?" asked Neil, very much interested in the meagre narrative.

"He has already detected the rascal in some trickery, and he is quite sure the knave is not his son. The scamp annoys Kate very much, and she is anxious to avoid him."

"She has succeeded very well this afternoon," added Neil, as Captain Patterdale's attention was called in another direction.

Neil sat down in a great arm-chair to consider the situation. His mother had insisted that he should leave Belfast, and avoid the Bilders; but she had given no explanation of her request. Why was she so anxious that he should avoid them? Captain Bilder had had a son who was supposed to be drowned. The name of Neil Brandon had startled the father of the

lost child. The name of the steamer — Ocean-Born — had surprised him. There was something very strange about all this, and Neil could not fathom it. He felt it to be his duty to avoid Kate Bilder, after what his mother had written, as much as he could without rudeness. He wondered if she knew anything about the lost child, the little brother. He was tempted to ask her; but then he had too much reverence for his mother to disregard her commands even in the spirit, if he could in the letter.

“I beg your pawdon, Captain Bwandon,” said Mr. McGusher, rushing up to the commander of the Ocean-Born; “I have been insulted several times by a pawson that belongs to your steamaw.”

“Indeed? Who was he?” asked Neil,

“The fellow they call Ben.”

“What has he done?”

“He is vewy wude.”

“Is he? I am sorry for that.”

“He is wolling ten pins in the bowling alley with Miss Bildaw. I pwoposed to join them for a game, and though Miss Bildaw desiwed my company, he wefused to let me play.”

“That is no affair of mine, Mr. McGusher. If Miss Bilder desired you to join the party, I am sure Mr. Lunder would not object.”

“But he does object! He requested me to leave the alley.”

“You are acquainted with Miss Bilder, then!”

“To be suaw I am. I was the guest of haw fathaw in Belfast.”

“I think I heard you say she was your sister. Is that so?”

“That is so,” replied Mr. McGusher, as he seated himself by the side of the captain of the Ocean-Born. “It is twue, though I don’t care to say much about it just yet.”

The long-lost was satisfied that he had been imprudent; and perhaps he understood the reason why he had been so. When he found it was impossible for him to dine with the clubs, he had concluded to take the meal alone, and in the absence of other company, he had called for a half bottle of champagne. He drank the whole of it, and as his head was not a very powerful piece of machinery, the wine had turned what little brains he had. Doubtless it made his legs a little uncertain, as well as his head,

which explained the destruction of the crockery ware. His head had been under the weather, or he would hardly have claimed so near a relationship to Captain Bilder and his daughter. Neil Brandon saw that he was not entirely regular. Mr. McGusher wanted to be confidential in regard to his relations with Captain Bilder, and he placed his mouth so near Neil's face that the captain could not help smelling the fumes of the wine in his breath. Topsy or not, Neil wanted to know more about Captain Bilder's son.

"Are you really his son?" asked the captain.

"No dowbt of it. I bwrought pwoof positive to Captain Bildaw."

"But his son was drowned in the Mississippi when a child," added Neil, using the fragment of information he had obtained from Captain Patterdale.

"Not dwound, faw heaw I am!" said Mr. McGusher, warmly.

"But how do you know you are his son?"

"I was saved; in a wawd, I was stolen by a man of the name of Neil Bwandon."

"Neil Brandon!" exclaimed the captain of the Ocean-Born.

“By gwacious! I didn't think of it befowe, but yaw name is Bwandon!” replied the long-lost.

“Not only Brandon, but Neil Brandon. You say you were saved by him.”

“I was stolen fwom my pawents by this Bwandon. I don't know why. He took me to England, and left me with a man who bwrought me up as his son till he sent me to an Awphan Asylum. That's all I know about it, but I was always suaw that I belonged to a good family.”

“But what became of Neil Brandon?” asked the captain.

“I don't know,” replied Mr. McGusher, shaking his head.

“You were stolen by a man of the name of Neil Brandon,” repeated Neil.

“That is what I said; and if you don't believe it you can wead this lettaw;” and the long-lost produced the epistle he had read to Mr. Bilder and Kate.

Neil read it. Perhaps he would have thought nothing of it if his mother had not directed him to avoid the Bilders. He inquired about

the pieces of card, and they were explained to him. Neil knew that his own name was the same as his father's; he knew that his mother was born in New Orleans. He was bewildered and confounded. Was his father the Neil Brandon who had stolen the child? If so, what had he done with it? And again, why had his mother forbidden him to see the Bilders any more? Why was she so worried because he was in Belfast—so worried that she could not sleep? He was tempted to call Martin Roach, and hasten back to Belfast, where he could confront Captain Bilder, and learn more from him. But he respected the wishes of his mother, and he promptly abandoned the idea.

“I beg yaw pawdon, Captain Bwandon,” said Mr. McGusher, as he took the letter from his companion's hand; “you see there can be no mistake about this business.”

“I don't know: I don't understand it well enough to give an opinion,” replied Neil.

“Might I beg the favaw of an intwoduction to some of the young ladies in yaw pawty?” said the long-lost, coming to the point he had had in view from the first.

“You must excuse me, Mr. McGusher, but the young ladies are not under my protection, and I don’t feel at liberty to introduce any one to them without their permission.”

Neil was firm as a rock, because he saw that his companion was tipsy in the first place, and because he believed he was an impostor, in the second. Fortunately Mr. Monroe happened to pass through the hall, at this point of the conversation, and Mr. McGusher, smarting under the indignity received at his hands, “went for him,” leaving Neil to brood over the statement in the letter that his father had stolen Captain Bilder’s son—he believed it was his father, for he could hardly think there was another Neil Brandon in the world.

“Monwoe,” shouted Mr. McGusher, as he saw his late friend pass, and rushed upon him, as if with the intention of annihilating him, “don’t you think you tweated me uncommon shabby?”

“Shabby? How so?” asked Monroe, as coolly as though the long-lost was nothing more than a common mortal.

“I didn’t expect it of you,” added the New Yorker, reproachfully.

“What do you mean?”

“Didn’t you make me a pwomise, and didn’t you bweak that pwomise?”

“I was not aware of it.”

“Didn’t you pwomise to get me an invitation to dine with that pawty?”

“No, sir; I did not! I told you if I got an invitation for you, I would call for you in your room in five minutes. That’s what I said,” laughed Monroe. “I didn’t get any invitation for you; so of course it was of no use for me to call for you.”

“Why didn’t you get the invitation? It was an easy thing faw you to do. If you had only said yaw fwient, one to whom you was undaw pawticulaw obligations, it would have been all wight.”

“I was not willing to say all that, you see; and that was what was the matter.”

“Not willing to say it!” gasped Mr. McGusher. “I saw you chatting and laughing with the young ladies at the table without a thought of me, out in the cold.”

“These young ladies are my friends and neighbors; and of course I felt quite at home

among them. They are the daughters of some of the wealthiest and most respectable men in Belfast."

"I know it, and that was the weason why I wanted to be intwoduced to them," growled the long-lost. "When I got into the woom, and wanted to speak to you, you walked out. You might have saved me the mawtification of being awdawed out the woom."

"You might have saved yourself by not going into the room; and especially by not going in through the window."

"It was shabby, Mr. Monwoe, to desawt yaw fwiend. When I went wound to the office, you went wound to the dining-woom, seated yawself by the ladies, and seemed to fawget all about yaw fwiend."

"I have a bad memory at times."

"I did not think it of you, Monwoe, when you could have got me in just as well as not, and intwoduced me to all the young ladies."

"My dear fellow, don't you see I had no right to do any such thing? I was only a guest myself."

"The young ladies waw yaw fwiends and neighbaws, Monwoe; and —"

But that is just the reason why I couldn't do it," protested the Belfaster. "If they hadn't been my friends and neighbors, I would as lief have done it as not."

"I don't undawstand you."

"Certainly I ought to be very particular whom I introduced to my young lady friends. In my humble opinion, every respectable man is in honor bound never to introduce to a young lady any person, unless he knows that person is of good character and entirely respectable."

"Good gwacious! Do you mean to say that I am not a pawson of good chawactaw and entiawly wespectable?" demanded Mr. McGusher, with something like an expression of horror on his spooney face.

"You persist in misunderstanding me. I did not say you were not such."

"But we waw togethaw faw two or thwee days in Bangaw."

"I know that; but you see I am not so particular about myself," said Monroe, with an affectation of earnestness. "While I don't intend to keep bad company, I am not fanatical in regard to a chance acquaintance I may meet in

travelling. Of course I couldn't inquire into your moral character, when I met you at breakfast on board of the Cambridge; or when we took a room together at the Bangor House. A man may be extremely careful about his friends, you know, Mr. McGusher, without thinking it necessary to require a certificate of good moral character from every person with whom he may chance to pass the time of day in a railroad car, or at a public hotel. I have seen something of the world, Mr. McGusher; and if I happen to make the acquaintance of an unworthy person under such circumstances, why, I could stand it. I really don't think it would seriously affect my reputation—do you?"

"Do you apply those wemarks to me, saw?"

"But it is quite a different thing with young ladies, you are aware."

"Do you apply those wemawks to me, Mr. Monroe?" demanded the long-lost.

"What remarks?"

"Do you mean to insinuate that I am not a pawson of good mowal chawactaw?"

"Certainly not! You persist in misunderstanding me. My dear fellow, I don't know anything

at all about your character. I only said, if you were a person of bad character, that my chance acquaintance with you would not affect my reputation. You might be a gambler, a blackleg, a swindler, a thief; and I could treat you civilly, even courteously, at a hotel, without compromising my own character. That's all I said. But when you ask me to introduce you to the daughters of my friends and neighbors, you can see for yourself that it is quite a different thing."

"Do you insinuate—"

"My dear fellow, I don't insinuate. I speak right out just what I mean. For aught I know, I may have conversed for hours in a hotel, a railroad car, or a steamboat, with a burglar or a blackleg. I may even have gone out to ride with a thief; but I don't reproach myself for it, and don't think I am damaged by it so long as I didn't know who and what my chance acquaintance was. But I feel my responsibility when I introduce any gentleman to a young lady. Why, if you remember, I didn't even ask you where you got that five-hundred dollar bill I changed for you."

"No, you didn't," groaned Mr. McGusher.

Mr. Monroe was the most ungrateful of friends, and the long-lost went to his rooms to consider the situation. It was not pleasant to think that he had been snubbed by almost every one he met. Even Monroe, whom he had treated like a prince, upon whom he had poured out money like water, gave him the cold shoulder. Everybody conspired to keep him out of the presence of the young ladies. With all the eight hundred dollars in his pocket, with his steamer at the wharf, and his elegant parlor at the hotel he almost realized that he was a nobody—not quite, for it was quite impossible for him to lose his self-esteem. After a while, he brightened up. It was only a passing cloud that obscured his sky; all would yet be well, and he should yet shine the brightest of the bright.

