

**MORGAN
ROBERTSON**

**"WHERE
ANGELS FEAR
TO TREAD"
AND OTHER
STORIES
OF THE SEA**

Morgan Robertson

"Where Angels Fear to Tread" and Other Stories of the Sea

EAN 8596547229551

DigiCat, 2022

Contact: DigiCat@okpublishing.info



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"I have seen wicked men and fools, a great many of each; and I believe they both get paid in the end, but the fools first."

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

PART I

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The first man to climb the *Almena's* side-ladder from the tug was the shipping-master, and after him came the crew he had shipped. They clustered at the rail, looking around and aloft with muttered profane comments, one to the other, while the shipping-master approached a gray-eyed giant who stood with a shorter but broader man at the poop-deck steps.

"Mr. Jackson—the mate here, I s'pose?" inquired the shipping-master. A nod answered him. "I've brought you a good crew," he continued; "we'll just tally 'em off, and then you can sign my receipt. The captain'll be down with the pilot this afternoon."

"I'm the mate—yes," said the giant; "but what dry-goods store did you raid for that crowd? Did the captain pick 'em out?"

"A delegation o' parsons," muttered the short, broad man, contemptuously.

"No, they're not parsons," said the shipping-master, as he turned to the man, the slightest trace of a smile on his

seamy face. "You're Mr. Becker, the second mate, I take it; you'll find 'em all right, sir. They're sailors, and good ones, too. No, Mr. Jackson, the skipper didn't pick 'em—just asked me for sixteen good men, and there you are. Muster up to the capstan here, boys," he called, "and be counted."

As they grouped themselves amidships with their clothes-bags, the shipping-master beckoned the chief mate over to the rail.

"You see, Mr. Jackson," he said, with a backward glance at the men, "I've only played the regular dodge on 'em. They've all got the sailor's bug in their heads and want to go coasting; so I told 'em this was a coaster."

"So she is," answered the officer; "round the Horn to Callao is coasting. What more do they want?"

"Yes, but I said nothin' of Callao, and they were all three sheets i' the wind when they signed, so they didn't notice the articles. They expected a schooner, too, big enough for sixteen men; but I've just talked 'em out of that notion. They think, too, that they'll have a week in port to see if they like the craft; and to make 'em think it was easy to quit, I told 'em to sign nicknames—made 'em believe that a wrong name on the articles voided the contract."

"But it don't. They're here, and they'll stay—that is, if they know enough to man the windlass."

"Of course—of course. I'm just givin' you a pointer. You may have to run them a little at the start, but that's easy. Now we'll tally 'em off. Don't mind the names; they'll answer to

'em. You see, they're all townies, and bring their names from home."

The shipping-master drew a large paper from his pocket, and they approached the men at the capstan, where the short, broad second mate had been taking their individual measures with scowling eye.

It was a strange crew for the fore-castle of an outward-bound, deep-water American ship. Mr. Jackson looked in vain for the heavy, foreign faces, the greasy canvas jackets and blanket trousers he was accustomed to see. Not that these men seemed to be landsmen—each carried in his face and bearing the indefinable something by which sailors of all races may distinguish each other at a glance from fishermen, tugmen, and deck-hands. They were all young men, and their intelligent faces—blemished more or less with marks of overnight dissipation—were as sunburnt as were those of the two mates; and where a hand could be seen, it showed as brown and tarry as that of the ablest able seaman. There were no chests among them, but the canvas clothes-bags were the genuine article, and they shouldered and handled them as only sailors can. Yet, aside from these externals, they gave no sign of being anything but well-paid, well-fed, self-respecting citizens, who would read the papers, discuss politics, raise families, and drink more than is good on pay-nights, to repent at church in the morning. The hands among them that were hidden were covered with well-fitting gloves—kid or dog-skin; all wore white shirts and fashionable neckwear; their shoes were polished; their hats were in style; and here and there, where an unbuttoned, silk-faced overcoat exposed the garments beneath, could be seen a gold watch-chain with tasteful charm.

"Now, boys," said the shipping-master, cheerily, as he unfolded the articles on the capstan-head, "answer, and step over to starboard as I read your names. Ready? Tosses Galvin."

"Here." A man carried his bag across the deck a short distance.

"Bigpig Monahan." Another—as large a man as the mate—answered and followed.

