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THE
CRATER

JAMES FENIMORE
COOPER

THE CRATER

OR, VULCAN'S PEAK - A TALE OF THE PACIFIC

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JAMES FENIMORE COOPER



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"Thus arise
Races of living things, glorious in strength
And perish, as the quickening breath of God
Fills them, or is withdrawn."—*Bryant*.

Preface

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The reader of this book will very naturally be disposed to ask the question, why the geographies, histories, and other works of a similar character, have never made any mention of the regions and events that compose its subject. The answer is obvious enough, and ought to satisfy every mind, however "inquiring." The fact is, that the authors of the different works to which there is any allusion, most probably never heard there were any such places as the Reef, Rancocus Island, Vulcan's Peak, the Crater, and the other islands of which so much is said in our pages. In other words, they knew nothing about them.

We shall very freely admit that, under ordinary circumstances, it would be *prima facie* evidence against the existence of any spot on the face of this earth, that the geographies took no notice of it. It will be remembered, however, that the time was, and that only three centuries and a half since, when the geographies did not contain a syllable about the whole of the American continent; that it is not a century since they began to describe New Zealand, New Holland, Tahiti, Oahu, and a vast number of other places, that are now constantly alluded to, even in the daily journals. Very little is said in the largest geographies, of Japan, for instance; and it may be questioned if they might not just as well be altogether silent on the subject, as for any accurate information they do convey. In a word, much as is now known of the globe, a great deal still remains to be told, and we do not see why the "inquiring mind" should not seek for information in our pages, as well as in some that are ushered in to public notice by a flourish of literary trumpets, that are blown by presidents, vice-presidents and secretaries of various learned bodies.

One thing we shall ever maintain, and that in the face of all who may be disposed to underrate the value of our labours, which is this:—there is not a word in these volumes which we now lay before the reader, *as grave matter of fact*, that is not entitled to the most implicit credit. We scorn deception. Lest, however, some cavillers may be found, we will present a few of those reasons which occur to our mind, on the spur of the moment, as tending to show that everything related here *might* be just as true as Cook's voyages themselves. In the first place, this earth is large, and has sufficient surface to contain, not only all the islands mentioned in our pages, but a great many more. Something is established when the possibility of any hypothetical point is placed beyond dispute. Then, not one has as much was known of the islands of the Pacific, at the close of the last, and at the commencement of the present century, as is known to-day. In such a dearth of precise information, it may very well have happened that many things occurred touching which we have not said even one word. Again, it should never be forgotten that generations were born, lived their time, died, and have been forgotten, among those remote groups, about which no civilized man ever has, or ever will hear anything. If such be admitted to be the facts, why may not *all* that is here related have happened, and equally escape the knowledge of the rest of the civilized world? During the wars of the French revolution, trifling events attracted but little of the general attention, and we are not to think of interests of this nature, in the day, as one would think of them now.

Whatever may be thought of the authenticity of its incidents, we hope this book will be found not to be

totally without a moral. Truth is not absolutely necessary to the illustration of a principle, the imaginary sometimes doing that office quite as effectually as the actual.

The reader may next wish to know why the wonderful events related in these volumes have so long been hidden from the world. In answer to this we would ask if anyone can tell how many thousands of years the waters have tumbled down the cliffs at Niagara, or why it was that civilized men heard of the existence of this wonderful cataract so lately as only three centuries since. The fact is, there must be a beginning to everything; and now there is a beginning to the world's knowing the history of Vulcan Peak, and the Crater. Lest the reader, however, should feel disposed to reproach the past age with having been negligent in its collection of historical and geological incidents, we would again remind him of the magnitude of the events that so naturally occupied its attention. It is scarcely possible, for instance, for one who did not live forty years ago to have any notion how completely the world was engaged in wondering at Napoleon and his marvellous career, which last contained even more extraordinary features than anything related here; though certainly of a very different character. A man wondering, for near a quarter of a century, was monopolized by the French Revolution and its consequences.

There are a few explanations, however, which are of a very humble nature compared with the principal events of our history, but which may as well be given here. The Woolston family still exists in Pennsylvania, and that, by the way, is something towards corroborating the truth of our narrative. Its most distinguished member is recently dead, and his journal has been the authority for most of the truths here related. He died at a good old age, having seen his three-score years and ten, leaving behind him, in addition to a very ample estate, not only a good character, which means neither more nor less than what "the neighbours," amid their ignorance, envy, love of detraction, jealousy and other similar qualities, might think proper to say of him, but the odour of a well-spent life, in which he struggled hard to live more in favour with God, than in favour with man. It was remarked in him, for the last forty years of his life, or after his return to Bucks, that he regarded all popular demonstrations with distaste, and, as some of his enemies pretended, with contempt. Nevertheless, he strictly acquitted himself of all his public duties, and never neglected to vote. It is believed that his hopes for the future, meaning in a social and earthly sense, were not very vivid, and he was often heard to repeat that warning text of Scripture which tells us, "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall."

The faithful, and once lovely partner of this principal personage of our history is also dead. It would seem that it was not intended they should be long asunder. But their time was come, and they might almost be said to have departed in company. The same is true of Friends Robert and Martha, who have also filled their time, and gone hence, it is to be hoped to a better world. Some few of the young persons of our drama still exist, but it has been remarked of them, that they avoid conversing of the events of their younger days. Youth is the season of hope, and hope disappointed has little to induce us to dwell on its deceptive pictures.

If those who now live in this republic, can see any grounds for a timely warning in the events here recorded, it may happen that the mercy of a divine Creator may still preserve that which he has hitherto cherished and protected.

It remains only to say that we have endeavoured to imitate the simplicity of Captain Woolston's journal, in writing this book, and should any homeliness of style be discovered, we trust it will be imputed to that circumstance.

Chapter I

*

"'Twas a commodity lay fretting by you;
'Twill bring you gain, or perish on the seas."

Taming of the Shrew.

There is nothing in which American Liberty, not always as much restrained as it might be, has manifested a more decided tendency to run riot, than in the use of names. As for Christian names, the Heathen Mythology, the Bible, Ancient History, and all the classics, have long since been exhausted, and the organ of invention has been at work with an exuberance of imagination that is really wonderful for such a matter-of-fact people. Whence all the strange sounds have been derived which have thus been pressed into the service of this human nomenclature, it would puzzle the most ingenious philologist to say. The days of the Kates, and Dollys, and Pattys, and Bettys, have passed away, and in their stead we hear of Lowinys, and Orchistrys, Philenys, Alminys, Cytherys, Sarahletty, Amindys, Marindys, &c. &c. &c. All these last appellations terminate properly with an a, but the unfortunate vowel, when a final letter, being popularly pronounced like y, we have adapted our spelling to the sound, which produces a complete bathos to all these flights in taste.

