

&c.,) to antecedents to explain the plot and pith of their story—I only claim the same allowance:—Just four years ago, having received a hasty summons home from my fishing quarters in Norway, I took steamer from S—— to London, and not being a particular good sailor, for my own comfort, and at a slight extra expense, I engaged, by letter, a cabin to myself. I did not reach S—— until the evening previously to sailing, and was somewhat surprised, on my arrival at the hotel, at learning “that a person from the ship had called several times to see me, and would be there again shortly.” He came, and proved to be the purser of the steamer in which I intended sailing. He acquainted me that all the principal cabins were chock-full, and that a young gentleman had come on board and was in a great way because he couldn’t have a private cabin, and refused to go in the public berths. Would I allow him to share mine, as there were two berths in it?

This was a nuisance; but after inquiring whether the lad couldn’t be exchanged for a *lady*, or some other equally facetious remark, I learned that he was a youth of about fourteen, well-dressed, with a good port-manteau, and a patch over one eye; and I gave a reluctant consent that the young gentleman might occupy my apartment that night and every other such, until we arrived at our destination.

I did not go on board until the following morning, and the vessel sailing half-an-hour afterwards, being unencumbered with luggage, save a parcel of fishing rods, basket, and knapsack, I did not go to my cabin until late in the afternoon, when, failing to discover my “*compagnon du voyage*,” I thither proceeded, intending to see what he was like. I found the door locked. Upon my giving a smart rap on the panel, a very frightened, youthful voice, exclaimed, “Who’s that? What is it?” I answered, “Be kind enough to open the door, young gentleman, that the part-proprietor of this establishment may enter.” Whereupon, and during which, there was a sound of considerable shuffling of something into something, and shutting-up and locking of the same. The bolt was so softly withdrawn that I was not aware for some seconds that I was free to enter. I at length did so, and discovered—Nothing! He, the mysterious youth, had “turned in,” and the curtains of his berth were already drawn.

“Hilloa!” I said, “is anybody ill?”