

absolutely indispensable. If the heart be well-built, and kept in good sailing trim, he will have a tell-tale there which will keep all right aloft. As well set a seaman upon a voyage of discovery without a compass, as a young fellow upon the world without a character. But, d'ye see, because you can't go to sea without a compass of this kind, you are not to expect that, in all cases, it will insure you of reaching the Pole. No, Dick, it is rather like a pilot sent out to steer you in, when you are within sight of land, & without whose assistance you cannot reach the port.

"In conversation too, I hate to see a smooth-water puppy running at the rate of twelve knots, as if no vessel in the fleet could sail but his own. I have seen fellows of this sort, shewing off like gilded pinnaces at a regatta, while they were only shewing how little they had on board. Two things, in particular, I wish my nevy to avoid, namely, arguing in company, and speaking about himself. There is a time and a place for everything; and, though argument be well enough in its way, he who is always upon the look-out for one, is just as sure as he finds it, to find an enemy; and, as to speaking of one's self, independent of its ill-breeding, it is like a dose of salt water served round the company. The grand secret of conversation is, to say little in a way to please, and the moment you fail to do so, it is time to shove your boat off. Whenever you see a person yawn in your company, take your hat.

"Independent of these things, let him look well to his tide-table. Without punctuality, the best character becomes a bad one. The moment a man breaks his word, or becomes indifferent to his engagement, why, the confidence of his commodore is at an end; and, instead of being promoted to the quarter-deck, he may slave before the mast till the boatswain's last whistle pipe all hands to his funeral. Punctuality, Dick—systematical, methodical punctuality—is a fortune to a fellow ready made. Let him once listen to the syren voice of delay—neglect to weigh anchor with the tide, and if he don't drift back with the current, go to pieces on a sand-bank, or be blown to sticks by a foul wind, my name's not Jack. Let him keep a sharp eye upon the beginning, the middle, and the end of everything he undertakes. He must not tuck about, like a fellow on a cruise or a roving commission; but, whatever wind blows, maintain a straight course, keeping his head to the port. Burns, the poet, spoke like a philosopher, when he said it was the misfortune of his life to be without an aim. But I tell you what, Dick, we must not only have an object to steer to, but it must be a reasonable object. A madman may say he is determined to go to the North Pole, or the moon—but that's not the thing, Dick; our anticipations must be likelihoods, our ambitions probabilities; and when we have made frequent calculations, and find ourselves correct in our reckoning, though we have made but little way, then down with despondency, and stick to perseverance. I don't mean a beggarly, servile, grovelling perseverance, but the unsubdued determination of an unconquerable spirit, riding out the storm, and while small craft sink on every side, disdain- ing to take in a single reef.

"Now, having said thus much about shaping his course and laying in a freight, it is material that I drop a concluding word with regard to his rigging. Send him out with patched canvass, and the veriest punt that ever disgraced the water will clear out before him. A patch upon his coat will be an embargo on his prospects. People affect to despise tailors; but it is base ingratitude or shallow dissimulation. Not that I would let the world see my nevy an insignificant dandy—but remember the moment the elbows of your coat open, every door shuts.

"But my fingers are cramped with the long epistle, and, moreover, the paper is full, and with love to nevy George, to Nelly, and the little ones, I am, dear Dick,

— "Your affectionate Brother,  
"JOHN ROGERS,  
"Otherwise  
"JACK THE RAMBLER."

All applauded this letter when they had heard it, and they vowed the captain was a clever fellow—a noble fellow—ay, and a wise one; and they drank his health and a happy New Year to him, though half of what he had written, from his nautical types and symbols, was as Greek and Latin unto those who heard it, and worse unto George the genius who read it; though some parts of it all understood.

When the health of Captain Rogers had gone round, "I wonder in the world," said Richard, "what it can be that my brother's eye refers to about being unhappy? I've written to him fifty times to try to fathom it, but I never could—he never would give me any satisfaction."

"Why," said the seaman, as he sat leaning forward and turning round his shoulders between his knees, "I believe I know—or I can guess a something about the matter.—It's about ten years ago, according to my reckoning, we were coming down the Mediterranean—the captain was as fine a looking young fellow then as ever stood upon a deck. Well, as I was saying, we were coming down the Mediterranean, and at Genoa we took a gentleman and his daughter on board. She was a pretty creature; I've seen nothing like her neither before nor since. So, as I'm telling you, we took them on board at Genoa, for England, and they had not been many days on board, till every one saw, and I saw—though my eyes are none o' the smartest—that the captain could look on nothing but his lovely passenger. It wasn't hard to see that she looked much in the same way at him, and I have seen them walking on the deck at night with her arm through his, in the moonlight; and, let me tell you, a glorious sight it is—moonlight on the Mediterranean! It is