

NIGHT SCENE AT SEA.

From Cringle's Log.

THE small twinkling light from millions of lesser stars, in that part of the firmament where hung the moon, round as a silver pottid—shield I mean—were swamped in a flood of greenish-white radiance shed by her, and it was only a few of the first magnitude, with a planet here and there, that were visible to the naked eye, in the neighbourhood of her crystal bright globe; but the clear depth, and dark translucent purity of the profound, when the eye tried to pierce into it at the zenith, where the stars once more shone and sparkled thick and brightly, beyond the merging influence of the pale cold orb, no man can describe *now*—one could, *once*—but rest his soul, he is dead—and then to look forth far into the night, across the dark ridge of many a heaving swell of living water—but, “Thomas Cringle, ahoy—where the deuce are you cruising to?” So, to come back to my story, I went aft, and mounted the small poop, and looked towards the aforesaid moon, and not the paper lantern affair hanging in the atmosphere of fog and smoke, about which your bleareyed poets *haver* so much.

Ah, here it is! so off we go again—and looked towards the rising moon, whose shining wake of glow-worm-colored light, sparkling in the small waves, that danced in the gentle wind on the heaving bosom of the dark blue sea, was right ahead of us, like a river of quicksilver with its course diminished in the distance to a point, flowing towards us, from the extreme verge of the horizon, through a rolling sea of ink, with the waters of which for a time it disdained to blend. Concentrated, and shining like polished silver afar off—intense and sparkling as it streamed down nearer, but becoming less and less brilliant as it widened in its approach to us, until, like the stream of the great Estuary of the Magdalena, losing itself in the salt waste of waters, it gradually melted beneath us and around us into darkness.

I looked aloft—every object appeared sharply cut out against the dark firmament, and the swaying of the mast heads to and fro, as the vessel rolled, was so steady and slow, that *they* seemed stationary, while it was the moon and stars, which appeared to vibrate and swing from side to side, high over head, like the vacillation of the clouds in a theatre when the scene is first let down.

The masts, and yards, and standing and running rigging, looked like black pillars and bars, and wires of iron, reared against the sky, by some mighty spirit of the night; and the sails, as the moon shone dimly through them, were as dark as if they had been tarpawlings. But when I walked forward, and looked aft, what a beauteous change! Now each mast, with its gently swelling canvass, the higher sails decreasing in size, until they tapered away nearly to a point, though top-sail, topgallant-sails, royal and sky-sails, shewed like towers of snow, and the cordage like silver threads, while each dark spar seemed to be ebony, *finished* with ivory, as a flood of cold, pale, mild light streamed from the beauteous planet over the whole stupendous machine, lighting up the sand-