

I stood awhile where I was upon the deck, simply breathing in the cool air and taking no thought for my safety. A gunner lay beside his gun, asleep with his head upon the carriage; I could have touched him with my outstretched arm. . . .

I looked about me. We were riding at anchor in a little bay that from the aspect of the stars I took to be upon the Moorish side of the Straits: an opinion that became certainty when I gradually made out the form of that huge rock of Gibraltar to the northward and the mountainous promontory which lieth thereabout. There was no wind at all, which something excused the slack seamanship that was used amongst us, and in this principally showed, that our sails were but some of them furled up, although we rode at anchor; and the rest of them hung flat upon the yards. The moon had not risen, or was already set, but there was that soft diffused pallor of the stars by which, after awhile, I could see very well. In the general negligence the ship's lanterns were left unlit, but the gunner had one beside him, and also (what imported me more to find) a few broken morsels of bread. To carry these and the lantern down to the hold was my next concern, and was happily effected; but I judged my enterprise incomplete until I had got wine, or at least water, to wash it down, for even less to be supported than our hunger was our horrible scorching thirst.

Now, how I should have fared in my quest of that commodity I know not, seeing I did not proceed further in it than just so far as the prostrate gunner, whose leg in passing I chanced to touch and so woke him. He