"Moccasey Gill."

"Good God!" muttered the mate, as this man responded.

"Sinful Peck." An undersized man, with a cultivated blond mustache, lifted his hat politely to Mr. Jackson, disclosing a smooth, bald head, and passed over, smiling sweetly. Whatever his character, his name belied his appearance; for his face was cherubic in its innocence.

"Say," interrupted the mate, angrily, "what kind of a game is this, anyhow? Are these men sailors?"

"Yes, yes," answered the shipping-master, hurriedly; "you'll find 'em all right. And, Sinful," he added, as he frowned reprovingly at the last man named, "don't you get gay till my receipt's signed and I'm clear of you."

Mr. Jackson wondered, but subsided; and, each name bringing forth a response, the reader called off: "Seldom Helward, Shiner O'Toole, Senator Sands, Jump Black, Yampaw Gallagher, Sorry Welch, Yorker Jimson, General

Lannigan, Turkey Twain, Gunner Meagher, Ghost O'Brien, and Poop-deck Cahill."

Then the astounded Mr. Jackson broke forth profanely. "I've been shipmates," he declared between oaths, "with freak names of all nations; but this gang beats me. Say, you," he called—"you with the cro'-jack eye there—what's that name you go by? Who are you?" He spoke to the large man who had answered to "Bigpig Monahan," and who suffered from a slight distortion of one eye; but the man, instead of civilly repeating his name, answered curtly and coolly:

"I'm the man that struck Billy Patterson."

Fully realizing that the mate who hesitates is lost, and earnestly resolved to rebuke this man as his insolence required, Mr. Jackson had secured a belaying-pin and almost reached him, when he found himself looking into the bore of a pistol held by the shipping-master.

"Now, stop this," said the latter, firmly; "stop it right here, Mr. Jackson. These men are under my care till you've signed my receipt. After that you can do as you like; but if you touch one of them before you sign, I'll have you up 'fore the commissioner. And you fellers," he said over his shoulder, "you keep still and be civil till I'm rid of you. I've used you well, got your berths, and charged you nothin'. All I wanted was to get Cappen Benson the right kind of a crew."

"Let's see that receipt," snarled the mate. "Put that gun up, too, or I'll show you one of my own. I'll tend to your good men when you get ashore." He glared at the quiescent Bigpig, and followed the shipping-master—who still held his

pistol ready, however—over to the rail, where the receipt was produced and signed.

"Away you go, now," said the mate; "you and your gun. Get over the side."

The shipping-master did not answer until he had scrambled down to the waiting tug and around to the far side of her deck-house. There, ready to dodge, he looked up at the mate with a triumphant grin on his shrewd face, and called:

"Say, Mr. Jackson, 'member the old bark *Fair Wind* ten years ago, and the ordinary seaman you triced up and skinned alive with a deck-scraper? D' you 'member, curse you? 'Member breakin' the same boy's arm with a heaver? You do, don't you? I'm him. 'Member me sayin' I'd get square?"

He stepped back to avoid the whirling belaying-pin sent by the mate, which, rebounding, only smashed a window in the pilot-house. Then, amid an exchange of blasphemous disapproval between Mr. Jackson and the tug captain, and derisive jeers from the shipping-master—who also averred that Mr. Jackson ought to be shot, but was not worth hanging for—the tug gathered in her lines and steamed away.

Wrathful of soul, Mr. Jackson turned to the men on the deck. They had changed their position; they were now close to the fife-rail at the mainmast, surrounding Bigpig Monahan (for by their names we must know them), who, with an injured expression of face, was shedding outer garments and voicing his opinion of Mr. Jackson, which the others answered by nods and encouraging words. He had dropped

a pair of starched cuffs over a belaying-pin, and was rolling up his shirt-sleeve, showing an arm as large as a small man's leg, and the mate was just about to interrupt the discourse, when the second mate called his name. Turning, he beheld him beckoning violently from the cabin companionway, and joined him.

"Got your gun, Mr. Jackson?" asked the second officer, anxiously, as he drew him within the door. "I started for mine when the shippin'-master pulled. I can't make that crowd out; but they're lookin' for fight, that's plain. When you were at the rail they were sayin': 'Soak him, Bigpig.' 'Paste him, Bigpig.' 'Put a head on him.' They might be a lot o' prize-fighters."

