

## CHAPTER III.

*Arrival—The Custom House—Things Look Bad—The Interviewers—First Visits—Things Look Brighter—“O, Vanity of Vanities!”*

**New York Harbour, 5th January.**

AT seven o'clock in the morning, the Custom House officers came on board. One of them at once recognised me, said, calling me by name, that he was glad to see me back, and inquired if I had not brought Madame with me this time. It is extraordinary the memory of many of those Americans! This one had seen me for a few minutes two years before, and probably had to deal with two or three hundred thousand people since.

All the passengers came to the saloon, and made their declarations one after another; after which they swore in the usual form that they had told the truth, and signed a paper to that effect. This done, many a poor pilgrim innocently imagines that he has finished with the Custom House, and he renders thanks to Heaven that he is going to set foot on a soil where a man's word is not doubted. He reckons without his host. In spite of his declaration, sworn and signed, his trunks are opened and searched with all the dogged zeal of a policeman who believes he is on the track of a criminal, and who will only give up after perfectly convincing himself that the trunks do not contain the slightest dutiable article. Everything is taken out and examined. If there are any objects of apparel that appear like new ones to that scrutinising eye, look out for squalls.

I must say that the officer was very kind to me.