The hero of this narrative was born fully sixty years since, and happily before the rage for modern appellations, though he just escaped being named after another system which we cannot say we altogether admire; that of using a family, for a christian name. This business of names is a sort of science in itself and we do believe that it is less understood and less attended to in this country than almost all others. When a Spaniard writes his name as Juan de Castro y [\[1\]](#) Muños, we know that his father belonged to the family of Castro and his mother to that of Muños. The French, and Italian, and Russian woman, &c., writes on her card Madame this or that, *born* so and so; all which tells the whole history of her individuality. Many French women, in signing their names, prefix those of their own family to those of their husbands, a sensible and simple usage that we are glad to see is beginning to obtain among ourselves. The records on tomb-stones, too, might be made much more clear and useful than they now are, by stating distinctly who the party was, on both sides of the house, or by father and mother; and each married woman ought to be commemorated in some such fashion as this: "Here lies Jane Smith, wife of John Jones," &c., or, "Jane, daughter of Thomas Smith and wife of John Jones." We believe that, in some countries, a woman's name is not properly considered to be changed by marriage, but she becomes a Mrs. only in connection with the name of her husband. Thus Jane Smith becomes Mrs. *John* Jones, but not Mrs. Jane Jones. It is on this idea we suppose that our ancestors the English—every Englishman, as a matter of course, being every American's ancestor—thus it is, we suppose, therefore, that our ancestors, who pay so much more attention to such matters than we do ourselves, in their table of courtesy, call the wife of Lord John Russell, Lady *John*, and not Lady—whatever her Christian name may happen to be. We suppose, moreover, it is on this principle that Mr. General This, Mrs. Dr. That, and Mrs. Senator T'other, are as inaccurate as they are notoriously vulgar.

Mark Woolston came from a part of this great republic where the names are still as simple

unpretending, and as good Saxon English, as in the county of Kent itself. He was born in the little town of Bristol, Bucks county, Pennsylvania. This is a portion of the country that, Heaven be praised, still retains some of the good old-fashioned directness and simplicity. Bucks is full of Jacks, and Bens, and Dicks, and we question if there is such a creature, of native growth, in all that region, as an Ithus, or a Seneky, or a Dianthy, or an Antonizetty, or a Deidamy. [2] The Woolstons, in particular, were a plain family, and very unpretending in their external appearance, but of solid and highly respectable habits around the domestic hearth. Knowing perfectly how to spell, they never dreamed anyone would suspect them of ignorance. They called themselves as their forefathers were called, that is to say, Wooster, or just as Worcester is pronounced; though a Yankee schoolmaster tried for a whole summer to persuade our hero, when a child, that he ought to be styled Wool-ston. This had no effect on Mark, who went on talking of his uncles and aunts, "Josy Wooster," and "Tommy Wooster," and "Peggy Wooster," precisely as if a New England academy did not exist on earth; or as if Webster had not actually put Johnson under his feet!

The father of Mark Woolston (or Wooster) was a physician, and, for the country and age, was a well-educated and skilful man. Mark was born in 1777, just seventy years since, and only ten days before the surrender of Burgoyne. A good deal of attention was paid to his instruction, and fortunately for himself, his servitude under the eastern pedagogue was of very short duration, and Mark continued to speak the English language as his fathers had spoken it before him. The difference on the score of language, between Pennsylvania and New Jersey and Maryland, always keeping in the counties that were not settled by Germans or Irish, and the New England states, and *through* them, New York, is really so obvious as to deserve a passing word. In the states first named, taverns, for instance, are still called the Dun Cow, the Indian Queen, or the Anchor: whereas such a thing would be hard to find, this day, among the six millions of people who dwell in the latter. We question if there be such a thing as a coffee-house in all Philadelphia, though we admit it with grief, the respectable town of Brotherly Love has, in some respects, become infected with the spirit of innovation. Thus it is that good old "State House Yard" has been changed into "Independence Square." This certainly is not as bad as the *tour de force* of the aldermen of Manhattan when they altered "Bear Market" into "Washington Market!" for it is not a prostitution of the name of a great man, in the first place, and there is a direct historical allusion in the new name that everybody can understand. Still, it is to be regretted; and we hope this will be the last thing of the sort that will ever occur, though we confers our confidence in Philadelphian stability and consistency is a good deal lessened, since we have learned, by means of a late law-suit, that there are fifty or sixty aldermen in the place; a number of those worthies that is quite sufficient to upset the proprieties, in Athens itself!

Dr. Woolston had a competitor in another physician, who lived within a mile of him, and whose name was Yardley. Dr. Yardley was a very respectable person, had about the same degree of talents and knowledge as his neighbour and rival, but was much the richest man of the two. Dr. Yardley, however, had but one child, a daughter, whereas Dr. Woolston, with much less of means, had sons and daughters. Mark was the oldest of the family, and it was probably owing to this circumstance that he was so well educated, since the expense was not yet to be shared with that of keeping his brothers and sisters at schools of the same character.

In 1777 an American college was little better than a high school. It could not be called, in strictness, a grammar school, inasmuch as all the sciences were glanced at, if not studied; but, as respects the classics, more than a grammar school it was not, nor that of a very high order. It was a consequence of the light nature of the studies, that mere boys graduated in those institutions. Such was the case with

Mark Woolston, who would have taken his degree as a Bachelor of Arts, at Nassau Hall, Princeton, had not an event occurred, in his sixteenth year, which produced an entire change in his plan of life, and nipped his academical honours in the bud.

Although it is unusual for square-rigged vessels of any size to ascend the Delaware higher than Philadelphia, the river is, in truth, navigable for such craft almost to Trenton Bridge. In the year 1793, when Mark Woolston was just sixteen, a full-rigged ship actually came up, and lay at the end of the wharf in Burlington, the little town nearly opposite to Bristol, where she attracted a great deal of the attention of all the youths of the vicinity. Mark was at home, in a vacation, and he passed half his time in and about that ship, crossing the river in a skiff of which he was the owner, in order to do so. From that hour young Mark affected the sea, and all the tears of his mother and eldest sister, the latter a pretty girl only two years his junior, and the more sober advice of his father, could not induce him to change his mind. A six weeks' vacation was passed in the discussion of this subject, when the Doctor yielded to his son's importunities, probably foreseeing he should have his hands full to educate his other children, and not unwilling to put this child, as early as possible, in the way of supporting himself.

The commerce of America, in 1793, was already flourishing, and Philadelphia was then much the most important place in the country. Its East India trade, in particular, was very large and growing, and Dr. Woolston knew that fortunes were rapidly made by many engaged in it. After, turning the thing well over in his mind, he determined to consult Mark's inclinations, and to make a sailor of him. He had a cousin married to the sister of an East India, or rather of a Canton ship-master, and to that person the father applied for advice and assistance. Captain Crutchely very willingly consented to receive Mark in his own vessel, the Rancocus, and promised "to make a man and an officer of him."

The very day Mark first saw the ocean he was sixteen years old. He had got his height, five feet eleven, and was strong for his years, and active. In fact, it would not have been easy to find a lad everywhere so well adapted to his new calling, as young Mark Woolston. The three years of his college life, they had not made him a Newton, or a Bacon, had done him no harm, filling his mind with the germ of ideas that were destined afterwards to become extremely useful to him. The young man was already, indeed, a sort of factotum, being clever and handy at so many things and in so many different ways, as early to attract the attention of the officers. Long before the vessel reached the capes, he was at home in her, from her truck to her keelson, and Captain Crutchely remarked to his chief mate, the day they got to sea, that "young Mark Woolston was likely to turn up a trump."

