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"Dick, my boy," replied the Admiral, winking, "you mark me, I am not the worst."

"Then why," began Dick, and then paused. "But Esther," he began again, once more to interrupt himself. "The fact is, Admiral," he came out with it roundly now, "your daughter wished to run away from you to-day, and I only brought her back with difficulty."

"In the pony-carriage?" asked the Admiral, with the silliness of extreme surprise.

"Yes," Dick answered.

"Why, what the devil was she running away from?"

Dick found the question unusually hard to answer.

"Why," said he, "you know, you're a bit of a rip."

"I behave to that girl, sir, like an archdeacon," replied Van Tromp warmly.

"Well—excuse me—but you know you drink," insisted Dick.

"I know that I was a sheet in the wind's eye, sir, once—once only, since I reached this place," retorted the Admiral. "And even then I was fit for any drawing-room. I should like you to tell me how many fathers, lay and clerical, go upstairs every day with a face like a lobster and cod's eyes—and are dull, upon the back of it—not even mirth for the money! No, if that's what she runs for, all I say is, let her run."

"You see," Dick tried it again, "she has fancies——"

"Confound her fancies!" cried Van Tromp. "I used her kindly; she had her own way; I was her