

## *The Cruise of the SHINING LIGHT*

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My uncle would have (as he said) no dealings with a glass. There was none in the places familiar to his eyes; and when by chance, in the tap-rooms of the city, he came face to face with himself, he would start away with a fervent malediction upon the rogue in the mirror, consigning him to perdition without hope of passage into some easier state.

'Twas anathema most feeling and complete.

"Hist!" cries I. "You're never so bad as *that*, Uncle Nick!"

"None worse," says he, "than that there ol' lost rascal!"

I did not believe it.

"I isn't took a steady look at my ol' figger-'ead," he was used to saying, with his little eyes widened to excite wonder, "this five year! In p'int o' looks," says he, smirking, vain as you please, "I'm t' windward o' most o' the bullies when I trims my beard. Ah, lad, they's a raft o' bar-maids an' water-side widows would wed ol' Nicholas Top. An' why? 'Tain't money, God knows! for Nicholas Top haves none. Nar a dollar that a lone water-side widow could nose out! An' if 'tisn't money," says he, "why, Lord love us! 'tis *looks*. It can't be nothin' else. 'Tis looks or money with the widows; they cares not which. Come, now, lad," says he, "would you 'low it *could* be otherwise than looks?"

I must wag my head.

"Lord love us, Danniel" says he, so vain—so innocently vain of the face he would not see—that my lips twitch with laughter to think of it. "You an' them