As for Mark himself, he did not lose sight of the land, for the first time in his life, altogether without regrets. He had a good deal of feeling in connection with his parents, and his brothers and sisters; but as it is our aim to conceal nothing which ought to be revealed, we must add there was still another who filled his thoughts more than all the rest united. This person was Bridget Yardley, the only child of his father's most formidable professional competitor.

The two physicians were obliged to keep up a sickly intercourse, not intending a pun. They were too often called in to consult together, to maintain an open war. While the heads of their respective families occasionally met, therefore, at the bed-side of their patients, the families themselves had no direct communications. It is true, that Mrs. Woolston and Mrs. Yardley were occasionally to be seen seated at the same tea-table, taking their hyson in company, for the recent trade with China had expelled the bohea from most of the better parlours of the country; nevertheless, these good ladies

could not get to be cordial with each other. They themselves had a difference on religious points, that was almost as bitter as the differences of opinions between their husbands on the subject of medical alternatives. In that distant day, homoeopathy, and allopathy, and hydropathy, and all the opathies were nearly unknown; but men could wrangle and abuse each other on medical points, just as well as they do now. Religion, too, quite as often failed to bear its proper fruits, in 1793, as it does now. It proves barren in these, our own times. On this subject of religion, we have one word to say, and that is, simply, that it never was a meet matter for self-gratulation and boasting. Here we have the Americo-Anglican church, just as it has finished a blast of trumpets, through the medium of its numberless periodicals and a thousand letters from its confiding if not confident clergy, in honour of its quiet, and harmony, and superior polity, suspended on the very brink of the precipice of separation if not of schism, and all because it has pleased certain ultra-sublimated divines in the other hemisphere, to write a parcel of tracts that nobody understands, themselves included. How many even of the ministers of the altar fall, at the very moment they are beginning to fancy themselves saints, and are ready to thank God they are "not like the publicans!"

Both Mrs. Woolston and Mrs. Yardley were what is called 'pious;' that is, each said her prayers, each went to her particular church, and very *particular* churches they were; each fancied she had a sufficiency of saving faith, but neither was charitable enough to think, in a very friendly temper, of the other. This difference of religious opinion, added to the rival reputations of their husbands, made the ladies anything but good neighbours, and, as has been intimated, years had passed since either had entered the door of the other.

Very different was the feeling of the children. Anne Woolston, the oldest sister of Mark, and Bridget Yardley, were nearly of an age, and they were not only school-mates, but fast friends. To give the mothers their due, they did not lessen this intimacy by hints, or intimations of any sort, but let the girls obey their own tastes, as if satisfied it was quite sufficient for "professors of religion" to hate their own persons, without entailing the feeling on posterity. Anne and Bridget consequently became warm friends, the two sweet, pretty young things both believing, in the simplicity of their hearts, that the very circumstance which in truth caused the alienation, not to say the hostility of the elder members of their respective families, viz. professional identity, was an additional reason why *they* should love each other so much the more. The girls were about two and three years the juniors of Mark, but well grown for their time of life, and frank and affectionate as innocence and warm hearts could make them. Each was more than pretty, though it was in styles so very different, as scarcely to produce any of that other sort of rivalry, which is so apt to occur even in the gentler sex. Anne had bloom, and features, and fine teeth, and, a charm that is so very common in America, a good mouth; but Bridget had all these added to expression. Nothing could be more soft, gentle and feminine, than Bridget Yardley's countenance, in its ordinary state of rest; or more spirited, laughing, buoyant and pitying than it became, as the different passions or feelings were excited in her young bosom. As Mark was often sent to see his sister home, in her frequent visits to the madam's house, where the two girls held most of their intercourse, he was naturally enough admitted into their association. The connection commenced by Mark's agreeing to be Bridget's brother, as well as Anne's. This was generous, at least for Bridget was an only child, and it was no more than right to repair the wrongs of fortune in the particular. The charming young thing declared that she would "rather have Mark Woolston for her brother than any other boy in Bristol; and that it was delightful to have the same person for a brother as Anne!" Notwithstanding this flight in the romantic, Bridget Yardley was as natural as it was possible for a female in a reasonably civilized condition of society to be. There was a vast deal of excellent, feminine self-devotion in her temperament, but not a particle of the exaggerated, in either

sentiment or fueling. True as steel in all her impulses and opinions, in adopting Mark for a brother she merely yielded to a strong natural sympathy, without understanding its tendency or its origin. She would talk by the hour, with Anne, touching *their* brother, and what they must make him do, and where he must go with them, and in what they could oblige him most. The real sister was less active than her friend, in mind and body, and she listened to all these schemes and notions with a quiet submission that was not entirely free from wonder.

The result of all this intercourse was to awaken a feeling between Mark and Bridget, that was far more profound than might have been thought in breasts so young, and which coloured their future lives. Mark first became conscious of the strength of this feeling when he lost sight of the Capes, and fancied the dear little Bucks county girl he had left behind him, talking with his sister of his own absence and risks. But Mark had too much of the true spirit of a sailor in him, to pine, or neglect his duty; and, long ere the ship had doubled the Cape of Good Hope, he had become an active and hardy lad aloft. When the ship reached the China seas, he actually took his trick at the helm.

As was usual in that day, the voyage of the *Rancocus* lasted about a twelvemonth. If John Chinaman were only one-half as active as Jonathan Restless, it might be disposed of in about one-fourth less time; but teas are not transported along the canals of the Celestial Empire with anything like the rapidity with which wheat was sent to market over the rough roads of the Great Republic, in the age which we are writing.

When Mark Woolston re-appeared in Bristol, after the arrival of the *Rancocus* below had been known there about twenty-four hours, he was the envy of all the lads in the place, and the admiration of most of the girls. There he was, a tall, straight, active, well-made, well-grown and decidedly handsome lad of seventeen, who had doubled the Cape of Good Hope, seen foreign parts, and had a real Indian handkerchief hanging out of each pocket of a blue round-about of superfine cloth, besides one around his half-open well-formed throat, that was carelessly tied in a true sailor knot! The questions he had to answer, and *did* answer, about whales, Chinese feet, and "mountain waves!" Although Bristol lies on a navigable river, up and down which frigates had actually been seen to pass in the revolution, it was but little that its people knew of the ocean. Most of the worthy inhabitants of the place actually fancied that the waves of the sea were as high as mountains, though their notions of the last were not very precise, there being no elevations in that part of the country fit even for a windmill.

But Mark cared little for these interrogatories. He was happy; happy enough, at being the object of so much attention; happier still in the bosom of a family of which he had always been the favourite and was now the pride; and happiest of all when he half ravished a kiss from the blushing cheek of Bridget Yardley. Twelve months had done a great deal for each of the young couple. If they had not quite made a man of Mark, they had made him manly, and his *soi-disant* sister wondered that any one could be so much improved by a sea-faring life. As for Bridget, herself, she was just bursting into young womanhood, resembling the bud as its leaves of green are opening to permit those of the deepest rose coloured tint to be seen, before they expand into the full-blown flower. Mark was more than delighted; he was fascinated; and young as they were, the month he passed at home sufficed to enable him to test his passion, and to obtain a half-ready, half-timid acceptance of the offer of his hand. All this time, the parents of these very youthful lovers were as profoundly ignorant of what was going on, as the children were unobservant of the height to which professional competition had carried hostilities between their respective parents. Doctors Woolston and Yardley no longer met even in consultations; or, if they did meet in the house of some patient whose patronage was of too much value to be

slighted, it was only to dispute, and sometimes absolutely to quarrel.

