

silence by a laughing proposal to catch the fish. His suggestion was not very favourably received in the present humour of his shipmates; but as he merrily maintained his ability to conquer the enemy, I offered him the use of the fishing lines and harpoons. Prince grinned and shook his head. "No, no, skippah, you no savez, massa shark 'spect to be treat in de mos pilatess manna. Me, massa Prince, gib massa shark berry nice hot suppa for *nyam* (eat)."

And he forthwith commenced his operations, while the crew gathered curiously but doubtingly around him. They were simply to heat a firebrick in the stove, wrap it up in some greasy cloths, and toss it hastily overboard in the vicinity of the shark; nothing surely could have been more ludicrous or more unpromising; but the effect was triumphant and instantaneous. The shark darted after the hissing prey, with the velocity of wind, and gorged it in a moment. Almost immediately his uneasy movements discovered the success of the experiment. His gleaming body darted hither and thither in his increasing agony, like forked lightning; sometimes lashing the water in his fury so that the spray was carried over the taffrail where we were standing, and sometimes rushing blindly against our hull, as if stupefied with torture. Prince whooped and screamed with extacy, and hurrying up to the surly Spaniards, who stood very low in his good graces, congratulated them with laughing irony, on the prospect of "fresh fish for supper." They had not taken the slightest interest in our proceedings, and this to Prince was the perfection of envy and injustice; it was like disputing his laurels. We had not the satisfaction we desired in the capture of our victim; his violence was soon subdued by the approach of death; gradually turning up his white belly to the surface, we beheld his last throes; and at last he yielded to the current, which was gradually carrying the swollen body unresistingly to the beach. A breeze soon after sprung up; every gloomy foreboding was at once banished by the crew, and the Spaniards restored to good humour by the prospect of speedily attaining the end of their voyage, suffered the whining condolment of Prince upon the loss of the "fresh fish," to pass without resentment, or at least without reply. Andersen was terribly crest-fallen at the result of his prediction, and perceiving him reclining sulkily upon the sparemast, I could not resist the inclination to tease him a little by recurring to the incident.

"Mate, which of the hands do you think the shark had its eye upon?"

He winced a little, but replied in a serious

tone as if resolved not to be jeered out of his belief:

"Belay, belay, skipper. When you have sailed the salt seas as long as I have done, you will know that a shark never scuds in the wake of a ship, but as the messenger of ill-luck. Skipper, I know a story of a shark, a fearful, bloody story, and one that haunts my memory night and day, sleeping and waking. Once when I was off-ship in Vera Cruz, where I had been thrown upon my beam-ends by the vomito prieta, and was lounging about, like another Lazarus, without a picayune to buy me a tortillia, or a blanket to cover me when I slunk away to sleep, like a homeless dog, in the corner of some coraal or other, I made an acquaintance with one of the wharf-rats or leperos of the Moletta, a vagabond as reckless, as desperate, and as miserable as myself. Perhaps it was a similarity of fortune that drew us together. However I fared the better for it, for as he pilfered with the dexterity of a monkey, I was never at a loss for a few reales to stay my hunger. For a half-blood he was generous enough, but he never did a favour, without extorting a dozen in return. He had been a soldier, and had served under Morillo with the old Spanish legion, and could tell long stories of burnings and bush-fighting, and matters that I had never seen nor heard of before. He had also been a pearl-diver, and was noted for the boldness and success of his adventures; but he made free with some of his comrade's sequins, a crime more heinous than murder, and never to be forgiven by that scrupulous fraternity, who care not a maravedi what spoil is made of another's goods so that theirs is inviolable; so my amigo was brutally expelled, and a mark of infamy set upon him. By a little timely sympathy for such injustice, for misery had changed the colour of my heart, and the thought of old Norway was banished like a spectre, I found it easy enough to establish a friendship with this *birbone*, who shared with me his hammock and his puchero. One night, a growling stormy night it was, we were sitting alone in his hut, over the sleepy light of a mangrove fire, when José, that was his name,—but like all Spaniards, he had as many at the back of it, as might serve for the progeny of Methuselah,—when José, looking at me with a serious and stedfast eye, said abruptly:

"Hermano, I am going to put my life into your hands, to tell you a secret worth ten thousand barias of gold; but you are a brave man, I know it, and will not betray me. You do not go to the altar, brother, nor to confession,—your priest, Don Luther, has forbidden it,—I do; but it is not