

CHAPTER V.

AN ACCIDENTAL MEETING.

ONE of the boats plying between New York and Fall River was rapidly making her way down the Sound one scorching August evening. Let us pause before a group surrounding a tall, bronzed and bearded man, who is entertaining them with an account of his travels in other lands. Can this voluble stranger really be our modest friend Hal, from whom we parted three years ago? If it is indeed he, what a change those past three years have wrought! So thinks the quiet little woman who leans over the railing with her back partially turned towards the group of which he forms the central figure, as she listens to the well-remembered voice that had once caused her heart to flutter like that of an imprisoned bird when a rude hand touches its dainty plumage. At last he tires of the attention he is receiving from those strangers, and, coolly turning his back upon them, he leans over the rail-