At the end of one short month, however, Mark was once more summoned to his post on board the *Rancocus*, temporarily putting an end to his delightful interviews with Bridget. The lovers had made Anne their confidant, and she, well-meaning girl, seeing no sufficient reason why the son of one respectable physician should not be a suitable match for the daughter of another respectable physician, encouraged them in their vows of constancy, and pledges to become man and wife at a future, but an early day. To some persons all this may seem exceedingly improper, as well as extremely precocious; but the truth compels us to say, that its impropriety was by no means as obvious as its precocity. The latter it certainly was, though Mark had shot up early, and was a man at a time of life when lads, in less genial climates, scarcely get tails to their coats; but its impropriety must evidently be measured by the habits of the state of society in which the parties were brought up, and by the duties that had been inculcated. In America, then, as now, but little heed was taken by parents, more especially in what may be called the middle classes, concerning the connections thus formed by their children. So long as the parties were moral, bore good characters, had nothing particular against them, and were something near the same social station, little else was asked for; or, if more were actually required, it was usually when it was too late, and after the young people had got themselves too deeply in love to allow ordinary prudential reasons to have their due force.

Mark went to sea this time, dragging after him a "lengthening chain," but, nevertheless, filled with hope. His years forbade much despondency, and, while he remained as constant as if he had been a next-door neighbour, he was buoyant, and the life of the whole crew, after the first week out. The voyage was not direct to Canton, like the first; but the ship took a cargo of sugar to Amsterdam, and thence went to London, where she got a freight for Cadiz. The war of the French Revolution was now blazing in all the heat of its first fires, and American bottoms were obtaining a large portion of the carrying trade of the world. Captain Crutchely had orders to keep the ship in Europe, making the most of her, until a certain sum in Spanish dollars could be collected, when he was to fill up with provisions and water, and again make the best of his way to Canton. In obeying these instructions, he went from port to port; and, as a sort of consequence of having Quaker owners, turning his peaceful character to great profit, thus giving Mark many opportunities of seeing as much of what is called the world, as can be found in sea-ports. Great, indeed, is the difference between places that are merely the marts of commerce, and those that are really political capitals of large countries! No one can be aware of, or can fully appreciate the many points of difference that, in reality, exist between such places, who has not seen each, and that sufficiently near to be familiar with both. Some places, of which London is the most remarkable example, enjoy both characters; and, when this occurs, the town gets to possess a tone that is even less provincial and narrow, if possible, than that which is to be found in a place that merely rejoices in a court. This it is which renders Naples, insignificant as its commerce comparatively is, superior to Vienna, and Genoa to Florence. While it would be folly to pretend that Mark, in his situation, obtained the most accurate notions imaginable of all he saw and heard, in his visits to Amsterdam, London, Cadiz, Bordeaux, Marseilles, Leghorn, Gibraltar, and two or three other ports that might be mentioned and to which he went, he did glean a good deal, some of which was useful to him in after-life. He lost no small portion of the provincial rust of home, moreover, and began to understand the vast difference between "seeing the world" and "going to meeting and going to mill."^[3] In addition to these advantages, Mark was transferred from the fore-castle to the cabin before the ship sailed for Canton. The practice of near two years had made him a very tolerable sailor, and his previous education made the study of navigation easy to him. In that day there was a scarcity of officers in America, and a young man of Mark's advantages, physical and moral, was certain to get

on rapidly, provided he only behaved well. It is not at all surprising, therefore, that our young sailor got to be the second-mate of the *Raucocus* before he had quite completed his eighteenth year.—

The voyage from London to Canton, and thence home to Philadelphia, consumed about ten months. The *Raucocus* was a fast vessel, but she could not impart her speed to the Chinamen. It followed that Mark wanted but a few weeks of being nineteen years old the day his ship passed Cape May, and, what was more, he had the promise of Captain Crutchely, of sailing with him, as his first officer, in the next voyage. With that promise in his mind, Mark hastened up the river to Bristol, as soon as he was cleared of the vessel.

Bridget Yardley had now fairly budded, to pursue the figure with which we commenced the description of this blooming flower, and, if not actually expanded into perfect womanhood, was so near it as to show beyond all question that the promises of her childhood were to be very amply redeemed. Mark found her in black, however; or, in mourning for her mother. An only child, the serious loss had thrown her more than ever in the way of Anne, the parents on both sides winking at a connection that could do no harm, and which might prove so useful. It was very different, however, with the young sailor. He had not been a fortnight at home, and getting to be intimate with the room and tree of Doctor Yardley, before that person saw fit to pick a quarrel with him, and to forbid him his house. As the dispute was wholly gratuitous on the part of the Doctor, Mark behaving with perfect propriety on the occasion, it may be well to explain its real cause. The fact was, that Bridget was a heiress; if not on a very large scale, still an heiress, and, what was more, unalterably so in right of her mother; and the thought that a son of his competitor, Doctor Woolston, should profit by this fact, was utterly insupportable to him. Accordingly he quarrelled with Mark, the instant he was apprised of the character of his attentions, and forbade him the house. To do Mark justice, he knew nothing of Bridget's worldly possessions. That she was beautiful, and warm-hearted, and frank, and sweet-tempered, and feminine, and affectionate, he both saw and felt; but beyond this he neither saw anything, nor cared about seeing anything. The young sailor was as profoundly ignorant that Bridget was the actual owner of certain three per cents, that brought twelve hundred a year, as if she did not own a 'copper,' as it was the fashion of that period to say, '*cents*' being then very little, if at all, used. Nor did he know anything of the farm she had inherited from her mother, or of the store in town, that brought three hundred and fifty more in rent. It is true that some allusions were made to these matters by Doctor Yardley, in his angry comments on the Woolston family generally, Anne always excepted, and in whose flavour he made a salvo, even in the height of his denunciations. Still, Mark thought so much of that which was really estimable and admirable in Bridget, and so little of anything mercenary, that even after these revelations he could not comprehend the causes of Doctor Yardley's harsh treatment of him. During the whole scene, which was purposely enacted in the presence of his wondering and trembling daughter, Mark behaved perfectly well. He had a respect for the Doctor's years, as well as for Bridget's father, and would not retort. After waiting as long as he conceived waiting could be of any use, he seized his hat, and left the room with an air of resentment that Bridget construed into the expression of an intention never to speak to any of them again. But Mark Woolston was governed by no such design, as the sequel will show.

Chapter II

*

"She's not fourteen."
"I'll lay fourteen of my teeth,
And yet, to my teen be it spoken, I have but four,—
She is not fourteen."—

Romeo and Juliet.

