

THE FAMILY MAGAZINE.

THE CAPTAIN'S STORY.

When I was about forty years of age I took command of the ship *Peter-sham*. She was an old craft and had seen just as much service as she was capable of seeing with safety. But her owners were willing to trust a valuable cargo in her, so I would not refuse to trust myself. We were bound to Liverpool, and nothing unusual happened until about the eighth day out, when we ran foul of a small iceberg. It was early in the morning before sunrise, and not above six or eight feet of ice was above the water, it having nearly all been melted in the warm region of the gulf stream. I did not think we had sustained much injury, for the shock was light; but I was angry, and gave the look-out a severe punishment without stopping to inquire whether he could have seen the berg in time to escape it.

My cabin boy was named Jack Withers. He was fourteen years of age, and this was his first voyage. I had taken him from his widowed mother, and had promised her that I would see him well treated, that was, if he behaved himself. He was a bright intelligent lad. I soon made myself believe that he had an awful disposition. I fancied that he was the most stubborn piece of humanity I had ever met with. I made up my mind that he had never been properly governed, and had resolved to break him in. I told him I'd curb his temper before I had done with him. In reply he told me that I might kill him if I liked; and I flogged him with the end of the mizzen top-gallant

halyards till he could hardly stand. I asked him if he'd got enough, and he told me I might flog him more if I wished to. I felt a strong inclination to put him overboard, but at that moment he staggered against the mizzen-mast from absolute weakness, and I left him to himself. When I reasoned calmly about the boy's disposition, I was forced to acknowledge that he was one of the smartest and most intelligent and faithful lads I had ever seen. When I asked him to do anything he would be off like a rocket; but when I roughly ordered him to do it then came the disposition with which I found fault.

One day, when it was very near noon, I spoke to him to bring up my quadrant. He was looking over the quarter-rail, and I knew he did not hear me: the next time I spoke I ripped out an oath, and intimated that if he did not move I'd help him.

"I didn't hear you," he said, with an independent tone.

"No words," said I.

"I suppose I can speak," he retorted, moving slowly towards the companion-way.

His looks, words, and the slow, careless manner in which he moved, fired me in a moment, and I grasped him by the collar.

"Speak to me again like that, and I'll flog you within an inch of your life," said I.

"You can flog away," he replied, firm and undaunted as a rock.

And I did flog him. I caught up the end of a rope and beat him till