Mr. Becker was not afraid; his position and duties forbade it. He was simply human, and confronted with a new problem.

"Don't care a rap what they are," answered the mate, who was sufficiently warmed up to welcome any problem. "They'll get fight enough. We'll overhaul their dunnage first for whisky and knives, then turn them to. Come on—I'm heeled."

They stepped out and advanced to the capstan amidships, each with a hand in his trousers pocket.

"Pile those bags against the capstan here, and go foward," ordered the mate, in his most officer-like tone.

"Go to the devil," they answered. "What for?—they're our bags, not yours. Who in Sam Hill are you, anyhow? What are you? You talk like a p'liceman."

Before this irreverence could be replied to Bigpig Monahan advanced.

"Look here, old horse," he said; "I don't know whether you're captain or mate, or owner or cook; and I don't care, either. You had somethin' to say 'bout my eyes just now. Nature made my eyes, and I can't help how they look; but I don't allow any big bull-heads to make remarks 'bout 'em. You're spoilin' for somethin'. Put up your hands." He threw himself into an aggressive attitude, one mighty fist within six inches of Mr. Jackson's face.

"Go forrard," roared the officer, his gray eyes sparkling; "forrard, all o' you!"

"We'll settle this; then we'll go forrard. There'll be fair play; these men'll see to that. You'll only have me to handle. Put up."

Mr. Jackson did not "put up." He repeated again his order to go forward, and was struck on the nose—not a hard blow; just a preliminary tap, which started blood. He immediately drew his pistol and shot the man, who fell with a groan.

An expression of shock and horror over-spread every face among the crew, and they surged back, away from that murderous pistol. A momentary hesitance followed, then horror gave way to furious rage, and carnage began. Coats and vests were flung off, belaying-pins and capstan-bars seized; inarticulate, half-uttered imprecations punctuated by pistol reports drowned the storm of abuse with which the mates justified the shot, and two distinct bands of men swayed and zig-zagged about the deck, the center of each

an officer fighting according to his lights—shooting as he could between blows of fists and clubs. Then the smoke of battle thinned, and two men with sore heads and bleeding faces retreated painfully and hurriedly to the cabin, followed by snarling maledictions and threats.

It was hardly a victory for either side. The pistols were empty and the fight taken out of the mates for a time; and on the deck lay three moaning men, while two others clung to the fife-rail, draining blood from limp, hanging arms. But eleven sound and angry men were left—and the officers had more ammunition. They entered their rooms, mopped their faces with wet towels, reloaded the firearms, pocketed the remaining cartridges, and returned to the deck, the mate carrying a small ensign.

"We'll run it up to the main, Becker," he said thickly—for he suffered—ignoring in his excitement the etiquette of the quarter-deck.

"Aye, aye," said the other, equally unmindful of his breeding. "Will we go for 'em again?" The problem had defined itself to Mr. Becker. These men would fight, but not shoot.

"No, no," answered the mate; "not unless they go for us and it's self-defense. They're not sailors—they don't know where they are. We don't want to get into trouble. Sailors don't act that way. We'll wait for the captain or the police." Which, interpreted, and plus the slight shade of anxiety showing in his disfigured face, meant that Mr. Jackson was confronted with a new phase of the problem: as to how much more unsafe it might be to shoot down, on the deck of a ship,

men who did not know where they were, than to shoot down sailors who did. So, while the uninjured men were assisting the wounded five into the forecastle, the police flag was run up to the main-truck, and the two mates retired to the poop to wait and watch.

In a few moments the eleven men came aft in a body, empty-handed, however, and evidently with no present hostile intention: they had merely come for their clothes. But that dunnage had not been searched; and in it might be all sorts of dangerous weapons and equally dangerous whisky, the possession of which could bring an unpleasant solution to the problem. So Mr. Jackson and Mr. Becker leveled their pistols over the poop-rail, and the chief mate roared: "Let those things alone—let 'em alone, or we'll drop some more o' you."

The men halted, hesitated, and sullenly returned to the forecastle.

"Guess they've had enough," said Mr. Becker, jubilantly.