Divine wisdom has commanded us to "Honour your father and your mother." Observant travellers affirm that less respect is paid to parents in America, than is usual in Christian nations—we say *Christian* nations; for many of the heathen, the Chinese for instance, worship them, though probably with an allegorical connection that we do not understand. That the parental tie is more loose in this country than in most others we believe, and there is a reason to be found for it in the migratory habits of the people, and in the general looseness in all the ties that connect men with the past. The laws on the subject of matrimony, moreover, are so very lax, intercourse is so simple and has so many facilities, and the young of the two sexes are left so much to themselves, that it is no wonder children form that connection so often without reflection and contrary to the wishes of their friends. Still, the law of God is there, and we are among those who believe that a neglect of its mandates is very apt to bring its punishment, even in this world, and we are inclined to think that much of that which Mark and Bridget subsequently suffered, was in consequence of acting directly in the face of the wishes and injunctions of their parents.

The scene which had taken place under the roof of Doctor Yardley was soon known under that of Doctor Woolston. Although the last individual was fully aware that Bridget was what was then esteemed rich, at Bristol, he cared not for her money. The girl he liked well enough, and in secret even admired her as much as he could find it in his heart to admire anything of Doctor Yardley's; but the indignity was one he was by no means inclined to overlook, and, in his turn, he forbade all intercourse between the girls. These two bitter pills, thus administered by the village doctors to their respective patients, made the young people very miserable. Bridget loved Anne almost as much as she loved Mark, and she began to pine and alter in her appearance, in a way to alarm her father. In order to divert her mind, he sent her to town, to the care of an aunt, altogether forgetting that Mark's ship lay at the wharves of Philadelphia, and that he could not have sent his daughter to any place, out of Bristol where the young man would be so likely to find her. This danger the good doctor entirely overlooked, or, if he thought of it at all, he must have fancied that his sister would keep a sharp eye on the movements of the young sailor, and forbid him *her* house, too.

Everything turned out as the Doctor ought to have expected. When Mark joined his ship, of which he was now the first officer, he sought Bridget and found her. The aunt, however, administered to him the second potion of the same dose that her brother had originally dealt out, and gave him to understand that his presence in Front street was not desired. This irritated both the young people, Bridget being far less disposed to submit to her aunt than to her father, and they met clandestinely in the streets.

week or two of this intercourse brought matters to a crisis, and Bridget consented to a private marriage. The idea of again going to sea, leaving his betrothed entirely in the hands of those who disliked him for his father's sake, was intolerable to Mark, and it made him so miserable, that the tenderness of the deeply enamoured girl could not withstand his appeals. They agreed to get married, but to keep their union a secret until Mark should become of age, when it was hoped he would be in a condition, in every point of view, openly to claim his wife.

A thing of this sort, once decided on, is easily enough put in execution in America. Among Mark's college friends was one who was a few years older than himself, and who had entered the ministry. This young man was then acting as a sort of missionary among the seamen of the port, and he had fallen in the way of the young lover the very first day of his return to his ship. It was an easy matter to work on the good nature of this easy-minded man, who, on hearing of the ill treatment offered to his friend, was willing enough to perform the ceremony. Everything being previously arranged, Mark and Bridget were married, early one morning, during the time the latter was out, in company with a female friend of about her own age, to take what her aunt believed was her customary walk before breakfast. Philadelphia, in 1796, was not the town it is to-day. It then lay, almost entirely, on the shores of the Delaware, those of the Schuylkill being completely in the country. What was more, the best quarters were still near the river, and the distance between the *Rancocus*—meaning Mark's ship, and not the creek of that name—and the house of Bridget's aunt, was but trifling. The ceremony took place in the cabin of the vessel just named, which, now that the captain was ashore in his own house, Mark had added to himself, no second-mate having been shipped, and which was by no means an inappropriate place for the nuptials of a pair like that which our young people turned out to be, in the end.

The *Rancocus*, though not a large, was a very fine, Philadelphia-built ship, then the best vessels of the country. She was of a little less than four hundred tons in measurement, but she had a very neat and commodious poop-cabin. Captain Crutchely had a thrifty wife, who had contributed her full share to render her husband comfortable, and Bridget thought that the room in which she was united to Mark was one of the prettiest she had ever seen. The reader, however, is not to imagine it a cabin ornamented with marble columns, rose-wood, and the maples, as so often happens now-a-days. No such extravagance was dreamed of fifty years ago; but, as far as judicious arrangements, neat joiner-work, and appropriate furniture went, the cabin of the *Rancocus* was a very respectable little room. The circumstance that it was on deck, contributed largely to its appearance and comfort, sunk cabins, or those below decks, being necessarily much circumscribed in small ships, in consequence of being placed in a part of the vessel that is contracted in its dimensions under water, in order to heighten their sailing qualities.

The witnesses of the union of our hero and heroine were the female friend of Bridget named, the officiating clergyman, and one seaman who had sailed with the bridegroom in all his voyages, and who was now retained on board the vessel as a ship-keeper, intending to go out in her again as soon as she should be ready for sea. The name of this mariner was Betts, or Bob Betts as he was commonly called; and as he acts a conspicuous part in the events to be recorded, it may be well to say a word or two more of his history and character; Bob Betts was a Jerseyman;—or, as he would have pronounced the word himself, a Jarseyman—in the American meaning of the word, however, and not in the English. Bob was born in Cape May county, and in the *State* of New Jersey, United States of America. At the period of which we are now writing, he must have been about five-and-thirty, and seemingly a confirmed bachelor. The windows of Bob's father's house looked out upon the Atlantic Ocean, and he had snuffed sea air from the hour of his birth. At eight years of age he was placed, as cabin-boy, on board

coaster; and from that time down to the moment when he witnessed the marriage ceremony between Mark and Bridget, he had been a sailor. Throughout the whole war of the revolution Bob had served the navy, in some vessel or other, and with great good luck, never having been made a prisoner of war. In connection with this circumstance was one of the besetting weaknesses of his character. As often happens to men of no very great breadth of views, Bob had a notion that that which he had successfully escaped, viz. captivity, other men too might have escaped had they been equally clever. Thus it was that he had an ill-concealed, or only half-concealed contempt for such seamen who suffered themselves, at any time or under any circumstances, to fall into the enemies' hands. On all other subjects Bob was not only rational, but a very discreet and shrewd fellow, though on that he was often harsh, and sometimes absurd. But the best men have their weakness, and this was Bob Betts's.

Captain Crutchely had picked up Bob, just after the peace of 1783, and had kept him with him ever since. It was to Bob that he had committed the instruction of Mark, when the latter first joined the ship, and from Bob the youth had got his earliest notions of seamanship. In his calling Bob was full of resources, and, as often happens with the American sailor, he was even handy at a great many other things, and particularly so with whatever related to practical mechanics. Then he was of vast physical force, standing six feet two, in his stockings, and was round-built and solid. Bob had one sterling quality—he was as fast a friend as ever existed. In this respect he was a model of fidelity, never seeing a fault in those he loved, or a good quality in those he disliked. His attachment to Mark was signal, and he looked on the promotion of the young man much as he would have regarded preferment that befel himself. In the last voyage he had told the people in the forecastle "That young Mark Woolston would make a thorough sea-dog in time, and now he had got to be *Mr.* Woolston, he expected great things of him. The happiest day of my life will be that on which I can ship in a craft commanded by *Captain* Mark Woolston. I teached him, myself, how to break the first sea-biscuit he ever tasted, and the next day he could do it as well as any on us! You see how handy and quick he is about a vessel's deck and shipmates; a ra'al rouser at a weather earin'—well, when he first come aboard here, and that was little more than two years ago, the smell of tar would almost make him swound away." The latter assertion was one of Bob's embellishments, for Mark was never either lackadaisical or very delicate. The young man cordially returned Bob's regard, and the two were sincere friends without any phrases on the subject.