“There was a sound of revelry” below, that evening, for the clubs had a grand hop in the hall. The music was like a funeral knell to Mr. McGusher, for the door of paradise was closed against him. The young ladies were whirling in the mazy dance, but he could not whirl them. At eleven the festivities were finished, and the officers and crew of the Ocean-Born returned to the steamer.

CHAPTER XV.

CAPTAIN BILDER'S VISITOR.

WHILE the young ladies of the Dorcas Club were sleeping soundly in their rooms at the hotel at Fort Point, and the crews of the Ocean-Born and the yachts were sleeping soundly on board the several craft at anchor, the steamer from Boston made her stop at the wharf in Belfast. Among the passengers who landed there was a well-dressed lady, not a stylish person, but one who would have passed for the wife of a well-to-do farmer, whose ideas were rather above the homespun order. She might have been forty-five, or she might have been older; but this is a delicate question to settle. She called a carriage, and was driven to the principal hotel. She took a room, and after breakfast she seated herself in the parlor, and sent for the clerk.

“Is there a young man by the name of McGusher at this house?” asked the lady.

“No, madam; he is not here at present,” replied the clerk.

“Not here!” exclaimed the guest.

“Not now; he was here for a day or so, but he left a week ago.”

“Do you know where he is now?”

“I think he has gone up the river with a party which left yesterday morning.”

“Then he has not been staying at this hotel?” added the lady, apparently somewhat surprised.

“He was here a day, or part of a day; I don’t remember how long,” answered the clerk.

“Do you know where he went when he left the hotel?”

“To a private house.”

“Whose house?”

“He said he was invited to the residence of Captain Bilder to stay a week or two; and I suppose he went there.”

“Captain Bilder’s!” exclaimed the lady.

“Yes, ma’am; and I heard of his being with the boat clubs on some of their excursions; but

I don't know anything more about him," added the clerk, moving towards the door, as if he had already practised too much condescension in answering so many questions.

The lady was musing over the information she had obtained, and she said nothing more for a few moments. The clerk left the parlor, but he returned immediately.

"I beg your pardon, madam, but I believe you did not register your name," said he.

"You can enter my name upon the register," replied the guest in an absent manner.

"I will, if you will be kind enough to tell me what it is."

"Mrs. Banford, New York," she replied.

"Mrs. Banford, New York," added the clerk, bowing and retreating.

"Stop a moment, if you please," interposed the guest. "Does Captain Bilder live where he did a dozen years ago?"

"I believe so, Mrs. Banford, though I really don't know where he lived a dozen years ago. I can tell you where he lives now, though I heard he was going to move out of his house."

"Going to move? Does he intend to leave Belfast?" asked the lady.

“I’m sure I don’t know where he is going. Do you know the captain?”

“I used to know him years ago; but I haven’t seen him for at least ten years.”

“Then perhaps you haven’t heard that things have been going wrong with him,” added the clerk, who was astonishingly garrulous for a hotel clerk dealing with a stranger.

“Indeed! What do you mean?” asked Mrs. Banford, with deep interest.

“I don’t know about it, but it is all over the city that he has lost his property, speculating in New York.”

“Lost his property!” gasped the lady, greatly startled at this information.

“That’s what they say; and what everybody says must be true. He isn’t worth a dollar now, and must move out of his fine house, sell his horses and carriages, and go to work again. It’s a hard case; but it’s just what happens to the best of men.”

“Not worth a dollar?” repeated Mrs. Banford, to whom this seemed to be disastrous intelligence.

“I don’t know anything about it myself; I

only tell you what is town talk," replied the clerk, apparently unwilling to bear any of the responsibility of the captain's financial disaster.

Mrs. Banford dropped into a rocking-chair, and, whether from sympathy or other motives, she seemed to labor under some great anxiety, evidently caused by Captain Bilder's misfortune. As she said nothing more, the clerk retired, and wrote her name on the register at the office.

"Lost all his property! Not worth a dollar!" muttered Mrs. Banford to herself, as, much excited, she tilted back and forth in the rocking-chair.

She sat there half an hour, curvetting, like a race horse, in the chair. The news she had received doubtless deranged some plan she had formed, and which had occasioned her visit to Belfast. Then she got up, and nervously walked the room.

"Not worth a dollar! Why didn't the fool tell me this in his letter?" she muttered, impatiently.

But she did not indicate who the "fool" was; and after she had taken a day's wear out of

the parlor carpet, she went to the office, and asked for a carriage. It was at the door, and getting in, she told the driver to take her to Captain Bilder's house. In five minutes she reached her destination; but her excitement and nervousness seemed to increase all the time. The driver rang the bell; and having ascertained that the ship-master was at home, Mrs. Banford entered the house.

"I suppose you don't know me now, Captain Bilder," said the lady, as the captain presented himself before her.

"Mrs. Banford!" exclaimed the ship-master, promptly recognizing her as soon as she spoke. "Is it possible!"

"I didn't think you would know me," replied Mrs. Banford, taking the captain's offered hand. "It's almost ten years since I left Belfast."

"All of that. Where have you been all these years? I believe you were going to Oregon when you left."

"I did go there; but I didn't stay long. I have been living with — with a friend of mine, in the State of New York, for several years. But how is Miss Kate?"

“Very well, indeed, I thank you. She has grown up into a great girl, and you wouldn't know her.”

“I suppose not,” she added, rather coldly.

“She is very strong and healthy; and more than these, she is as good a girl as ever lived,” added the captain, warmly.

“She always was a good girl when I took care of her.”

“She is just as good as she ever was. She has gone on an excursion up to Bangor with the boat club. You don't seem to have grown much older since you left Belfast. I suppose everything has gone well with you.”

“Yes, very well, indeed.”

“I'm happy to hear it. I am very glad, indeed, to see you again. I was thinking the other day, that I wished to see you very much indeed.”

“Well, I'm sure I'm just as glad to see you,” added Mrs. Banford; but even Captain Bilder could observe that there was not much heart in her words. “I hope everything has gone well with you sir.”

“No; I'm sorry to say, things have gone all

wrong with me of late. In a word, I've lost all my property, and I'm not worth a single dollar that I can call my own."

"I'm sorry to hear that;" and there could be no doubt that she was sorry, if not from sympathy, then for some other motive.

Captain Bilder recited his misfortunes at some length; but he was by this time reconciled to his hard lot, and did not bewail it.

"I'm sure I'm sorry for you," said Mrs. Banford, when the story was finished. "Did anything ever come of that letter you received just before I went away?"

She asked this question with an assumed indifference, and her eyes wandered about the room as she did so. "I suppose you remember that letter. It had a piece of card in it."

"O, yes; I remember all about it," replied Captain Bilder, who, however, did not seem to be very communicative on the subject.

The ship-master had given a great deal of thought to that letter, and to the one which had been delivered to him by Mr. Arthur McGusher. Whatever the object of the one or the other of the writers of these letters, it was

evident to him that each of them was quite familiar with his past history, and with his business affairs. He had endeavored to connect them with some one he had known in former years. Mrs. Banford had been in his mind more than once, as almost the only person who had knowledge enough of the incidents of his career to write those letters; or, rather, the last one; for the first had come while she was still his housekeeper. But then he had believed for years that she was in Oregon, where it would have been hardly possible for her to manage such an enterprise as that in which Mr. McGusher was engaged. Now it appeared that Mrs. Banford had been in Oregon only a short time, and for several years had resided in the State of New York. He was disposed to ask if she lived in Goshen, or to suggest that she did; but he was a prudent man, and did not care to commit himself.

“I suppose no one ever brought the other pieces of the card,” added Mrs. Banford. “It looked like a ridiculous piece of business, in the first place, to me.”

“Well, it didn’t to me,” replied Captain Bil-

der. "I'll tell you why. If my boy was really stolen from the steamer on the Mississippi, and not drowned as I believe he was, the person that did it might have intended to restore him to me some time or other."

"Why didn't he do it, then?" demanded Mrs. Banford, "and not fool with those bits of card?"

"There may have been good reasons why the person did not restore the boy. In the first place, it is a penal offence to kidnap a child; and he may have been afraid of the consequences."

"That may be," added the late housekeeper, as if partially convinced.

"Then if anybody stole the child, it must have been in order to make some money out of me; and the person may be waiting for a good chance to open negotiations with me."

"Do you think any one would wait ten or a dozen years?"

"It may be; I don't know."

"That's all nonsense, Captain Bilder," protested Mrs. Banford. "If the one that stole the child intended to make any money by the job,

he would have commenced operations long before this time."

"I think you are right."

"If anybody stole the child, he is sorry for it, and wants to restore him to you."

"I have hoped this might be the case."

"Then you have had no letter since that first one?" said Mrs. Banford, rather sharply.

"I did not say so," replied Captain Bilder, with a smile. "But speaking of letters reminds me that we have one for you."

"A letter for me?"

"A letter for you; and the strange part of it is, that this letter came about ten years ago — a short time after you left, I think."

"That is very strange. Whom is it from?" asked Mrs. Banford.

"Of course I don't know: I didn't open it. I kept hoping that we should hear from you. You went to Oregon from here, and I had not your address. It was stuck into the looking-glass frame in one of the spare chambers. Kate wanted to send it to the dead letter office in Washington, that it might be opened, and returned to the person who wrote it; but I told

her to let it remain where it was, so that it might not be forgotten. I expected to hear from you some time. Of course I shouldn't have kept it if I had supposed it would be ten years before I heard from you. If you will excuse me for a moment, I will get the letter."

She was very willing to excuse the captain, for she evidently knew what the letter contained, or what it ought to contain, whether Mr. McGusher knew or not when he opened it. In a moment the captain returned with the letter, and gave it to Mrs. Banford. She read the address; then she turned it over and looked at the back. The envelope was a white one; or, rather, it had been white in its day, but was now musty and discolored with age. She could not help seeing that the flap of the envelope was daubed and dirty where it was sealed; that it had been vigorously pressed, rubbed, and marked with finger nails. With a nervous hand, she tore the letter open. She was satisfied that the seal had been tampered with; the daubs and dirt had already convinced her on this point. She took the sheet of paper from the envelope, and unfolded it. Before she thought of reading it,

she opened the sheet, turned it over and over, and then looked in her lap and on the floor, to ascertain whether anything had dropped from it. Finding nothing, she looked into the envelope, but it was entirely empty.

“What are you looking for, Mrs. Banford?” asked Captain Bilder, who thought the actions of his former housekeeper were rather extraordinary.

