

THE CREW OF THE "WATER WAGTAIL."

CHAPTER I.

A ROUGH BEGINNING.

IT is well that mankind cannot pry into the secrets of futurity.

At all events, it is certain that if the crew of the *Water Wagtail* had known what was in store for them when they set sail from Bristol, one fine spring morning at the beginning of the sixteenth century, most of them would have remained at home—though it is not improbable that, even with full knowledge of coming events, some of the romantic among them, and a few of the reckless, might have decided to go on.

Undoubtedly Paul Burns would have scorned to draw back, for he was a "hero of romance;" an enthusiast of the deepest dye, with an inquiring mind, a sanguine disposition, and a fervent belief in all things great and good and grand. He was also a six-footer in his socks, a horse in constitution, a Hercules in frame, with a hook nose and a hawk eye and a strong