

THE ANCHOR AND CHAIN

upon a footing of equality. 'Tis every man's privilege, to be sure, to drink rum or not, as he will, without loss of dignity.

If his mates would have me drink a glass with them my uncle would not hinder.

"A nip o' ginger-ale," says I, brash as a sealing-captain.

'Twas the despair of my uncle. "Lord love us!" says he, looking with horror upon the bottle.

"T' you, sir," says I, with my glass aloft, "an' t' the whole bally crew o' ye!"

"Belly-wash!" groans my uncle.

And so, brave and jolly as the rest of them, forgetting the doses of jalap in store for me when I was got back to the Tickle, I would now have my ninny (as they called it). Had the bar-maids left off kissing me --but they would not; no, they would kiss me upon every coming, and if I had nothing to order 'twas a kiss for my virtue, and if I drank 'twas a smack for my engaging manliness; and my only satisfaction was to damn them heartily—under my breath, mark you! lest I be soundly thrashed on the spot for this profanity, my uncle, though you may now misconceive his character, being in those days quick to punish me. But such are women: in a childless place, being themselves childless, they cannot resist a child, but would kiss queer lips, and be glad o' the chance, because a child is lovely to women, intruding where no children are.

As a child of seven I hated the bar-maids of the Anchor and Chain, because they would kiss me against