“I was looking to see if there was anything in the letter,” replied Mrs. Banford, fixing her eye-glasses on her nose, and proceeding to read the letter.

It was very short, as we have had occasion to remark before, and was quickly read. Mrs. Banford opened the sheet again, turned it over, and looked into the envelope once more. She seemed to be very much disturbed, and even more nervous and excitable than before. Finally, she fixed her gaze upon the back of the envelope, soiled by the dirty, perspiring fingers of Mr. McGusher.

“Captain Bilder,” said Mrs. Banford, with her lips pursed up, and with an expression of the utmost severity, which rather amused the



“CAPTAIN BILDER, . . . THIS LETTER HAS BEEN OPENED!” Page 299.

captain, who, of course, had no idea of the difficulty under which his visitor was laboring.

“You were about to say something, Mrs. Banford,” replied the ship-master, after he had waited a moment for her to proceed.

“I was, Captain Bilder!” answered she, with added sternness. “This letter has been opened!”

“I see it has; in fact, it is open now.”

“But it had been opened before you gave it to me!” snapped the lady.

“If it had been, I was not aware of the fact,” replied the captain, who did not seem to be much alarmed at the implied charge.

“It has been opened in this house!”

“How do you know?”

“It came here by mail, and it must have been opened here.”

“I think not. I am confident it could not have been opened here, Mrs. Banford. Certainly I did not open it; and I am just as sure that Kate did not.”

“I don’t know who opened it; but it has been opened,” persisted the visitor.

“Impossible, I should say. I was looking at the letter a few weeks ago, when I happened

to be in the room where it was. I am sure it had not been opened then; and I have not seen it since."

"Captain Bilder!"

"Well, Mrs. Banford?"

"This letter contained a thousand dollars in money!" added she, with all the severity she could crowd into the expression.

"A thousand dollars!" exclaimed the captain. "And it has been in the frame of the looking-glass for ten years. A thousand dollars? That's rather a large story."

"There was a thousand dollars in it, Captain Bilder; but now the money is gone! Who opened that letter? It was done in your house," added Mrs. Banford.

"Do you mean to tell me there was a thousand dollars in that letter, which has lain in my house for the tenth part of a century?" demanded Captain Bilder, with energy. "I can't believe it. Why, if that had been the case, the —"

"Read the letter then!" said the lady, almost in a fury, as she handed the document to her former employer.

If she had not been excited and angry when

she did this, she would doubtless have considered the consequences of what she was doing. Captain Bilder eagerly grasped the letter, and proceeded to read its contents before his visitor could reconsider her action. It was as follows:—

“MRS. BANFORD: Enclosed I send you one thousand dollars in this letter. If you are not still liveing with Captain Bilder, let me know whare you are liveing. Yours, truely.”

This was all the letter contained; but the penmanship immediately attracted the attention of the captain. The spelling also challenged his observation; but both the writing and spelling were the same as in the letter in which the middle piece of the card was enclosed. The writer was a woman; and whoever she was, she persisted in retaining the final *e* in words ending in *ing*. The writing too, was like that on the pieces of card. He was positive in regard to the penmanship, and he was satisfied that Mrs. Banford was, or had been, in communication with the person who wrote the card and the first letter.

“Are you satisfied, Captain Bilder?” asked the visitor.

“The writer of this letter certainly says she sends you a thousand dollars in it,” replied the captain.

“Well, sir, isn’t that enough?” demanded Mrs. Banford.

“Would anybody send you so large a sum without signing her name to the letter?”

“I suppose she forgot to put her name to it.”

“That may be; but if she received no reply to her letter, she would be likely to inquire into the matter.”

“She did inquire into it.”

“Ah, she did! She informed you that she had sent a letter to you containing a thousand dollars, in my care. If you knew the letter had been sent, nine or ten years ago, why didn’t you write to me about it?”

“I did write to you; but I suppose my letter was lost.”

“By the way, Mrs. Banford, who sent you this letter, with the money in it?” asked Captain Bilder, quietly.

“My sister, in Philadelphia.”

“What is her name?”

“Emily Gilpath.”

“Where does she live in Philadelphia?”

“At No. 1298 North Thirteenth Street.”

“Thank you. I am glad to know where I may find her, for the person who wrote the letter in your hand, enclosing the thousand dollars, is the one who wrote the anonymous letter containing the card.”

Mrs. Banford drew a long breath, and realized that she had made at least one bad blunder in allowing Captain Bilder to read her letter.

“I don’t know anything about that,” she replied, when she had in some measure recovered her self-possession. “I don’t care anything about it, either;” and perhaps she did not, since Captain Bilder had lost all his property. “All I want is my money—the two five-hundred dollar bills that were in that letter. That’s what I came here for; and I must have it.”

“The two five-hundred dollar bills! Then you know what the bills were?” suggested Captain Bilder.

“Of course I do. Didn’t my sister tell me what they were? You must have opened that letter; at any rate, it was done in your house, and you are responsible for the money. Look

at that envelope! Don't you see it has been opened?"

"I am confident now that it has been opened. A young man by the name of Arthur McGusher slept in that room one night."

"You needn't lay it to him, or to any of your company."

"Then you know Mr. McGusher?"

"No, I don't."

"Of course I should not charge it upon him simply because he slept in the room. But I happen to know that he changed a five hundred dollar bill in Bangor the other day, though he told me he had not money enough to pay for a week's board at the hotel. I think the bill can be had, for the cashier of the bank in Bangor, suspecting that all was not right, agreed to keep it."

Mrs. Banford dropped into her chair, from which she had risen in the excitement of the moment. She was evidently overcome. She said she was sick, and would see the captain again. She left the house, and taking her carriage at the door, returned to the hotel.

CHAPTER XVI.

MR. MCGUSHER IN TROUBLE.

THE members of the clubs did not "turn out" very early on the morning after the revels at the hotel. Neil Brandon was one of the last to show himself on board of the Ocean-Born. He had sat in his solitary state-room till long after midnight, thinking of the discovery he had made that day. Neil Brandon, the mate of the *Coriolanus*, had stolen the child from its parents on the Mississippi River. It did not help the matter at all that Arthur McGusher claimed to be this child. He could readily have believed there was some other Neil Brandon than his father in the world, if his mother had not been so anxious that he should avoid the Bilders. The New York swell might be the long-lost son of Captain Bilder, for all he knew or cared; but he was troubled about his dead father's connection with the business.

Before he went to sleep, Neil had almost made up his mind to run back to Belfast, the next morning, in the steamer, and confront Captain Bilder, who doubtless would be able to satisfy his curiosity; but this would be violating his mother's expressed wish. He hoped Madam Brandon would go to Bangor, as she threatened to do, for it did not seem to him that he could wait till his return to Philadelphia, at the end of the vacation, for an explanation of the mystery. He wanted to talk over the subject with Berry Owen or Ben Lunder; but if his dead father had done any mean or criminal act in his lifetime, his son ought to be the last to bring reproach upon his memory by an exposure. While he was thinking what he should do about it, he went to sleep without reaching a decision.

The party breakfasted at their own hours with the other guests of the hotel. At nine o'clock most of the young men had been to the table, and were now busy in making preparations to continue the excursion up the river. It was quite late when Mr. McGusher left his princely apartments. In the office he heard that the

clubs were to start in a couple of hours, and he sent a servant to Captain Post of his steamer, to have his craft in order, and ready to follow the Ocean-Born. Then he went in to breakfast; and his heart leaped with emotion when he saw Kate Bilder and three other members of the Dorcas Club at the table, unattended by Captain Patterdale, Ben Lunder, or any other of the ogres of the party. The girls were chatting in the merriest way over the events of the preceding evening.

“Aw, good mawning, Miss Bildaw. I hope you are quite well this mawning,” said the long-lost, with his usual flourish, as he seated himself at the head of the table, on each side of which were two of the young ladies.

“Quite well, I thank you, Mr. McGusher,” replied Kate, cheerfully, when she saw that she could not escape without positive rudeness.

“It’s a delicious mawning,” added Mr. McGusher.

“Very pleasant, indeed; but all the yachtmen are grumbling because there is no wind,” replied Kate.

“Like myself, you don’t depend upon the wind.”

“I think most young men need wind,” said Minnie Darling.

“Aw, but my steamaw goes by steam, you see,” replied Mr. McGusher, delighted to find himself actually in conversation with some of the young ladies.

“Does she, indeed!” exclaimed Minnie; and the other girls laughed. “What a funny steamboat she must be!”

“Well, I suppose she is,” chuckled the long-lost; “but she don’t want no wind, you see. She goes wight along, whethaw thaw is any wind or not.”

“She is a very remarkable steamboat,” added Minnie.

“But the yachts cannot go up the river, if there is no wind,” suggested Kate.

“Captain Brandon says he will tow them up,” added Nellie Patterdale.

“And I will tow the Dawcas Club,” said Mr. McGusher. “My steamaw is at yaw sawvice.”

“We intend to row every inch of the way to Bangor,” replied Kate.

“Wow all the way to Bangaw!” exclaimed the gallant New Yorker. “That would be

hawwible! Those beauteous awms would be bwocken!"

"Mine will stand it, I know," said Kate. "We are going as far as Bucksport to-day; and all of us are invited to dine on board of the Ocean-Born."

"The Ocean-Born!" ejaculated Mr. McGusher, who evidently believed the dinner was only a subterfuge to keep him out in the cold, though the ladies were not to blame for it.

The long-lost was happy for half an hour, and during that time he uttered a great many inanities, which pleased the gay girls not a little. They were very willing to laugh at him, though they were vexed when he intruded his society upon them at the table. For their own amusement, though perhaps against their better judgment, they rather encouraged him. When they rose from the table, Mr. McGusher strutted and flourished more than ever. He gave himself up to bowing and scraping.

"I am delighted to have met you, ladies. My steamaw will go up the wiver—"

"And you'll keep us in a quiver," laughed Mollie Longimore.

“No, I hope not; but I trust we shall meet—”

“Where breezes come so soft and sweet.”

“Just so; that’s the place!” chuckled Mr. McGusher. “Where come so soft and sweet the breezes—”

“Sighing though the pine-wood treeses,” added Mollie.

“Thanks, ladies! I’ll be there. My steamaw shall float—”

“Like a canary bird’s note—”

“Yes; like a canawy bawd’s note. Weally, ladies, you aw poets,” ogled the long-lost. “I used to wite poetwy once. I’m vewy fond of poetwy.”

“Then you shall write us some, Mr. McGusher,” said Mollie. “Young ladies are always fond of poetry.”

“But I twust I shall see more of you. My steamaw shall float at the side of the fleet.” Mr. McGusher paused, for the last word would rhyme with ‘sweet,’ and he hoped Mollie would supply another line; but she did not.

