

The captain groaned. While Huish was thus airing and exercising his bravado, the man at his side was actually engaged in prayer. Prayer, what for? God knows. But out of his inconsistent, illogical, and agitated spirit, a stream of supplication was poured forth, inarticulate as himself, earnest as death and judgment.

"Thou Gawd seest me!" continued Huish. "I remember I had that written in my Bible. I remember the Bible, too, all about Abinadab and parties. Well, Gawd!" apostrophising the meridian, "you're goin' to see a rum start presently, I promise you that!"

The captain bounded.

"I'll have no blasphemy!" he cried, "no blasphemy in my boat."

"All right, cap," said Huish. "Anythink to oblige. Any other topic you would like to suggest, the ryne-gyge, the lightnin' rod, Shykepeare, or the musical glasses? 'Ere's conversation on tap. Put a penny in the slot, and . . . 'ullo! 'ere they are!" he cried. "Now or never! is 'e goin' to shoot?"

And the little man straightened himself into an alert and dashing attitude, and looked steadily at the enemy.

But the captain rose half up in the boat with eyes protruding.