

"Crowd on all sail now, my men, out with the studdin' sails — be quick there; steer straight for that headland, and that will keep the island between us and the Spitfire. Cutler," said I, and he was on deck in a minute, "we are safe now, and I surrender my command to you."

"Where is the man-of-war?" said he, lookin' round.

"On the sand bar, on the other side of the island," I replied. "I guess they are goin' to grave her, or perhaps survey the channel, for their chart don't seem no good," and I gave him a wink, but he didn't smile.

"Mr. Slick," said he, "that commission puts it out of your power to act the boy, and play tricks that way. You are the last man that ought to compromise the government."

"Cutler," said I, "you are as correct as a boot-jack, and I respect your scruples. I admit it was a thoughtless frolic, and it shan't happen again."

"That's right," said he, "I knew you were only doin' of it out of fun, but there are times when we must not commit ourselves. If any cruiser interferes with us in our lawful pursuits, I will resist to the death, but I never will draw blood in defendin' a wrong act." Cutler was right; *if we begin to do wrong in fun, we are apt to end by doin' wrong in earnest.*

"Well, Eldad," said I, "what do you think of that dodge, eh? I am afeard," said I, winkin' to him, for the mate was within hearin', "I am afeard we shall all be took up, tried in court, and ruined in damages, for decoyin' that vessel ashore."

"Oh, Mr. Slick!" he replied, "let me be," and he hung his head and walked forward. "Well, Mr. Slick," said Eldad, "you are the man for my mōney, arter all. You talk the most sense and the most nonsense of any person I ever see. You play with the galls, take rises out of the men, tell stories by the hour, and seem made on purpose for rollickin. On the other hand, no danger scares you, and no difficulty stops you. No other man would have got out of that are scrape but yourself. Not content with that, you have turned the tables on Captain Stoker, and put him into a most a beautiful of a frizzle of a fix."

"Well," said I, "don't say no more for goodness gracious sake, for I have a friend who, when he reads it, will say it's all my vanity. Come, let's go below and liquor; but I must say myself, Eldad, that was a reel '*narrow escape.*'"