“My steamaw shall float at the side of the fleet,
As I gaze at the wowers so faiaw and sweet.

Eh? How is that for a couplet?”

“Splendid, Mr. McGusher. Do give us some more,” replied Mollie.

“I will wite a long poem as we sail up the wiver. I will dedicate it to the ladies of the Dawcas Club, and have it pwinted in the Bangaw papaws when we awive,” gushed the long-lost, who thought some of these young ladies must be desperately in love with him by this time.

“But we must get ready to start, girls,” said Mollie Longimore, who was the leader of the Dorcas.

“You will pawmit me to see you again, I twust,” added Mr. McGusher.

“We shall be delighted to see you again,” replied Minnie. “By the way, Mr. McGusher, did you say your steamer went by steam?”

“Of cawse it goes by steam. It wouldn’t be a steamaw if it didn’t go by steam,” replied the long-lost, with a fascinating smile. “Shall I see you on bawd of my steamaw—the Monogwam? She has a cabin—”

“Has she a boiler?” asked Minnie.

“A boilaw? Of cawse she has a boilaw. Whaw would she get haw steam, if she didn’t have no boilaw, you see?”

“Then I’m afraid I can’t go on board of your steamer. I don’t like to go where they have boilers: they are apt to explode,” replied Minnie, gravely.

“Please to have the boiler taken out of her, Mr. McGusher,” pleaded Mollie. “Only think, if it should burst!”

“It won’t bawst; I won’t allow it to bawst while you are on bawd. But I will see you again to-day.”

“By-by,” said Mollie.

Mr. McGusher went up stairs to his elegant apartments with his heart all in a flutter. He had known all along, if he could only get within speaking distance of these young ladies, he should be able to make an impression. The result proved that he was right. Four of them, at least, had smiled upon him. He had been asked to write some poetry. Here was his opportunity; and he would address it to that pretty Mollie Longimore.

“I will wite a poem,” said he, stalking across his parlor. “I can wite poetwy. I wondaw if that Billing Boundaw Ben can wite poetwy. It isn’t eveyw fellow that can wite poetwy. Let me see:—

Softly o'er the swelling tide,
In our boats we sweetly wide.

That's sooted to the occasion. No fellow can
beat that, not even Longfellow.

Gently woll the spawklng waves—

Waves—waves? What wymes with waves?
Gwaves. No; gwaves won't do for such a jolly
time. Slaves?

Gently woll the spawklng waves
'Neath the humblest of thy slaves,
In his barge that goes by steam,
While thine eyes so softly gleam :
Floating the Penobscot up ;
Dash not fwom his lips the cup,
The cup of bliss he fain would quaff :
Do not at thy suppliant laugh.
Heaw me, as we float, dear Mollie—

Mollie, Mollie! What rhymes with Mollie? I
see.

Heaw me as we float, deaw Mollie :
Banish all my *melancholy*.
Give me but one loving smile,
And, though wataws swell and bile,
Naught on awth will Awthur feaw,
With the smiling Mollie neaw.

Not so bad! I will finish it on bawd of my
steamaw, when I have the inspiwation of haw
bwight eyes to help me."

Doubtless it was better to postpone the poem,
as the hour for sailing was at hand. Thus far

the poem was a success, in his opinion; and he re-wrote it with ink before he packed his valise. He went down to the office, paid his bill, and directed the porter to carry his baggage down to the wharf.

All the members of the clubs were at the landing. The Ocean-Born had come up to the pier for the managing agent and the surgeon. There was hardly a breath of wind, and it was plain that the yachts could make no headway going up the river against the tide, which would not turn for three hours.

“It is no use to start in this sort of a hurricane,” said Sam Rodman, of the Maud. “We shall only drift into the shoal water and get aground, or go down the river when we want to go up.”

“Of course we can’t do anything without wind,” added Frank Norwood, of the Alice.

“Why should you howl, jolly yachtman?” demanded Ben Lunder. “Yonder comes the mighty commander of the Ocean-Born. Hear what he will say.”

“I will tow the yachts up the river,” said Neil Brandon. “That’s what I’m here for.”

“You can’t tow the six yachts against this ebb tide,” replied Commodore Montague.

“We can do it with two reefs in the fore-royal smoke-stack,” shouted Ben.

“I think we can take along all the yachts, commodore; though I don’t know how strong the current is.”

“It runs pretty swift through Bucksport Narrows.”

“I know I can keep the yachts from drifting down stream, at least; and I hope to make three or four knots.”

“I beg yaw pawdon,” said Mr. McGusher, edging his way into the centre of the crowd.

“Ah, my jolly maintopman!” cried Ben. “Now cast off your foreto-bowline, swing too on your bob-scuttles, lighten up your after-davits, and sail in!”

“I didn’t address myself to you, saw,” said Mr. McGusher, with a withering sneer on his intellectual face. “I wish to see the commo-daw.”

“I’m not the commo-daw, I’m the jack-daw.”

“I beg yaw pawdon, commodaw,” continued the charter party of the Monogwam. “I beg

leave to offaw the sawvices of my steamaw, to tow the yachts up the wivaw.”

“I thank you, sir; but we have already secured the Ocean-Born for that purpose,” replied Commodore Montague, rather coldly.

“But I hawd the Captain of the Ocean-Bawn say the tide was too strong to tow all the yachts. The Monogwan shall tow pawt of them.”

“Thank you; but I think we shall not require her.”

“We can tow your six yachts,” added Neil.

“’ Vast heavin’! Of course we can!” cried Ben. “If we can’t, we’ll splice the topsail-boom, and take two half-hitches in the main brace! If we can’t, I’ll take a line ashore, and drag them up to Bangor.”

“Who’s that coming?” said Ned Patterdale, as two gentlemen were seen in a grove approaching the wharf.

“One of them is your father, Kate,” added Minnie Darling. “Perhaps he has come to take you away. But you mustn’t go.”

“Who’s that with him?” asked Kate.

“It’s Mr. Beardsley,” said Ned.

“Deputy Sheriff Beardsley!” added Sam Rod-

man. "I wonder if he has come after any of us!"

"I should be vewy happy to have you accept the sawvices of my steamaw," continued Mr. McGusher. "The captain of my steamaw, says she can tow all the yachts, and not stwain hawself. The young ladies wish me to join the pawty; and I will do all I can to make the excawsion agweeable. I will twy to be agweeable myself."

"Right! That's a good fellow," said Mr. Beardsley, tapping him on the shoulder. "You are my prisoner!"

"Yaw pwisonaw!" exclaimed Mr. McGusher. Captain Bilder had paused on the outside of the crowd, where Kate had met him.

"That's what I said," added the deputy sheriff.

"Yaw pwisonaw! Do you mean to insult me?"

"If arresting you is insulting you, that's just what I mean to do."

"Awest me!"

"That's the idea."

"But, saw, this is irwegular."

“I think not — perfectly regular. I hope you don't object.”

“I do object, most pawsitively. I am engaged with this pawty on an excawsion up the wivaw.”

“We'll excuse you,” said some one in the crowd.

“The party will have to excuse you; and I'm glad to hear they are willing to do so,” said the officer.

“Thaw's some mistake.”

“I think not.”

“Why should you awest me? I am not a cwiminal. I'm a gentleman — fwom New Yawk.”

“Can't help it. I must arrest you.”

“Do you know who I am, saw?” demanded Mr. McGusher, as he threw back his head, and gave the officer a crushing sneer.

“Well, my warrant says you are Arthur McGusher, now or formerly of New York City.”

“No, saw; I am the only son of Captain Bil-daw, of Belfast.”

“Are you, indeed! He does not seem to be aware of the fact.”

“Yes, he is.”

“Nonsense, you young monkey! If you ever say that again, I’ll pitch you into the river,” interposed the ship-master, coming to the middle of the ring “I can stand anything but to be accused of being the father of such an ape as you are.”

“Good gwacious, Captain Bildaw! Didn’t I bwing you the piece of cawd?”

“You did.”

“And didn’t I tell you a stwaight stowy?”

“Very straight,” laughed Captain Bilder.

“You wote to yaw fwiend Bawden Gween?”

“No, I didn’t. But I got an answer to the letter I did not write, which surprised me not a little.”

“You did not wite to Bawden Gween!” gasped Mr. McGusher.

“I did not; at least, I did not write to him anything about you. I sent my letter to the firm in New York. Borden Green does not live in Goshen.”

“You have played a contemptible twick upon me, Captain Bildaw. I did not expect this from my long-lost fawther.”

“He won’t own you,” said Mr. Beardsley.
“Are you ready to go with me?”

“No, saw, I’m not weady.”

“Very well; then I shall have to put the twisters on you;” and the deputy-sheriff produced a pair of handcuffs.

“I won’t! Nevaw! They peawce my soul!” groaned the swell. “Tell me that this is a pwactical joke, got up by my fwiend, Mr. Lundaw.”

“Shiver my booms and bobstays!” cried Ben; “don’t call me your friend! Anything but that. Don’t libel an old salt.”

“On what chawge am I to be awested?” asked the New Yorker, more mildly.

“On the charge of opening a letter and stealing therefrom a thousand dollars, in two five-hundred dollar bills,” replied Mr. Beardsley. “It will be my duty to hand you over to the United States officers.”

“It is false! What lettaw?” asked McGusher, whose face was very pale.

“You know all about it better than I do. Have you any money about you?”

“Of cawse I have. Do you expect a gentleman to go off on a vacation without money?”

“Turn out your pockets. Let’s see what you have,” said the matter-of-fact officer.

“Do you mean to sawch me?”

“That’s the idea.”

“Am I to submit to such an indignity?”

“You are to submit; and I must attend to the matter at once, before you make any different arrangements.”

Mr. McGusher was searched in spite of his protest. A five-hundred dollar bill, a hundred, several fifties, and some smaller bills were found in his wallet; and Mr. Beardsley was cruel enough to take possession of the whole amount.

“It’s a vewy hawd case,” said the culprit, as he wiped away the tears which his misfortunes had brought to his eyes—he called them misfortunes.

“I am ready to return to Belfast, Mr. McGusher,” added the sheriff. “If you have any orders to give in regard to your steamer, now is your time.”

“We will wetawn in haw, if you please.”

“All right: I don’t object.”

Before they could go on board of her, a buggy, containing a lady and gentleman, descended the slope to the wharf.

“What have you done, Captain Bilder?”

asked Mrs. Banford, for she was the lady in the buggy.

“I have caused Arthur McGusher to be arrested for opening that letter,” replied the shipmaster.

“You needn’t have troubled yourself,” replied the lady. “The letter was addressed to me, not to you.”

“I am aware of that. But when you charge me with opening it, I think I shall be able to produce the one who did open it.”

