

"It's law," said he, "and that's enough for me."

I didn't tell him he had been violatin' law all along the coast, by sellin' things without enterin' of them at the Custom House and payin' the duties, for he warn't used to it, and didn't think of it.

"Cutler," said I, "our ambassador used to say there was two sorts of wrong—moral wrong, and legal wrong; that the first couldn't be done on no account, but legal wrong could, because it was mere statute regulation; only if you are catched, you must pay the penalty."

"Yes," said he, "that is just on a par with political honesty. I can have no hand in it. I am little more than a passenger here, engaged by you. The responsibility rests with you. If you think proper to fish, do so, but excuse me." And he went below.

"Well, well," said I, "I'll save you harmless, let what will happen."

In a few minutes the boat was got ready, the lines fastened to the taffrail, salt and cut food thrown over to make the fish rise well to the surface, and we went at it in airnest. It's amazin' how quick they was taken. Splittin' and saltin' is done in no time. The splitter is provided with a blunt-pointed knife, like a shoemaker's in shape, and gauged with a leather thong, so as to leave about two inches of the blade exposed. With this, he splits the fish down the back, from the nose to the root of the tail, and actilly splits a hundred in three minutes, or as fast as two men can hand them to him. If he is a smart hand, as the mate was, he keeps three gibbers a-goin' as fast as they can for their life.

The gibber covers his left hand with a mitten, to enable him to have a good grip, and to protect him agin the bones of the fish, and with the forefinger and thumb of the right hand extracts the gills and garbage. The mackarel is then thrown into a tub and washed, and arter that, salted at the rate of a bushel of salt to a cask. I had heard the process so often described, I knew it well enough, but I never saw it before; and I must say, I was astonished at the rapidity with which it was done.

"Well," said I, "Eldad, that's quick work we are makin' of it here, aint it? It's quite excitin' when you see it for the fust time."

He was then stretched out at full length on the stern, and was nearly all covered over with a watch-cloak; but he rose deliberately, and put away his spy-glass on the binnacle. "Yes," said he, "and we are goin' to have quick work made with us too; and I guess you will find that very excitin' when you are nabbed for the first time."

"How is that?" said I.

"Well," said he, "sit down here, Sir, with your back to the men, so as not to draw attention. Do you see that are square-rigged vessel that's a fetchin' of the breeze down with her, while we lay here like a log? She is a British man-of-war; I know her well;