

"Now, my dear man," said Paul, seating himself one evening at the cabin table and laying his hand impressively on his friend's arm, "do let me lock up this bottle. You can't navigate the ship, you know, when you've got so much of that stuff under your belt."

"O yes, I can," said the skipper, with an imbecile smile, for his friend had a winning way with him that conciliated even while he rebuked. "Don't you fear, Paul, I—I'm all right!"

The half-offended idiotic expression of the man's face was intensely ludicrous, but Paul could not see the ludicrous at that time. He only saw his usually sedate, manly, generous friend reduced to a state of imbecility.

"Come, now, Master Trench," he said persuasively, taking hold of the case-bottle, "let me put it away."

"N—no, I won't," said the captain sharply, for he was short of temper.

The persuasive look on Paul's face suddenly vanished. He rose, grasped the bottle firmly, went to the open hatch, and sent it whizzing up into the air with such force that it went far over the stern of the ship and dropped into the sea, to the unutterable amazement of the man at the helm, who observed the bottle's unaccountable flight with an expression of visage all his own.

There is no accounting for the rapid transitions of thought and feeling in drunken men. The skipper sprang up, clenched his right hand, and gazed in fierce astonishment at his friend, who advanced towards him with a benignant smile, quite regardless of consequences. Even in the act of striking, the captain