“Good gwacious!” groaned Mr. McGusher, as he recognized the voice of Mrs. Banford, “whaw did she come fwom?”

“If you have taken him up, I command you to let him go!” said Mrs. Banford, in a tone suited to the words she uttered.

“I think not. He opened the letter and took out the money,” answered the deputy sheriff. “I shall be able to produce one of the bills, which I found upon him, and the other is at a bank in Bangor.”

“No matter for that, sir. The letter was addressed to me, and the money was mine,” added the lady, fiercely.

“Did you authorize him to open the letter?” asked the officer.

“I did,” replied she; but probably she did not speak the truth.

“Then, if you testify that you did at his trial, I dare say he will be acquitted.”

“You know this young man, it seems, Mrs. Banford,” said Captain Bilder.

“I do.”

“And you sent him here to assert his claim that he is my son?”

“No, sir; I did not.”

“But you did. You wrote the letter which he brought to me,” added Captain Bilder, somewhat excited.

“I haven’t another word to say about it,” answered Mrs. Banford, with assumed dignity.

“But don’t let him awest me, mothaw,” pleaded Mr. McGusher, whose spirit seemed to be entirely broken.

“Mother!” exclaimed the captain, rather startled by this involuntary confession.

“He is not my son,” said Mrs. Banford: “I am his father’s wife.”

“That indeed. I think I begin to see through

this business. I understand it better than I did. You managed this little scheme," continued Captain Bilder.

"He is not your son. That's enough for now. He may as well have one beggar for his father as another," added Mrs. Banford, bitterly.

"Mr. Beardsley, I must ask you to keep an eye on this lady. I shall enter a complaint against her for conspiracy," said the ship-master.

"Conspiracy against a beggar!" sneered Mrs. Banford, who was evidently a strong-minded woman.

She was permitted to go on board of the *Menogram* with Mr. McGusher, in charge of the officer; and she immediately departed for Belfast. The poem was never delivered to Mollie Longimore.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE MYSTERY DEEPENS.

THE arrest of Mr. McGusher produced a great sensation among the members of the clubs, for though he was an unmitigated swell, no one supposed he was a rascal, or knew enough to be a rogue. Some of the tender-hearted girls even pitied him, when he was arrested and exposed. No one was more interested in the proceedings than Neil Brandon, and after the Monogram had departed with the prisoner and his discomfited step-mother, he was not quite willing to go on board of the Ocean-Born while Captain Bilder remained on shore. The ship-master had brought Mr. Beardsley over with his own team, and intended to drive back in the course of the day.

“Berry, will you pick up those yachts, and get ready to tow them up?” asked Neil of his

mate. "I am not quite prepared to go on board yet."

"Certainly I will," replied Berry Owen.

"Take one on each side, and the other four astern, in pairs," added Neil.

"I wish you would go up the river, father," said Kate, while they were waiting on the river.

"I must return to the city, and attend to Mr. McGusher's case. Perhaps I will go up as far as Bucksport, and return in the steamer."

"I wish you would," added Neil. "We will make you comfortable on board the Ocean-Born."

Captain Bilder accepted the invitation. Kate took her place in the Lily, and in a few moments the five boats of the Dorcas Club were pulling steadily up the river. Neil and his new guest went on board of the Ocean-Born in a shore boat before she had arranged her tow, for as there was not a breath of wind, the yachts were utterly helpless, and the steamer had to pick them up one at a time.

"Mr. McGusher seems to have come to grief," said Neil, when they had reached the deck of the Ocean-Born.

"He is a simpleton," replied Captain Bilder ;

“but I am satisfied that he is not a rascal of his own volition.”

“I don’t think he knows enough to be a great villain,” added Neil.

“And the choice of him as an agent is not very creditable to his principals.”

“I don’t quite understand the matter. Who is the woman that talked so loud and was so positive?”

“Mrs. Banford; she was formerly my house-keeper, and as such she obtained a very full knowledge of all my business and family affairs.”

“Won’t you walk into my room, Captain Bilder?” continued Neil, who seemed to forget that he was not now avoiding the Bilders, as his mother desired.

In a few minutes, Neil and his guest were seated in front of the desk in the captain’s room. The young man was nervous and ill at ease. Perhaps he felt that he was prying into a forbidden subject.

“You seem to be quite sure that Mr. McGusher is a fraud,” said he, when they were seated.

“I have been satisfied of that from the be-

ginning," replied Captain Bilder. "I know that my son had not his eyes or his nose."

"Then you had a son?"

"I had, but I am reasonably sure that he was drowned in the Mississippi River when a small child;" and the ship-master briefly related the incident of the disappearance of the child.

"After all, it is possible that the child was stolen," said Neil.

"Barely possible; if any one stole the little one, it could only be in order to get a large sum of money out of me. As no one has put in any claim, except this young fellow, I am afraid there is nothing to hope for."

"McGusher showed me the letter he carried to you," continued the young captain.

"Did he, indeed?"

"That letter says the child was stolen by Neil Brandon."

"Yes; he was the mate of my ship; but I don't think he was vile enough to do such a deed.

"What became of him?" asked Neil, deeply interested.

"I don't know; I never saw him after I dis-

charged him at Hong Kong, though I heard he was in New York, when my ship arrived. I never ascertained what became of him. I don't know that I felt interest enough in him to inquire. Do you think he was a relative of yours?"

"I have no idea, sir. It seems very strange that his name and mine should be the same."

"That was what startled me when I first went on board of your steamer. What do you know about your father, Captain Brandon?"

"Not much; he died when I was quite young. I only know that he was a rich man, who made his fortune by the rise of land in Philadelphia. He went to sea when he was a young man."

"There is something about this McGusher affair which perplexes me beyond measure," said Captain Bilder, thoughtfully. "I fully understand that Mrs. Banford fitted out her step-son for his mission in Belfast; but I do not understand where she obtained the pieces of card which were relied upon to carry her point."

"What were those?" asked Neil.

“Some ten years ago I received a letter, with no signature, informing me that my son was not dead, and that some time he might come to me, claiming to be my son. The letter contained one of three pieces of a card, on which were six lines of writing. My son, if he came to me, was to bring the left hand piece, while the middle one was sent to me. This was before Mrs. Banford left my employ, and the writing was not hers. I talked with her about the matter. Now, ten years after, her step-son appears with the left hand piece of card. The third piece, I was informed in the letter, was deposited with Borden Green & Co., New York. The other day I wrote to this firm, who had formerly been my bankers. This morning’s mail brought me the third piece of card, which exactly corresponds with the other two. I have them with me,” said Captain Bilder, taking an envelope from his pocket.

On the desk he arranged the three pieces of card, the right hand piece of which had just reached him. The part fitted the middle piece perfectly, and it was evident that they had all been cut from one and the same card. The

pieces had come from three different sources, and the card must have been divided more than ten years before, when Mrs. Banford was still the housekeeper of the ship-master.

Ship *Eriolanus*.
 Neil Brandon
 Richard Bilder, ^{mate} Master
 Marguerite Brandon
née Lardier
 Oscar Blake Bilder.

“I should call that very good evidence indeed,” said Neil.

“So should I, if the young fellow had not been so different from my son,” replied Captain Bilder. “The original card was written upon by the person who penned the first letter to me, whoever that may have been. It was a woman, but her identity is a mystery to me.”

“Perhaps it was Mrs. Banford,” suggested Neil.

“No; I am quite sure it is not she. The writing was not hers; and the spelling was not hers. You heard what McGusher was arrested for?”

“For breaking open a letter.”

“And taking two five-hundred dollar bills from it. Well, I read that letter. It had been in my house nearly ten years. The handwriting and the spelling were the same as that of the first letter which had come to me. The address on it was not in the same hand.”

“Then the person who wrote the card and the letter, telling you your son might come to you, was a correspondent of Mrs. Banford,” said Neil.

“That is proved to my satisfaction, and before I have done with the woman and her son, I shall know who her correspondent is,” added Captain Bilder, very decidedly. “I have lost all my property, it is true; and perhaps this fact has modified the action of the woman.”

“May I look at that card?” asked Neil, glancing at the pieces which still lay matched together on the desk.

“Certainly,” replied Captain Bilder.

Neil bent over the desk, and read the card.

“ ‘Marguerite Brandon, *née* Lardier’ ! ” exclaimed he.

“ Do you know any such person ? ” asked the ship-master.

Neil was not willing to answer the question. He was much agitated, and seemed to feel that he had betrayed the confidence reposed in him by his mother.

“ Oscar Blake Bilder,” he continued, reading the last line of the re-united piece of card.

“ Who was he ? ”

“ He was my son — the little boy that was lost. I am sure that Mrs. Banford could not have known all the facts stated on that card,” added Captain Bilder. “ For instance, Lardier was Marguerite’s maiden name. We never called her anything but Marguerite. This information did not come from her. There is another person concerned in the conspiracy ; and this other person sent the money to Mrs. Banford. However, I shall get at the whole truth before I have done with the matter. You seemed to be a little startled when you read the name of Marguerite. Can you explain this business ? ”

“I cannot, sir. Who was Marguerite?” replied Neil.

“She was the nurse employed to take care of my children. She was with us in the China sea, and made several voyages with me. If this card is to be relied upon, she became the wife of Neil Brandon.”

“Then Neil Brandon was a bad man,” added the young captain, musing.

“I don’t say that, and I don’t believe it.”

“Then you don’t believe he stole your child?”

“I do not. Neil Brandon was not a bad man while he was with me. He was the best mate I ever had, and always did well till Marguerite came on board with the children. He was very fond of her, and neglected his duty to talk and flirt with her. I was afraid I should lose my ship, or my children, by the neglect and carelessness of the mate and the nurse, and I discharged him. He was angry, and threatened to be revenged upon me for sending him off; but I took this as only a burst of passion, and thought nothing more about it.”

“Have you the letter which contained the money McGusher stole?” asked Neil.

He was completely bewildered by the facts which had been forced upon his understanding. Though he could not explain the business, as he had told Captain Bilder, he recognized the writing on the card as that of Madam Brandon, his mother. Her maiden name he knew was Lardier.

“I have not the letter; it is the property of Mrs. Banford, and I had no authority to retain it; but I have asked Mr. Beardsley to get it for me,” replied the ship-master.

“Do you know the handwriting?” asked Neil, nervously.

“I do, very well indeed.”

“Is that it?” inquired Neil, as he took from the desk the long letter from his mother, wherein he had been requested to avoid the Bilders.

Captain Bilder put on his glasses and examined the writing very attentively.

“It is the same hand precisely, though this letter is written more rapidly than the card or Mrs. Banford’s letter,” replied the ship-master, somewhat excited himself by this time. “The style of spelling is the same. ‘Living’ is spelled with an e, and ‘where’ is whare. I have no

doubt this letter was written by the one who wrote the card, and the money letter which has been in my house ten years."

