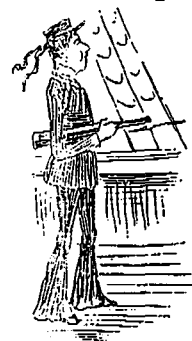


on board to take farewell of those who were leaving England, and who had accompanied them so far, had returned to shore by the last tug, and the only link that bound our Pickwickian adventurers to their native land was removed. As Mr. Vereker Yubbits remarked to his companions as all four of them stood on the quarter deck together, fondly gazing on the now fast receding shore, "We are in for it now, and it is no use attempting to jib." It must not be supposed, however, that there was any wish to "jib," as the sporting Yubbits expressed it, in the breast of any one of the devoted four, although it must be confessed that Mr. Coddleby experienced a strange sensation underneath his collar-stud as he saw how rapidly England was being left astern, out whatever misgivings he might feel on the score of the wisdom of his embarkation in this expedition, he kept quietly to himself and gave no sign that he considered that he had done rather a rash and foolish thing in coming at all.

Perhaps it is only natural that four young men who had never till this moment been out of sight of their mother country, should feel a slight despondency when they found themselves for the first time bounding away over the ocean to a land several thousand miles distant, but these gloomy sensations were far outweighed by the thoughts of the novelties they expected to witness in the new world, and by the conviction that so large a portion of the inhabitants of the universe was to reap the benefits of their investigations, to say nothing of the honor that had been conferred upon them by their fellow members of that glorious association to which they belonged.

The hustle and confusion which had prevailed on board the *Chinaman* on first leaving Liverpool was rapidly subsiding and order and quiet were taking their place, though as the vessel proceeded further out to sea the gliding peaceful motion which had characterized her passage down the river was hourly becoming anything but gliding and peaceful, being in fact the very reverse of what is usually understood by those terms, and as a stiff nor'-westerly breeze was blowing, she was soon rolling about and pitching in a manner most decidedly opposed to the comforts of those unaccustomed to "go down to the sea in ships."



Mr. Yubbits, before long, began to repent of the boastful tone in which he had spoken, when on shore, of his own contempt for those uneasy sensations which usually beset a landsman on his first sea-voyage. "I have been a great yachtsman in my time, you know," he had said to his admiring comrades, as he strutted about with an assumed nautical roll which was very unlike the genuine article, "and I fancy my days of seasickness are over; at any rate, even should a man experience a feeling of that complaint commonly termed *mal de mer*, a strong determination and a firm effort of the will can always be relied upon to dispel any such sensation. A man with great will-power can do anything, and I flatter myself that I possess it in a somewhat remarkable degree."

It would seem, as he stood on the deck of the *Chinaman* with his three companions, that he was inwardly wondering whether his will power was as fully developed as he had asserted it to be, and whether, if so, it possessed the desirable qualities he claimed for it. Of one thing there could be no doubt, and that was that Mr. Vereker

Yubbits was uncommonly pale, which being remarked by Mr. Bramley, the former had laid it to "that confounded lobster salad we had at luncheon," whereupon the poet Crinkle, who was by far the most cheerful of the whole party, had suggested that if that was the cause, his friend seemed to be well on the road to get rid of it; at which Mr. Yubbits looked the very keenest daggers at the other, but affected to smile complacently.

The four adventurers, if such a term may be applied to them, had come on board with an immense amount of baggage, or luggage as it is termed in England, and the task of looking after this had in a great measure diverted their thoughts from other subjects; but now that they had seen everything safely stowed away, it was evident that the jocularity and high spirits of our heroes were merely assumed, and that misgivings as to their own wisdom would come stealing unbidden into their breasts.



As has been said, the whole four were grouped on the deck, and there was evidently something in their appearance that differed from that of the ordinary run of passengers, for old travellers who had crossed the ocean many times could not refrain from smiling as they looked at them, and the second officer was heard to whisper to one of his subordinates that "something his eyes if he'd ever seen four such Johnny Raws in his somethinged experience," to which the other had responded that they "*did* seem to be a sanguinary green crew, something *his* eyes, if they didn't," and yet a casual observer would not probably have noticed anything particularly remarkable about their appearance, except, perhaps, that of the redoubtable Yubbits, who was attired in a blue pea-jacket, and with a multitude of brass buttons in front and on the cuffs, and pantaloons of the same hue, made very tight in the thighs and extremely wide at the lower end of the legs, the whole being surmounted by a glazed straw hat with a ribbon ends streamed away in the breeze; this costume, together with an immense telescope which he carried under his arm, occasionally putting it to his eye in an attempt to scan the horizon, regardless of the fact that he had forgotten to remove the cap at the larger end of the instrument, that gentleman firmly believed would impress any one who might see him with the fact that he was a thorough-paced sea-goer if not a retired officer of Her Britannic Majesty's navy, or a lieutenant, or possibly an officer of higher rank in the same glorious service, on leave of absence. He also made use of several nautical phrases in his conversation with his fellow-voyagers, who appeared to regard him as an authority as great in maritime affairs as in matters pertaining to sport, and they appealed to him for information on every subject that came under their notice.

"What an extraordinary looking vessel," exclaimed Coddleby, who was gazing out to sea, as his eye lit on a fishing smack making for the English coast, which was by this time nearly if not quite out of sight, "what is it, Yubbits, out there over the stick in front of our ship?"

Mr. Yubbits, who had been gradually growing paler and whiter all the time as the rolling of the *Chinaman* increased, but who was heroically endeavouring to exercise his indomitable will-power to disperse the uneasiness he evidently felt, raising his telescope, which he rested on Mr. Crinkle's shoulder, to one eye whilst he held his hand