



## UPS AND DOWNS

VOL. III. DECEMBER 24TH, 1897, FOR JANUARY 1ST, 1898. No. 2.

### A Dive for a Pearl

A Complete Story, Written Specially for UPS AND DOWNS.

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Author of "Nailing His Colors, or the Light that Shines," "Steady Your Helm, or Stowed Away," "Undaunted, a Tale of the Solomon Islands," "Aboveboard, a Tale of Adventure on the sea," and of other well-known books devoted to life afloat.

**I**T was Christmas-eve. Outside, the ground was mantled with the white snow, the weather bitterly cold and intensified by a wild, blustering north-easterly wind which swept with a rushing, buzzing sound around the old gabled house, and bellowed in fitful gusts down the chimneys. Inside, all was bright and cheery, as befitting so festive an occasion. In the oak parlour a merry group, consisting principally of young people, but with a fair sprinkling of the more sober middle aged and old, was gathered in front of the large Yule log which spluttered out its cheerful, sparkling welcome and cast weird, fantastic shadows on the walls.

"A story, a story!" shouted the younger members of the happy group, a suggestion which appeared to meet with unanimous approval.

"Now, Captain, you must have met with plenty of adventures in your time," said one; "spin us a 'yarn' as you call it."

"Tell us something about your

adventures when you were pearl fishing," put in another. "You must have seen some wonderful sights under water whilst diving for pearls," she added questioningly.

"Well, yes, I have," I replied emphatically, "and whilst upon one occasion I was diving off the Australian coast, I picked up a pearl of inestimable value and my own fate as well, which was linked to that same pearl."

"Whatever do you mean, Captain?" "What can he mean?" "His own fate linked to a pearl!" and such like expressions of astonished enquiry followed my remark.

"Well," I replied, cheerily, "you are asking for a story, and as there is a 'yarn' hanging to that particular 'pearl,' I will spin it for you."

In the year 1848 I left London for Sydney, Australia, as second mate of the fine frigate built ship *Abwick Castle*. We had several first class passengers on board, for the ship was a favourite in the trade, and her captain bore a high reputation