"I am entirely satisfied on that point," added Neil, now trembling with emotion.

"Who wrote this letter?" demanded Captain Bilder.

"Have you read it, sir?"

"Only a line here and there."

"Read it, if you please."

"But who wrote it?"

"My mother," replied Neil, in a sad and subdued tone.

"Your mother!" exclaimed the ship-master, springing out of his chair in his excitement.

"Yes, sir; my mother."

"Can it be that your mother is engaged in this — this conspiracy!"

"It would appear that she is; but I know nothing about it," added Neil, and it seemed to him that a crime was about to be fastened upon his mother.

"But didn't you say that your father was a wealthy man?"

"I did, sir; he was worth half a million, besides the house in which he lived."

“And what became of his property?” asked Captain Bilder.

“He left it all to my mother,” replied Neil.

“None to you?”

“No, sir; but by my mother’s will, which she says she has made, I am the sole heir.”

“Certainly your mother, worth half a million of dollars, could not have engaged in any conspiracy,” said the ship-master.

“I don’t believe she did. I don’t understand it,” pleaded Neil.

“I must see your mother! I must know whether she was the nurse of my children on board the *Coriolanus*!” exclaimed Captain Bilder. “She wrote that card, and she must have given the left hand piece of it to Mrs. Banford. But I can’t see why she should engage in such a piece of trickery.”

“Nor I, sir. Will you read her letter? While you are doing so, I will go out and see how we are getting on.”

Neil left the state-room, and Captain Bilder gave himself up to the reading of the long epistle. The *Ocean-Born* was on her way up the river. The *Sea Foam* was made fast on her

port and the Skylark on her starboard side. Behind her she was dragging the Maud, Phantom, Alice, and Nellie. She was making a speed of about three knots, which was as fast as the Dorcas Club, only a few fathoms ahead of her, cared to row. Half her yachtmen were on the hurricane deck of the steamer, and all hands were exceedingly jolly. Neil was sadly troubled, and he did not join the festive company. He looked into the galley, where Peter Blossom was up to his eyes in poultry and roasting pieces, and Karl was washing potatoes, turnips, and other vegetables, all for the great dinner which was to be given that day to the members of the Dorcas Club. The cooks of the several yachts were performing similar service on the forecastle, and it was evident there would be no lack of dinners in the fleet.

Neil gave some directions to the cook and steward, and then walked aft. He wanted to believe that his mother had done nothing wrong, at least that she had taken no guilty part in the conspiracy against Captain Bilder. The shipmaster did not believe his former mate had stolen the child, and, of course, the son had no

reason to think his dead father had done so cruel a deed. He had never heard a word about Mrs. Banford before, and he could not fathom his mother's relations to her. It was all a muddle, and he could make nothing of it. He returned to his state-room before Captain Bilder had finished the reading of the letter.

"Your mother wishes you to avoid me and my daughter," said the ship-master, as he finished the letter.

"Yes, sir; that was what I particularly wished you to see," replied Neil.

"Well, that is perfectly consistent with what we already know. She seems to have assisted Mrs. Banford in her attempt to impose McGusher upon me."

"I can't see why she should do it."

"Nor I. Then she had paid her a thousand dollars in one sum, and as the letter containing the money was permitted to remain unclaimed for ten years in my house, it was hardly probable this was all your mother paid her."

"Perhaps not: I don't know," replied Neil, blankly. "I can't see why my mother should pay her any money."

“It is not likely that she would have done so, unless Mrs. Banford had some strong claim upon her. From the carelessness with which the business was done, I should judge that it was hush-money she paid.”

“Perhaps it was. But, Captain Bilder, my mother is a good woman. She always goes to church three times a day, and she gives thousands of dollars to the poor every year. I never knew her to do anything wrong,” pleaded Neil, his eyes full of tears.

“Some very good people, without any fault of their own, have paid money to avoid certain consequences. Mrs. Banford evidently has some hold upon your mother, and probably extorted that piece of card from her, as well as considerable sums of money. I must see your mother, Captain Brandon.”

“You may have an opportunity if you go up to Bangor with us.”

“Do you think she will go there?”

“I do; it would be just like her. You can judge from her letter how nervous she is about this business.”

“Well, we will talk no more about it now.

I must leave you at Bucksport to return to Belfast by the steamer, for I am obliged to attend to the case of Mrs. Banford, or rather Mrs. McGusher, for that appears to be her name now. But I think I shall go up to Bangor in the boat to-morrow morning."

"I hope I shall see you there, for I shall not be satisfied till this mystery is solved," replied Neil.

"After what I have learned from you, I may make some progress with Mrs. McGusher in getting at the truth."

The conference was ended for the present, and Neil joined his friends on the hurricane deck, struggling to banish from his thoughts the mystery of the hour. He tried to believe that his mother had done no wrong which she had paid large sums of money to conceal; and he was not willing to believe that his dead father had ever known anything about the lost child of his guest.

The Dorcas Club rowed abreast, in single line, in couples, and in all manner of figures that could be formed with the five boats. Men, women, and children on the shores observed the

club with interest, and the crews of the lumber vessels anchored all the way up, waiting for a breeze, cheered the young ladies. Steamers whistled complimentary salutations, to all of which the fair rowists responded by tossing their oars, and the Ocean-Born whistled in reply. The girls rested half an hour in the Narrows, but they fell astern and made fast to the yachts, to prevent the swift current from carrying them down the river. Ben Lunder made salt speeches to them, and when they started again, he was a passenger in the Lily. He kept the girls laughing so that they could hardly preserve their position in the line. In fact, there was a young man in every one of the boats, and possibly one in the head of each of the young ladies. But everybody was happy, and every moment of the excursion was enjoyed.

At half past one, after a pull of three hours and a half, the procession of boats reached Bucksport. The Ocean-Born, with the yachts still in tow, anchored under the guns of Fort Knox, opposite the town. The row-boats ran alongside of her, and the gallant yachtmen assisted the ladies on board. The boats were secured where the tide could not harm them, and

all the young men began to be exceedingly polite, chatty, and devoted.

“Der dinner ist rady!” shouted Karl. “You don’t petter wait here dill every dings is colt.”

“But we can’t all dine in that little cabin,” said Miss President Darling.

“All the ladies can,” replied Neil; “and all the officers and crew of the Ocean-Born shall do duty behind their chairs.”

It was rather a close fit, but all the members of the Dorcas Club were seated at the table in the forward cabin. Neil placed himself behind the chair of Minnie Darling, at the head; Ben was behind that of Kate Bilder, and others expressed their preferences in the same manner, though they did not confine their attention to the ladies behind whom they had rallied. The dinner was one of Mr. Blossom’s best, and the members of the Dorcas Club were hungry enough to appreciate it. When it was over, the table was prepared for another service. The officers and crew seated themselves with their guests, and then, to their astonishment, the Dorcasites took places behind their chairs, at least two to each person. It was a jolly time, and the fun bubbled up like water from a spring.

In the afternoon they visited the town, and in the evening danced at the hotel, where rooms had been engaged for the Dorcas Club.

The next morning at eight, the fleet resumed its course up the river, the Ocean-Born towing the yachts, and the row-boats leading the way. The party lunched off Hampden, and reached Bangor at two in the afternoon. The excursionists formed a procession as at Fort Point, and marched to the hotel, where the dinner, tendered by Dr. Darling, was in readiness for them.

As soon as he entered the Bangor House, Neil went to the office and examined the register. Among the arrivals was that of "Mrs. Brandon, Phila."

CHAPTER XVIII.

MADAM BRANDON'S STORY.

NEIL BRANDON knew his mother well enough to understand that she would not quietly await the issue of the adventure on the Penobscot; that she would not patiently remain in her home till another letter reached her. When there was a doubt, she insisted upon solving it at once. But Neil was glad his mother had come; he was always glad to see her for her own sake; and he was doubly so in this instance, because his mind was terribly disturbed by the events of the last few days. Though dinner was all ready, and he was the honored guest of the occasion, he felt that the soup would poison him if he tasted it before he saw his mother. A servant showed him to her rooms, and he was promptly admitted.

“I am very glad to see you mother,” said

he, as he kissed her. "I knew you would come, after what you wrote."

"Sit down, my boy: I have a great deal to say to you," added Madam Brandon, with her arm around his neck, as she led him to a chair.

"I can't stay now, mother. I have just arrived with the clubs, and dinner is waiting for us. You must understand that I am a great man down here, just now," laughed Neil. "The Ocean-Born's officers and crew are in high feather—"

"The clubs?"

"I told you about the cruise of the clubs in my letter."

"I know you did. Are the Bilders in the clubs?"

"Kate Bilder is; but I have hardly spoken to her since we left Belfast. I think Captain Bilder will be up here to-morrow morning."

"Is this the way you do what I asked you, Neil?" asked Madam Brandon, nervously.

"I couldn't help it, mother. The plans for the excursion were all made. I couldn't back out," pleaded Neil. "But come down to dinner with me, mother. The party will be very glad indeed to see you."

“I have dined, my son ; and I do not wish to meet your party. I do not wish your friends to know I am here.”

“But your name is on the hotel register, mother.”

“I did not know that. Go down and dine with your party, and come to me as soon as you can,” added Madam Brandon, with a very troubled expression, which her son could not understand.

“What’s the matter, mother? I will go down and get excused,” said Neil.

“No ; I don’t wish you to do that,” continued Madam Brandon, smiling in order to reassure her son, rather than because there was any hope in the situation.

After considerable pressing on the part of his mother, Neil went down to the dining-room, where the party were already seated. The dinner was a remarkably good one, the toasts and speeches were remarkably funny, and Ben Lunder made a particularly remarkable nautical oration. Neil was rather sober and dignified, though he struggled to forget the burden which weighed upon his mind. He sat next to

Minnie Darling, because she was president of the Dorcas Club, and he was the captain of the Ocean-Born. He tried to say pretty things to her, and perhaps he succeeded to some extent; but he failed to be half as brilliant as he wished to be; and perhaps this is the case with all modest young men. He made his usual brief and sensible speech, and was vigorously applauded. But the enigma of his own relations with the Bilders was continually intruding itself upon his thoughts.

After dinner, the party were to visit the notables of Bangor, and Neil excused himself on the plea that his mother—whose arrival was known to all the excursionists—wished to see him.

“We will excuse you for one hour, Captain Brandon,” said Minnie. “Then we shall call upon the mayor of the city. You must go with us, and your mother too.”

“I will endeavor to go,” replied Neil, as he hastened to his mother’s apartments.

“I have had hard work to get away from the party mother,” said he. “I am wanted again in an hour, and you are particularly invited to go with us.”