Bob Betts was the only male witness of the marriage between Mark Woolston and Bridget Yardley, with the exception of the officiating clergyman; as Mary Bromley was the only female. Duplicate certificates, however, were given to the young couple, Mark placing his in his writing-desk, and Bridget hers in the bosom of her dress. Five minutes after the ceremony was ended, the whole party separated, the girls returning to their respective residences, and the clergyman going his way, leaving the mate and the ship-keeper together on the vessel's deck. The latter did not speak, so long as the bridegroom's eyes fastened on the light form of the bride, as the latter went swiftly up the retired wharf where the ship was lying, on her way to Front street, accompanied by her young friend. But, no sooner had Bridget turned a corner, and Bob saw that the attraction was no longer in view, than he thought it becoming to put in a word.

"A trim-built and light-sailing craft, Mr. Woolston," he said, turning over the quid in his mouth; "one of these days she'll make a noble vessel to command."

"She is my captain, and ever will be, Bob," returned Mark. "But you'll be silent concerning what has passed."

"Ay, ay, sir. It is not my business to keep a log for all the women in the country to chatter about, like ~~so many monkeys that have found a bag of nuts. But what was the meaning of the parson's saying~~ 'with all my worldly goods I thee endow'—does that make you any richer, or any poorer, sir?"

"Neither," answered Mark, smiling. "It leaves me just where I was, Bob, and where I am likely to be for some time to come, I fear."

"And has the young woman nothing herself, sir? Sometimes a body picks up a comfortable chest-furniture with these sort of things, as they tell me, sir."

"I believe Bridget is as poor as I am myself, Bob, and that is saying all that can be said on such a point. However, I've secured her now, and two years hence I'll claim her, if she has not a second gown to wear. I dare say the old man will be for turning her adrift with as little as possible."

All this was a proof of Mark's entire disinterestedness. He did not know that his young bride had quite thirty thousand dollars in reversion, or in one sense in possession, although she could derive no benefit from it until she was of age, or married, and past her eighteenth year. This fact her husband did not learn for several days after his marriage, when his bride communicated it to him, with a proposal that he should quit the sea and remain with her for life. Mark was very much in love, but this scheme scarce afforded him the satisfaction that one might have expected. He was attached to his profession and scarce relished the thought of being dependent altogether on his wife for the means of subsistence. The struggle between love and pride was great, but Mark, at length, yielded to Bridget's blandishments, tenderness and tears. They could only meet at the house of Mary Bromley, the bride's maid, but then the interviews between them were as frequent as Mark's duty would allow. The result was that Bridget prevailed, and the young husband went up to Bristol and candidly related all that had passed, thus revealing, in less than a week, a secret which it was intended should remain hid for at least two years.

Doctor Woolston was sorely displeased, at first; but the event had that about it which would be apt to console a parent. Bridget was not only young, and affectionate, and beautiful, and truthful; but according to the standard of Bristol, she was rich. There was consolation in all this, notwithstanding professional rivalry and personal dislikes. We are not quite certain that he did not feel a slight gratification at the thought of his son's enjoying the fortune which his rival had received from his wife, and which, but for the will of the grandfather, would have been enjoyed by that rival himself. Nevertheless, the good Doctor did his duty in the premises. He communicated the news of the marriage to Doctor Yardley in a very civilly-worded note, which left a fair opening for a settlement of all difficulties, had the latter been so pleased. The latter did not so please, however, but exploded in a terrible burst of passion, which almost carried him off in a fit of apoplexy.

Escaping all physical dangers, in the end, Doctor Yardley went immediately to Philadelphia, and brought his daughter home. Both Mark and Bridget now felt that they had offended against one of the simplest commands of God. They had *not* honoured their father and their mother, and even thus early came the consciousness of their offence. It was in Mark's power, however, to go and claim his wife and remove her to his father's house, notwithstanding his minority and that of Bridget. In this last respect, the law offered no obstacle; but the discretion of Doctor Woolston did. This gentleman, through the agency of a common friend, had an interview with his competitor, and they talked the matter over in a tolerably composed and reasonable temper. Both the parents, as medical men, agreed that it would be better that the young couple should not live together for two or three years, the ve-

tender age of Bridget, in particular, rendering this humane, as well as discreet. Nothing was said of the fortune, which mollified Doctor Yardley a good deal, since he would be left to manage it, or at least to receive the income so long as no legal claimant interfered with his control. Elderly gentlemen submit very easily to this sort of influence. Then, Doctor Woolston was exceedingly polite, and spoke to his rival of a difficult case in his own practice, as if indirectly to ask an opinion of his competitor. All this contributed to render the interview more amicable than had been hoped, and the parties separated, not friends, at least with an understanding on the subject of future proceedings.

It was decided that Mark should continue in the *Rancocus* for another voyage. It was known the ship was to proceed to some of the islands of the Pacific, in quest of a cargo of sandal-wood and bêche-de-mer, for the Chinese market, and that her next absence from home would be longer, even, than her last. By the time the vessel returned, Mark would be of age, and fit to command a ship himself, should it be thought expedient for him to continue in his profession. During the period the vessel should remain in port, Mark was to pay occasional visits to his wife, though not to live with her; but the young couple might correspond by letter, as often as they pleased. Such was an outline of the treaty made between the high contracting parties.

In making these arrangements, Doctor Yardley was partly influenced by a real paternal interest in the welfare of his daughter, who he thought altogether too young to enter on the duties and cares of the married life. Below the surface, however, existed an indefinite hope that something might yet occur to prevent the consummation of this most unfortunate union, as he deemed the marriage to be, and that would enable him to get rid of the hateful connection altogether. How this was to happen, the worthy doctor certainly did not know. This was because he lived in 1796, instead of in 1847. Now-a-days, nothing is easier than to separate a man from his wife, unless it be to obtain civic honours for a murderer. Doctor Yardley, at the present moment, would have coolly gone to work to get up a lamentable tale about his daughter's fortune, and youth, and her not knowing her own mind when she married, and a shipwrecked cabin, and a few other embellishments of that sort, when the worthy and benevolent statesmen who compose the different legislatures of this vast Union would have been ready to break their necks, in order to pass a bill of divorce. Had there been a child or two, it would have made no great difference; for means would have been devised to give the custody of them to the mother. This would have been done, quite likely, for the first five years of the lives of the dear little things, because the children would naturally require a mother's care; and afterwards, because the precocious darlings, at the mature age of seven, would declare, in open court, that they really loved 'ma' more than they did 'pa'! To write a little plainly on a very important subject, we are of opinion that a new name ought to be adopted for the form of government which is so fast creeping into this country. New things require new names, and, were Solomon now living, we will venture to predict two things of him, viz. he would change his mind on the subject of novelties, and he would never go to congress. As for the new name, we would respectfully suggest that of Gossipian, in lieu of that of Republican, gossip fast becoming the levelling power that moves everything in the land. The newspapers, true to their instincts of consulting the ruling tastes, deal much more in gossip than they deal in reason; the courts admit it as evidence; the juries receive it as fact, as well as the law; and as for the legislatures, let a piteous tale but circulate freely among the lobbies, and bearded men, like Juliet when a child, as described by her nurse, will "stint and cry!" In a word, principles and proof are in much less esteem than assertions and numbers, backed with enough of which, anything may be made to appear as legal, or even constitutional.

