

the same time that it was not his desire to force any man against his will. Without a murmur the watch below, as well as that on deck, repaired to the quarter-deck, and were soon seated around the capstan. The captain took charge of the deck himself; that is, looked out for the proper steerage of the ship, and relieved the second mate, whose watch it was, to join the men at prayers. These arrangements completed, the chief mate placed a Bible on the capstan, read a chapter from the New Testament, made some remarks upon it, and then prayed; after which he read a sermon, and closed with prayer. The whole exercise occupied about an hour, and seemed to produce a good effect upon the men, who, during the rest of the day, in their intercourse with one another, talked about religion.

That afternoon, when it was the mate's watch on deck, Capt. Williams entered into conversation with him as follows:

"I say, Briggs, what does all your preaching and praying amount to in the long run? I have managed to get along very well thus far without either; and if I were to die to-day, I could safely say that I never injured any man knowingly, and have always endeavoured to do my duty to my owners and my family. What more can a man do, even if he had all the religion in the world?"

"Captain Williams," replied the mate, "this world, sir, is not our home; we are only here for a few short years, and then we go to our place."

"Place!" interrupted the captain, "place—what do you or I or any one else know about any other place than this world? Place, indeed! you do not suppose that I am silly enough to believe the Bible, with its strange fish stories, and unaccountable yarns about miracles?"