“Perhaps I will go,” added Madam Brandon, doubtfully. “Did you say you expected Captain Bilder here to-morrow morning, Neil?”

“I do expect him. He wishes to see you, mother,” replied the son.

“He wishes to see me!” exclaimed she, startled by the announcement. “What have you been doing, Neil?”

“What have I been doing? What have you been doing, mother?” asked Neil, trying to laugh.

“Has anything happened since you wrote me?” she inquired, much agitated.

“What’s the matter, mother? Why are you so troubled?” demanded Neil.

“Let me know the worst, Neil,” gasped she, sinking into a chair, and covering her face with her handkerchief.

“The worst? What can you mean, mother? I hope there is nothing wrong between you and the Bilders,” added the young man; and some of his half-formed fears seemed to be realized in her present conduct and appearance.

“Why does Captain Bilder wish to see me, Neil?” continued Madam Brandon, recovering

her self-possession with a tremendous effort.

“Tell me everything.”

“I will mother.”

He began with the history of Mr. McGusher's mission in Belfast, and told the story as we have related it.

“Now, mother, I have seen the letter and the piece of card which this fellow brought with him to prove his claim,” added Neil. “In that letter it says that Neil Brandon stole the child from his parents on the Mississippi River.”

Madam Brandon was as pale as marble, but she maintained a tolerable degree of composure.

“On the card, when these pieces brought from three different sources were put together, was the name of Marguerite Brandon, *nee* Lardier. That was your name, mother,” pursued Neil. “More than this, the card was in your hand-writing.”

“Go on, Neil,” added his mother, when he paused to note the effect upon her of these revelations.

“I hoped you would explain this, mother.”

“I will in due time, Neil. Go on; let me hear the whole story.”

“The letter from which McGusher took the two five-hundred dollar bills, was also in your handwriting, though it was not signed. Mrs. Banford —”

“Who?” asked Madam Brandon.

“Mrs. Banford. She was Captain Bilder’s housekeeper years ago; but she married the father of this McGusher, and of course she is Mrs. McGusher now.”

“Go on, Neil.”

“Mrs. Banford opened the letter; it was directed to her. Captain Bilder is satisfied that you were in communication with this woman.”

“Then you have talked with Captain Bilder about the matter,” said Madam Brandon, with something like a gasp of despair.

“I couldn’t help it, mother. I never was so worked up about anything in all my life. I don’t like this Mrs. Banford. I think she has been playing tricks upon you and Captain Bilder.” She has been trying to make it out that this step-son of hers is Captain Bilder’s son. But both of them have been arrested.”

“Arrested?” groaned Madam Brandon.

“The young fellow has been arrested, and the

officer has his eye on the woman. He is a fraud, and so is she. When she found that Captain Bilder had lost all his property, she seems to have changed her tune. She didn't care to make out a case then."

"What do you mean, Neil?"

"Captain Bilder is a poor man to-day, and of course she couldn't get any money out of him," Neil explained.

"A poor man?"

"He says he is not worth a dollar in the world; and as other people say so too, I suppose there is no doubt about it. He lost all he had in speculation."

Strange as it may seem, the countenance of Madam Brandon brightened up at this intelligence. She was evidently pleased with the information.

"Are you very sure about this, Neil?" she asked.

"I think there can be no doubt of it, mother," replied the son. "He must leave his fine house, sell his horses and carriages, and they say he must go to sea again to earn his daily bread."

"He was a rich man," mused the lady.

“Then you knew him, mother?”

“I did—years ago.”

“I have heard you say that you had been a servant before you were married.”

“You will not despise me for that, my boy?”

“No, mother, far from it. I honor you because you have never pretended to be what you are not.”

“I have tried for many years to be a good woman, Neil,” added Madam Brandon, wiping a tear from her pale cheek.

“And you are a good woman, mother; there is none better in the whole world!” exclaimed Neil, with enthusiasm.

“I wish I were,” sighed she.

“I wanted to see you, mother, that you might tell me there was nothing wrong between you and this Mrs. McGusher. I know now that you were the nurse in Captain Bilder’s family and that you were with him in the *Coriolanus*. And my father was the mate of that ship.”

“No, he was not, Neil.”

“Then there was another Neil Brandon?” added the young man, hopefully.

“Don’t ask me now, Neil. I will tell you all

very soon, said Madam Brandon, struggling with her emotions.

“I am amazed, mother. There is something terrible about this business, I fear.”

“There is, Neil,” replied his mother, impressively. “But, my boy, there is nothing terrible for you; it is only terrible for me. You will be bright and happy; you will rejoice at the change which is to come over you.”

“Why, mother, what do you mean!” said Neil, rising and kneeling on the floor before her. “You know I have loved and honored you as a son should; and never was a son more proud of his mother. Everybody that knows you blesses you for your kindness, for your goodness, for your charities!”

“Nobody knows me but God, Neil,” groaned Madam Brandon. “He knows me, and he knows what a weight I have borne upon my soul for all these years. He cannot forgive me, because I have not done my whole duty—because I have loved you, Neil, more than I have loved God and duty. No matter my boy; don’t you weep because I do. All shall be well with you, for you have done no wrong.”

“Have you, mother?”

“I have, Neil; but I will undo the wrong, so far as I can. I am overcome now, Neil. I cannot say any more. To-morrow when Captain Bilder comes, I will tell you all. You shall be happy, however it may be with me.”

“I can never be happy, if you are not, mother,” added he.

“I shall be happy in undoing the wrong I have done, and in seeing you happy, my boy. Say no more now. Where are your party going this afternoon?”

Madam Brandon suddenly cheered up; her French nature seemed to gain the ascendancy, and in another moment she smiled. She had a strong will, and she used it.

“I will go with you, Neil,” she added.

“Drive away the clouds, and be as gay as your friends. Do not dampen their pleasure by any gloominess.”

“You are going to be cheerful for my sake, mother?”

“I am; and you must be cheerful for your own sake.”

They went to the parlors, where Neil introduced his mother to all the party. Captain Patterdale and Dr. Darling were very polite and

very attentive to her. The excursionists visited the "lions" of Bangor, and in the evening there was a hop at the hotel. Madam Brandon danced with the surgeon and the managing agent, and a great many very pretty things were said to her about her modest, noble, and gallant son. The next morning the party went up to Old-town by train, where they passed through some of the lumber mills, and visited the Penobscot Indians. When they returned, Captain Bilder had arrived. Neil met him as he entered the parlor with his mother.

"Captain Bilder, my mother," said the young man.

"I am very glad indeed to meet you, Mrs. Brandon," said the ship-master, as he took the lady's offered hand.

"Thank you, sir. I am very glad to see one whom I knew in other days," replied Madam Brandon, with abundant suavity. "I suppose you do not recognize me."

"I see some of your former looks, though I should not have known you if I had met you alone."

"Now, Captain Bilder, Neil thinks there is a

little business which needs to be settled, and if you please we will attend to it. I have a private parlor," continued Madam Brandon, with no trace of the emotion which had disturbed her the day before.

They went to the private parlor, and Madam Brandon opened the subject of the conference without any delay.

"I am told that Mrs. Banford, or Mrs. McGusher, has paid you a visit, Captain Bilder," said she.

"Yes; but as she evidently came for money, she came to the wrong man," replied the captain.

"I learn that you have been unfortunate."

"Lost everything!" added the ship-master, bluntly. "Neither Mrs. McGusher nor her stepson can make anything out of me."

"Doubtless you were satisfied that the young man was not your son."

"I was very clear on that point from the moment I first saw him. But I have good evidence that my former housekeeper has done better with you, so far as money is concerned."

"I have paid her six thousand dollars, one

thousand of which I paid twice because the letter in which I sent it was lost. You have found it, I learn."

"Yes, it has been in my house for ten years. Perhaps you will object to inform me why you paid this woman so much money."

"On the contrary, I shall answer every question you ask, Captain Bilder," replied Madam Brandon, her emotions beginning to get the better of her, though she still struggled to be calm. "I paid the woman for keeping my secret."

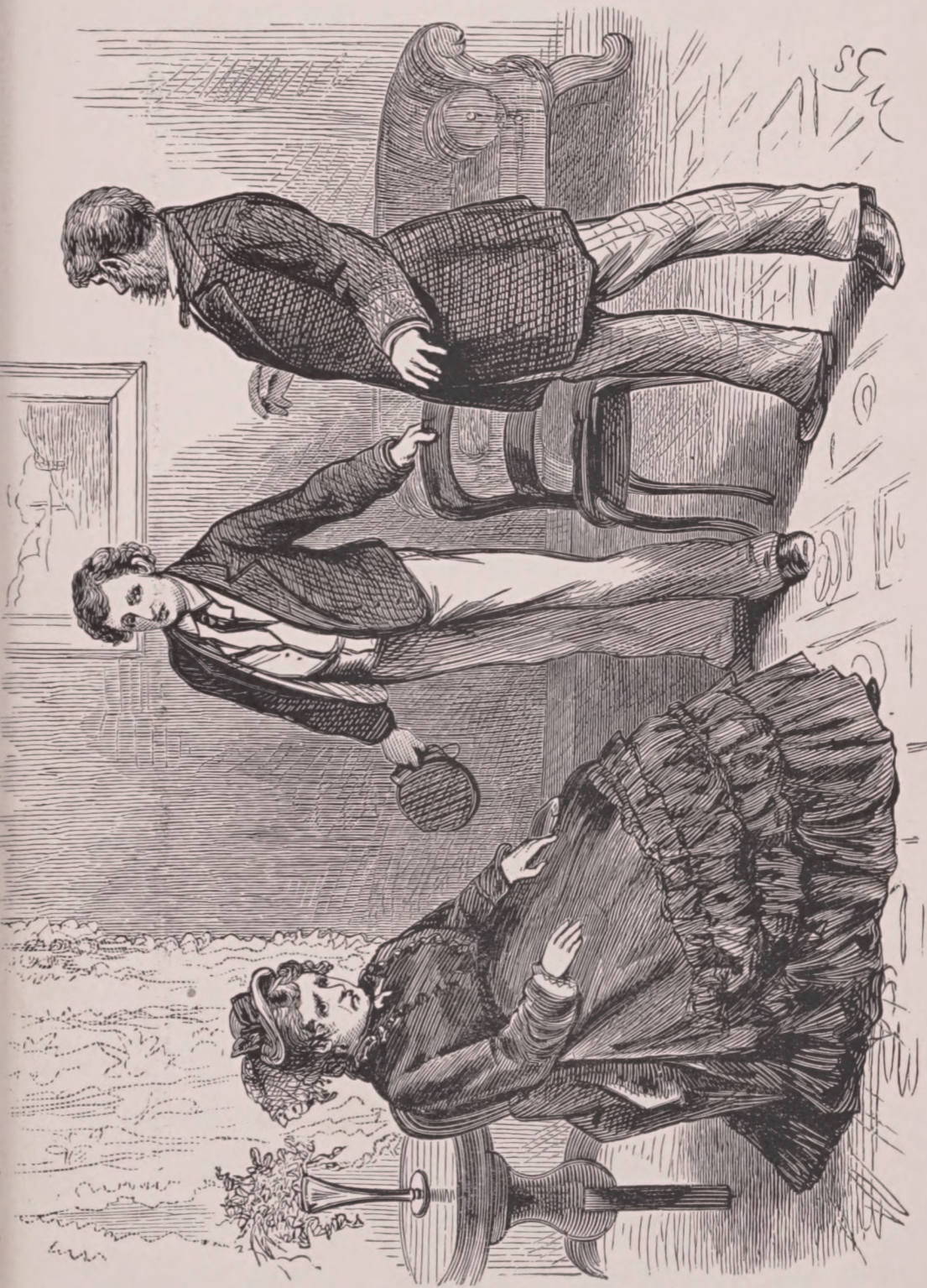
"What secret?" demanded the ship-master.