But neither of our doctors entered into all these matters. It was enough for them that the affair of the marriage was disposed of, for a time at least, and things were permitted to drop into their ancient

channels. The intercourse between Bridget and Anne was renewed, just as if nothing had happened and Mark's letters to his virgin bride were numerous, and filled with passion. The ship was 'taking in' and he could only leave her late on Saturday afternoons, but each Sunday he contrived to pass Bristol. On such occasions he saw his charming wife at church, and he walked with her in the fields along with Anne and a favoured admirer of hers, of an afternoon, returning to town in season to be his post on the opening of the hatches, of a Monday morning.

In less than a month after the premature marriage between Mark Woolston and Bridget Yardley, the Rancocus cleared for the Pacific and Canton. The bridegroom found one day to pass in Bristol, and Doctor Yardley so far pitied his daughter's distress, as to consent that the two girls should go to town under his own care, and see the young man off. This concession was received with the deepest gratitude, and made the young people momentarily very happy. The doctor even consented to visit the ship, which Captain Crutchely, laughing, called St. Mark's chapel, in consequence of the religious rite which had been performed on board her. Mrs. Crutchely was there, on the occasion of this visit, attending to her husband's comforts, by fitting curtains to his berth, and looking after matters general in the cabin; and divers jokes were ventured by the honest ship-master, in making his comments on, and in giving his opinion of the handy-work of his own consort. He made Bridget blush more than once, though her enduring tenderness in behalf of Mark induced her to sit out all the captain's wit, rather than shorten a visit so precious, one moment.

The final parting was an hour of bitter sorrow. Even Mark's young heart, manly, and much disposed to do his duty as he was, was near breaking: while Bridget almost dissolved in tears. They could not but think how long that separation was to last, though they did not anticipate by what great and mysterious events it was to be prolonged. It was enough for them, that they were to live asunder two whole years and two whole years appear like an age to those who have not yet lived their four lustrums. But the final moment must and did arrive, and the young people were compelled to tear themselves asunder, though the parting was like that of soul and body. The bride hung on the bridegroom's neck, as the tendril clings to its support, until removed by gentle violence.

Bridget did not give up her hold upon Mark so long as even his vessel remained in sight. She went with Anne, in a carriage, as low as the Point, and saw the Rancocus pass swiftly down the river, on their fourth voyage, bearing those in her who as little dreamed of their fate, as the unconscious wood and metals, themselves, of which the ship was constructed. Mark felt his heart beat, when he saw a woman's handkerchief waving to him from the shore, and a fresh burst of tenderness nearly unmanned him, when, by the aid of the glass, he recognised the sweet countenance and fairy figure of Bridget. Ten minutes later, distance and interposing objects separated that young couple for many a weary day.

A few days at sea restored the equanimity of Mark's feelings, while the poignant grief of Bridget did not fail to receive the solace which time brings to sorrows of every degree and nature. They thought of each other often, and tenderly; but, the pain of parting over, they both began to look forward to the joys of meeting, with the buoyancy and illusions that hope is so apt to impart to the bosoms of the young and inexperienced. Little did either dream of what was to occur before their eyes were to be again gladdened with the sight of their respective forms.

Mark found in his state-room—for, in the Rancocus, the cabin was fitted with four neat little state-rooms, one for the captain, and two for the mates, with a fourth for the supercargo—many proofs of Bridget's love and care. Mrs. Crutchely, herself, though so much longer experienced, had scarce

looked after the captain's comfort with more judgment, and certainly not with greater solicitude, than this youthful bride had expended on her bridegroom's room. In that day, artists were not very numerous in America, nor is it very probable that Doctor Yardley would have permitted his daughter to take so decided a step as to sit for her miniature for Mark's possession; but she had managed to get her profile cut, and to have it framed, and the mate discovered it placed carefully among his effects when only a week out. From this profile Mark derived the greatest consolation. It was a good one, and Bridget happened to have a face that would tell in that sort of thing, so that the husband had no difficulty in recognising the wife, in this little image. There it was, with the very pretty slight turn of the head to one side, that in Bridget was both natural and graceful. Mark spent hours in gazing at and in admiring this inanimate shadow of his bride, which never failed to recall to him all her grace, and nature, and tenderness and love, though it could not convey any direct expression of her animation and spirit.

It is said ships have no Sundays. The meaning of this is merely that a vessel must perform her work on week-days and sabbaths, day and night, in fair or foul. The *Rancocus* formed no exception to the rule, and on she travelled, having a road before her that it would require months ere the end of it could be found. It is not our intention to dwell on the details of this long voyage, for two reasons. One is the fact that most voyages to the southern extremity of the American continent are marked by the same incidents; and the other is, that we have much other matter to relate, that must be given with greater attention to minutiae, and which we think will have much more interest with the reader.

Captain Crutchely touched at Rio for supplies, as is customary; and, after passing a week in that most delightful of all havens, went his way. The passage round the Horn was remarkable neither way. It could not be called a very boisterous one, neither was the weather unusually mild. Ships do double the cape, occasionally, under their top-gallant-sails, and we have heard of one vessel that did not furl her royals for several days, while off that formidable head-land; but these cases form the exception and not the rule. The *Rancocus* was under close-reefed topsails for the better part of a fortnight, in beating to the southward and westward, it blowing very fresh the whole time; and she might have been twice as long struggling with the south-westerly gales, but for the fortunate circumstance of the wind veering so far to the southward as to permit her to lay her course, when she made a great run to the westward. When the wind again hauled, as haul it was almost certain to do, Captain Crutchely believed himself in a meridian that would admit of his running with an easy bowline, on the larboard tack. No one but a sailor can understand the effect of checking the weather-braces, if it be only for a few feet, and of getting a weather-leach to stand without 'swigging out' on its bowline. It has much the same influence on the progress of a ship, that an eloquent speech has on the practice of an advocate, a great cure or a skilful operation on that of a medical man, or a lucky hit in trade on the fortunes of the young merchant. Away all go alike, if not absolutely with flowing sheets, easily, swiftly, and with less of labour than was their wont. Thus did it now prove with the good ship *Rancocus*. Instead of struggling hard with the seas to get three knots ahead, she now made her six, and kept all, or nearly all she made. When she saw the land again, it was found there was very little to spare, but that little sufficed. The vessel passed to windward of everything, and went on her way rejoicing, like any other that had been successful in a hard and severe struggle. A fortnight later, the ship touched at Valparaiso.

The voyage of the *Rancocus* may now be said to have commenced in earnest. Hitherto she had done little but make her way across the endless waste of waters; but now she had the real business before her to execute. A considerable amount of freight, which had been brought on account of the Spanish

government, was discharged, and the vessel filled up her water. Certain supplies of food that were deemed useful in cases of scurvy, were obtained, and after a delay of less than a fortnight, the ship was once more put to sea.

