

vants of man. It was forever changing. It changed every day in the year; consequently the amount of the daily variation had to be ciphered out and allowance made for it, else the mariner would go utterly astray. Another said there was a vast fortune waiting for the genius who should invent a compass that would not be affected by the local influences of an iron ship. He said there was only one creature more fickle than a wooden ship's compass, and that was the compass of an iron ship. Then came reference to the well-known fact that an experienced mariner can look at the compass of a new iron vessel thousands of miles from her birth-place, and tell which way her head was pointing when she was in process of building.

Now an ancient whale-ship master fell to talking about the sort of crews they used to have in his early days. Said he,—

‘Sometimes we’d have a batch of college students. Queer lot. Ignorant? Why, they didn’t know the cat-heads from the main brace. But if you took them for fools you’d get bit, sure. They’d learn more in a month than another man would in a year. We had one, once, in the ‘Mary Ann,’ that came on board with gold spectacles on. And besides, he was rigged out from maintruck to keelson in the nobbiest clothes that ever saw a fo’castle. He had a chest full, too; cloaks and broadcloth coats and velvet vests; everything swell, you know; and didn’t the salt water fix them out for him? I guess not! Well, going to sea, the mate told him to go aloft and help to shake out the fore-to’-gallants’l. Up he shins to the fore-top, with his spectacles on, and in a minute