"The secret of your lost son."

"Wasn't he lost?" demanded Captain Bilder, rising from his chair in the excitement of the moment.

"Be calm, Captain Bilder. I will tell you the whole story. Ten years ago, I wrote that card, and divided it into three parts, that I might be able to do justice to you when the time came. I did not know that it would ever come, for, though I desired to purge my soul of its sin, I had not the courage to do so."

"You married my mate — did you not?" asked Captain Bilder, impatiently.



“HE IS YOUR SON!” CRIED MADAM BRANDON. Page 359.

“I did. Neil Brandon was my husband.”

“And he was my father—was he?” asked Neil.

“No, he was not,” replied Madam Brandon.

“He was your husband, and my name is Neil Brandon.”

“He was not your father.”

“Who was my father, then?” demanded Neil.

Madam Brandon rose, with her chest heaving violently, and raising her arm quickly, pointed at Captain Bilder, who still stood by his chair. She looked at Neil, as she continued to point at the ship-master in silence.

“Captain Bilder my father!” exclaimed Neil.

“He is.”

“My son?” gasped Captain Bilder.

“He is your son!” cried Madam Brandon, dropping heavily into her chair, sobbing and weeping bitterly.

“I cannot believe it,” added the ship-master.

“It is true,” sobbed Madam Brandon.

“Then you are not my mother,” said Neil, choking with emotion.

“I am not, Neil; but no son was ever dearer to a mother than you have been to me. I have lost you now!” and she wept more than before.

Captain Bilder walked up to Neil and began to scrutinize his features. The nose, the eyes, the hair, the general contour of the face, corresponded to those of the lost child. But the story was too strange to be credited.

“Then Neil Brandon robbed me of my child!” exclaimed the captain.

“He did; and I helped him do it. Curse me, if you will, for I deserve the worst you can say and do,” groaned Madam Brandon.

“How could he have done it? I searched the region for a fortnight.”

“The child was not taken from the steamer till after you left it. My husband had a room on board, on the same side we had ours. I carried the child myself into his room. I attended to it in the night and in the morning. We left the steamer at Baton Rouge; but my husband, with the child, went on it to Bayou Sara, where he landed. At this place he *bought* a black woman to take care of the little one.”

“How could he get ashore with the child without being seen?” asked the captain.

“He told me he followed a couple of women ashore, and people thought the child belonged

to one of them; at any rate, no one took any notice of him. I don't know how he managed it all, but he made his way to some place in Texas, where he staid some months. He wrote to me, and I met him in New Orleans, where we were married. We lived there a year, my husband being superintendent of a cotton-press. Then we went to Philadelphia, where Neil owned a large piece of land, left him by his father. This piece of land made him a rich man. It brought him over half a million of dollars."

"But why did he steal the child?"

"For revenge; because you discharged him from his position of mate, and cut off his hope of being a captain. I begged him not to do it, but I could not turn him from his purpose. He said, before he was rich, that the child would bring him fifty thousand dollars; that you would pay this sum to have it restored."

"I would, and more," added Captain Bilder.

"He said you had ruined his prospects, and you should pay for it. But he really loved the child, and I am sure I did. Up to the day he died, he was not willing to part with it, especially as he was rich. I think the influence of

the child made a new man of him. After he was gone, I was as unwilling to part with it, as he had been. I loved the little fellow as my own. We lived in a fine house in Philadelphia, with every luxury that money could buy. We had no children of our own, and we loved Neil—as we always called him—as though the child had been our own. But I was nervous and uneasy. I was afraid, and went to Belfast to see if you were still living. I wanted to know whether you believed the child was dead. I was dressed so different, that I did not think Mrs. Banford would recognize me, and when I saw her in the garden of your house I spoke to her. She told me all about the child, that it had been lost on the river. When she had informed me in regard to all I wanted to know, she called me by name. She had recognized me. She went to the hotel with me. This was after I had sent you the letter with the piece of the card in it. The letter, the card, and my appearance in Belfast betrayed me. She fathomed the truth, because I had no faculty for deception.

“She charged me with having the child. I

could not deny it. At last I confessed it. I offered her five thousand dollars to keep my secret, agreeing to pay her a thousand dollars a year. I paid her one thousand in Belfast, and sent the second payment in the letter which remained so long in your house. Then she came to me in Philadelphia. She was married, she said, to a man by the name of McGusher, from Baltimore; and she wanted the rest of the money I owed her at once, in order to buy a farm in Goshen, New York. I was not willing to pay it, but I was in her power, and she compelled me to do so. I was unwilling she should return to Belfast for the letter, fearful that it might have been opened, and my secret betrayed; so I gave her the thousand dollars she had lost. In order to prevent her from taking advantage of me, I told her about the plan I had for restoring the boy to his father. I allowed her to look at the piece of card I had retained. I could not find it after she had gone, and I have no doubt now that she stole it. I was afraid of her, and expected to be obliged to pay her at least a thousand dollars a year as long as she lived. I have told you the whole story, Captain Bilder."

“Hasn't Mrs. McGusher tried to get more money out of you?” asked the ship-master.

“No, sir; but this step-son was to get a fortune out of you; and this kept her quiet.”

“Perhaps it is lucky that I am a beggar,” said the captain, with a languid smile, as he glanced at his son, “Oscar! my Ocean-Born!”

“I know my mother speaks only the truth,” added Neil.

“I have spoken it to my own sacrifice,” replied Madam Brandon, wiping the tears from her eyes. “I have lost the best of boys.”

“Whatever I am, whoever I am, I shall never forget you!” exclaimed Neil, warmly, as he grasped both of her hands. “No mother could have done more for me than you have.”

“He has been brought up in luxury, but I have given him a good education.”

“In luxury!” added Captain Bilder. “Then it will be all the harder for him to step into a poor man's house, such as mine must be.”

“No, sir! If I should die to-day, he would be worth half a million. My husband left all his wealth to me; people wondered at it, for they did not know why he did so. Captain

Bilder, I wish to atone for my own and my husband's sin, so far as I can do so. We have grievously wronged you, and I know that money cannot compensate for the loss of the affections of such a son as my boy. Yesterday I decided what I should do. One half of my fortune shall be yours at once; the other half shall go to Neil when I need it no longer. Nay, you must accept my gift. I have been almost happy since I decided to do this. It must be done."

"One half of your fortune, Madam Brandon, is more than I ever had," said the ship-master.

"No matter, sir; it would grieve me if you refused to take it."

He did not refuse then.

"You are a noble fellow, Oscar; and I am proud of such a son," said the captain, grasping the hand of the "long-lost."

"You may well be proud of him," added Madam Brandon. "I cannot have him torn entirely from me."

She pressed him to her heart, and sobbed.

"He shall not be torn from you; you must live in Belfast now, and both of us shall see him every day. May I send for Kate? I wish to introduce her to her brother."

Kate was sent for; the whole story was told over again, and she was as proud of her brother as her father was of his son. The astounding news was told through the excursion party, and Oscar and Kate were congratulated by "all hands." The next day, the clubs sailed for home, Madam Brandon and Captain Bilder taking passage in the Ocean-Born. They spent a day at Fort Point on the return, and this time Madam Brandon was the host. She was almost as gay as a young girl, and the only objection Captain Bilder had to her was, that she spelled "living" with an e in it.

On their arrival at Belfast, the captain was too happy to trouble Mrs. McGusher and her step-son any further. They returned to Goshen, to the farm bought with the "hush-money" paid by Madam Brandon. Probably Mr. McGusher still figures in the "mawcantile" business.

The clubs spent three weeks more in the bay, making several long excursions. Mrs. Brandon was the guest of Captain Bilder, who had fully forgiven the living and the dead for the terrible wrong done to him. By the middle of August, the Ocean-Born started on her return

to Philadelphia. Madam Brandon, Captain Bilder, and Kate were passengers. One of the first things which the lady did when they arrived at her elegant residence, was to divide her stocks, bonds, and treasury notes into two equal parts, one of which she passed to Captain Bilder. After a great deal of reflection, he had concluded to accept the gift. Perhaps he felt that it was but a meagre compensation for what he had suffered at the hands of him who had died, leaving this fortune behind him.

Madam Brandon returned to Belfast with Captain Bilder and his children. She could not think of being separated from Oscar, as she now called him. She leased her house and furniture, and for the present was to reside with the ship-master, though she talked of purchasing a house in her new location. But it is a fact that she did not do so; and it is also a fact that she became Mrs. Bilder in about a year after the events we have narrated, so that Oscar was again permitted to call her mother. Kate did not object, and was almost as fond of her new mother as her brother was.

The only thing that seriously troubled Cap-

tain Oscar Blake Bilder, as his name was registered on the books of the Belfast Yacht Club, was the loss of the Ocean-Born, and she was the subject of a long correspondence between him and the joint owners of her with him. It resulted in the purchase of the three-fourths owned by Berry Owen and the Roaches, by Oscar. The business was completed about the middle of September, and in commemoration of the former happy cruise, the same officers and crew took her to Belfast, returning by rail and steamer.

Now, our story is told, when we have said that the Bilder family were "gushingly" happy; that Ben Lunder often goes to Belfast, and Kate blushes so when he comes, that Oscar is in danger of having a brother-in-law in the "Old Salt," one of these days; that Oscar spends a great many evenings at the house of Dr. Darling, and that Minnie even allows him to interpolate that hitherto forbidden comma, when he speaks her full name; and that often, in summer, our friends of the story, take a long cruise in the OCEAN-BORN.





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