

coming in, he continued his way toward the sitting-room entrance. We all instinctively turned that we might see who the newcomer was. When he first made his appearance, an exclamation of amusement escaped the lips of every man present, so unusual and quaint was the little figure which stood before us in the doorway.

It was that of a boy of about fourteen, dressed in the usual habit of the sailor ashore. In one hand he carried a wooden box, in the other a harmonica, and strapped to his shoulders hung a small telescope bag. A profuse shock of dark curls crowned his merry little face, and from his twinkling brown eyes there danced such a light of deviltry and mischief that it made one laugh to look at him.

We soon discovered he was French, and that he had run away from a coasting steamship then in port, and as he was looking for an opportunity to ship out again without delay, Old Dick at once secured him for our ship.

I asked him if he had been long at sea.

"I haf been to sea two years," he answered: "When I was leetle boy I go one French sheep and go by za Horn. You have been by za Horn? An' I haf been all ofer za world. I haf been Japan; I nat been China; I haf been Honolulu. I tell you I am a sail-or. My great-fazer was a sail-or; my fazer was a sail-or, was one of za officaire za French sheep Burgoyne; I am a sailor, an' if efer I haf a boy, I want him to be a sail-or."

When we took him aboard and showed him to the skipper, there was but one objection the latter found. It was this: the boy had as an inseparable companion a huge gray parrot. He had obtained the bird on his first trip to South Africa, and had since then kept it with him. The parrot had well-nigh seen as much of the world as the youngster himself. But the boy and the parrot could not be separated, and at length the skipper consented, upon condition that we kept the bird as much in the fo'cas'le as possible. This, of course, we promised faithfully to do, and so bore off the pair to their quarters. We never knew his name. We called him "Frenchy," and that sufficed to distinguish him from the rest of the crew.

Frenchy had named the parrot "Boney," and the latter soon became very popular among the men.

The bird was a good talker, but as Frenchy had been its teacher, its vocabulary was confined principally to French, but it could speak English—that is to say, Frenchy's English, for Frenchy was never so French as when he endeavoured to be English—and it would often cause us all to roar with laughter by croaking out in a throaty voice, "I am a Frenchman, I am a Frenchman."

Altogether, between Frenchy and the parrot, we had entertainment in plenty to break the monotony of our life on shipboard, and it was not long before the two became very dear to us.

It would be difficult to describe the friendship which had sprung up between Old Dick and the youngster almost upon their first meeting. It seemed strange that two so vastly different as Frenchy and the old man should become so attached. It was something more than mere friendship, too, as all could see, for the old seafarer could not have studied the lad's welfare more

had he been his father, and Frenchy in return entertained an equal affection for the sailor.

Dick and I had always been the best of friends. When I had been too young to fight my own battles, he had fought them for me, but I had never, in all the long years we had sailed together, taken the place in the old man's heart which Frenchy had gained well-nigh in a day.

I would often see them, during watch below, seated upon the fo'cas'le head, engaged in conversation. One day I came upon them seated thus together. They were teaching each other French and English, respectively. On Frenchy's shoulder sat the parrot Boney, sunning himself, and looking about with a critical eye on all that was going on. As I passed the pair, I stumbled, running my foot against a ring bolt.

"Great Scott!" I exclaimed, and as I paused to nurse the wounded member I heard Frenchy say to Dick—"What is zat, 'Great Scott?' Zat is English! good English? You can say zat in society? You can say zat to a lady?"

At other times they would argue upon the subject of French and American ships, and as the boy was intensely patriotic, this would more often than not lead on to a discussion of the countries themselves, and the old man always found in the youngster an able antagonist.

They presented a curious spectacle as they sat thus together—the one so old, the other so young.

A year passed away, and once more we lay at anchor off Tacoma's shores. The crew of the "Castle-reagh" remained much the same as it had been twelve months before, with the exception of one of the hands who had lost his life during a gale off the east coast of Australia.

All our cargo was aboard, and we were fast making ready for sea. It was expected we would sail in a few days, and, but for the unlooked-for illness of the chief mate, would even then have been on our way. However, he was reported recovering, and was expected aboard in a day or two. All things were in readiness that we might square our yards the minute he reached the head of

the gang-plank. The man had served the "Castle-reagh" as chief mate for as many years as I had served her before the mast. It was entirely due to him and his treatment of the men under him that the latter stuck by the ship as they did, for mates such as he were far outside the pale of the majority. He was that rare combination, an efficient officer and a just master, and the skipper was loath to dispense with his services for a single voyage; and, moreover, officers were at the time exceedingly difficult to procure.

Thus it was that while we lay at anchor, awaiting his coming, one morning we were all seated about the fo'cas'le, occupying ourselves in various ways. Frenchy and Old Dick were looking through the former's ancient scrap-book. Suddenly in burst one of the hands, Jack Doull by name, whom we had been expecting, and whose coming we awaited with no little anxiety. He had come from bringing the skipper off in a small boat.

"Boys," cried he, "I've bad news for you. We'll sail wi'out him."

On the instant Dick was upon his feet.

"But how can we?" he quickly responded. "Who-



Frenchy and His Parrot.

Drawn by Tom O. Marten.