In the year 1796 the Pacific Ocean was by no means as familiar to navigators as it is to-day. Cook had made his celebrated voyages less than twenty years before, and the accounts of them were then new to the world; but even Cooke left a great deal to be ascertained, more especially in the way of details. The first inventor, or discoverer of anything, usually gains a great name, though it is those who come after him that turn his labours to account. Did we know no more of America to-day than was known to Columbus, our knowledge would be very limited, and the benefits of his vast enterprise would still be in their infancy.

Compared with its extent, perhaps, and keeping in view its ordinary weather, the Pacific can hardly be considered a dangerous sea; but he who will cast his eyes over its chart, will at once ascertain how much more numerous are its groups, islands, rocks, shoals and reefs, than those of the Atlantic. Still the mariners unhesitatingly steered out into its vast waters, and none with less reluctance and fewer doubts than those of America.

For nearly two months did Captain Crutchely, after quitting Valparaiso, hold his way into the depths of that mighty sea, in search of the islands he had been directed to find. Sandal-wood was his aim, a branch of commerce, by the way, which ought never to be pursued by any Christian man, or Christian nation, if what we hear of its uses in China be true. There, it is said to be burned as incense before idols, and no higher offence can be committed by any human being than to be principal, or accessory in any manner or way, to the substitution of any created thing for the ever-living God. In after-life Mark Woolston often thought of this, when reflection succeeded to action, and when he came to muse on the causes which may have led to his being the subject of the wonderful events that occurred in connection with his own fortunes. We have now reached a part of our narrative, however, when it becomes necessary to go into details, which we shall defer to the commencement of a new chapter.

Chapter III

*

"God of the dark and heavy deep!
The waves lie sleeping on the sands,
Till the fierce trumpet of the storm
Hath summon'd up their thundering bands;
Then the white sails are clashed like foam,
Or hurry trembling o'er the seas,
Till calmed by thee, the sinking gale
Serenely breathes, Depart in peace."

Peabody.

The day that preceded the night of which we are about to speak, was misty, with the wind fresh at east south-east. The *Rancocus* was running off, south-west, and consequently was going with the wind fresh. Captain Crutchely had one failing, and it was a very bad one for a ship-master; he would drink rather too much grog, at his dinner. At all other times he might have been called a sober man; out, at dinner, he would gulp down three or four glasses of rum and water. In that day rum was much used in America, far more than brandy; and every dinner-table, that had the smallest pretension to be above that of the mere labouring man, had at least a bottle of one of these liquors on it. Wine was not commonly seen at the cabin-table; or, if seen, it was in those vessels that had recently been in the vine-growing countries, and on special occasions. Captain Crutchely was fond of the pleasures of the table in another sense. His eating was on a level with his drinking; and for pigs, and poultry, and vegetables that would keep at sea, his ship was always a little remarkable.

On the day in question, it happened to be the birthday of Mrs. Crutchely, and the captain had drunk even a little more than common. Now, when a man is in the habit of drinking rather more than is good for him, an addition of a little more than common is very apt to upset him. Such, a sober truth, was the case with the commander of the *Rancocus*, when he left the dinner-table, at the time to which there is a particular allusion. Mark, himself, was perfectly sober. The taste of rum was unpleasant to him, nor did his young blood and buoyant spirits crave its effects. If he touched it at all, it was in very small quantities, and greatly diluted with water. He saw the present condition of his superior, therefore, with regret; and this so much the more, from the circumstance that an unpleasant report was prevailing on the ship, that white water had been seen ahead, during a clear moment, by a man who had just come from aloft. This report the mate repeated to the captain, accompanying it with a suggestion that it might be well to shorten sail, round-to, and sound. But Captain Crutchely treated the report with disrespect, swearing that the men were always fancying they were going ashore on coral, and that the voyage would last for ever, did he comply with all their conceits of this nature. Unfortunately, the second-mate was an old sea-dog, who owed his present inferior condition to his being a great deal addicted to the practice in which his captain indulged only a little, and he had been sharing largely the hospitality of the cabin that afternoon, it being his watch below. This man supported the captain in his contempt for the rumours and notions of the crew, and between them Mark found himself silence

Our young officer felt very uneasy at the account of the sailor who had reported white water ahead, for he was one of the best men in the ship, and altogether unlikely to say that which was not true. It being now six o'clock in the evening, and the second-mate having taken charge of the watch, Mark went up into the fore-top-gallant cross-trees himself, in order to get the best look ahead that he could before the night set in. It wanted but half an hour, or so of sunset, when the young man took his station in the cross-trees, the royal not being set. At first, he could discern nothing ahead, at a distance greater than a mile, on account of the mist; but, just as the sun went below the waters it lighted up to the westward, and Mark then plainly saw what he was perfectly satisfied must be breakers, extending for several miles directly across the vessel's track!

Such a discovery required decision, and the young man shouted out—

"Breakers ahead!"

This cry, coming from his first officer, startled even Captain Crutchely, who was recovering a little from the effect of his potations, though it was still treated with contempt by the second-mate, who had never forgiven one as young as Mark, for getting a berth that he fancied due to his own greater age and experience. He laughed openly at this second report of breakers, at a point in the ocean where the charts laid down a clear sea; but the captain knew that the charts could only tell him what was known at the time they were made, and he felt disposed to treat his first officer, young as he was, with more respect than the second-mate. All hands were called in consequence, and sail was shortened. Mark came down to assist in this duty, while Captain Crutchely himself went aloft to look out for the breakers. They passed each other in the top, the latter desiring his mate to bring the ship by the wind, on the larboard tack, or with her head to the southward, as soon as he had the sail sufficiently reduced to do so with safety.

For a few minutes after he reached the deck, Mark was fully employed in executing his orders. Sail was shortened with great rapidity, the men working with zeal and alarm, for they believed the second-mate when the captain had not. Although the vessel was under top-mast studding-sails when the command to take in the canvas was given, it was not long before Mark had her under her three topsails, and these with two reefs in them, and the ship on an easy bowline, with her head to the southward. When all this was done the young man felt a good deal of relief, for the danger he had seen was ahead, and this change of course brought it nearly abeam. It is true, the breakers were still to leeward, and insomuch most dangerously situated but the wind did not blow strong enough to prevent the ship from weathering them, provided time was taken by the forelock. The *Rancocus* was a good weatherly ship, nor was there sufficient sea on to make it at all difficult for her to claw off a lee shore. Desperate indeed is the situation of the vessel that has rocks or sands under her lee, with the gale blowing in her teeth, and heavy seas sending her bodily, and surely, however slowly, on the very breakers she is struggling to avoid! Captain Crutchely had not been aloft five minutes before he hailed the deck, and ordered Mark to send Bob Betts up to the cross-trees. Bob had the reputation of being the brightest look-out in the vessel, and was usually employed when land was about to be approached or a sail was expected to be made. He went up the fore-rigging like a squirrel, and was soon at the captain's side, both looking anxiously to leeward. A few minutes after the ship had hauled by the wind both came down, stopping in the top, however, to take one more look to leeward.

The second-mate stood waiting the further descent of the captain, with a soft of leering look and contempt on his hard, well-dyed features, which seemed to anticipate that it would soon be known that

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