"Don't fool yourself. They're not used to blood-letting, that's all. If it wasn't for my wife and the kids I'd lower the dinghy and jump her; and it isn't them I'd run from, either. As it is, I've half a mind to haul down the flag, and let the old man settle it. Steward," he called to a mild-faced man who had been flitting from galley to cabin, unmindful of the disturbance, "go foward and find out how bad those fellows are hurt. Don't say I sent you, though."

The steward obeyed, and returned with the information that two men had broken arms, two flesh-wounds in the legs,

and one—the big man—suffered from a ragged hole through the shoulder. All were stretched out in bedless bunks, unwilling to move. He had been asked numerous questions by the others—as to where the ship was bound, who the men were who had shot them, why there was no bedding in the forecastle, the captain's whereabouts, and the possibility of getting ashore to swear out warrants. He had also been asked for bandages and hot water, which he requested permission to supply, as the wounded men were suffering greatly. This permission was refused, and the slight—very slight—nautical flavor to the queries, and the hopeful condition of the stricken ones, decided Mr. Jackson to leave the police flag at the masthead.

When dinner was served in the cabin, and Mr. Jackson sat down before a savory roast, leaving Mr. Becker on deck to watch, the steward imparted the additional information that the men forward expected to eat in the cabin.

"Hang it!" he mused; "they can't be sailor-men."

Then Mr. Becker reached his head down the skylight, and said: "Raisin' the devil with the cook, sir—dragged him out o' the galley into the forecastle."

"Are they coming aft?"

"No, sir."

"All right. Watch out."

The mate went on eating, and the steward hurried forward to learn the fate of his assistant. He did not return until

Mr. Jackson was about to leave the cabin. Then he came, with a wry face and disgust in his soul, complaining that he had been seized, hustled into the fore-castle, and compelled, with the Chinese cook, to eat of the salt beef and pea-soup prepared for the men, which lay untouched by them. In spite of his aches and trouble of mind, Mr. Jackson was moved to a feeble grin.

"Takes a sailor or a hog to eat it, hey, Steward?" he said.

He relieved Mr. Becker, who ate his dinner hurriedly, as became a good second mate, and the two resumed their watch on the poop, noticing that the cook was jabbering Chinese protest in the galley, and that the men had climbed to the topgallant-fore-castle—also watching, and occasionally waving futile signals to passing tugs or small sailing-craft. They, too, might have welcomed the police boat.

But, either because the *Almena* lay too far over on the Jersey flats for the flag to be noticed, or because harbor police share the fallibility of their shore brethren in being elsewhere when wanted, no shiny black steamer with blue-coated guard appeared to investigate the trouble, and it was well on toward three o'clock before a tug left the beaten track to the eastward and steamed over to the ship. The officers took her lines as she came alongside, and two men climbed the side-ladder—one, a Sandy Hook pilot, who need not be described; the other, the captain of the ship.

Captain Benson, in manner and appearance, was as superior to the smooth-shaven and manly-looking Mr. Jackson as the latter was to the misformed, hairy, and brutal second mate. With his fashionably cut clothing,

steady blue eye, and refined features, he could have been taken for an easy-going club-man or educated army officer rather than the master of a working-craft. Yet there was no lack of seamanly decision in the leap he made from the rail to the deck, or in the tone of his voice as he demanded:

"What's the police flag up for, Mr. Jackson?"

"Mutiny, sir. They started in to lick me 'fore turning to, and we've shot five, but none of them fatally."

"Lower that flag—at once."

Mr. Becker obeyed this order, and as the flag fluttered down the captain received an account of the crew's misdoing from the mate. He stepped into his cabin, and returning with a double-barreled shot-gun, leaned it against the booby-hatch, and said quietly: "Call all hands aft who can come."

Mr. Jackson delivered the order in a roar, and the eleven men forward, who had been watching the newcomers from the fore-castle-deck, straggled aft and clustered near the capstan, all of them hatless and coatless, shivering palpably in the keen December air. With no flinching of their eyes, they stared at Captain Benson and the pilot.

"Now, men," said the captain, "what's this trouble about? What's the matter?"

"Are you the captain here?" asked a red-haired, Roman-nosed man, as he stepped out of the group. "There's matter enough. We ship for a run down to Rio Janeiro and back in a big schooner; and here we're put aboard a square-rigged

craft, that we don't know anything about, bound for Callao, and 'fore we're here ten minutes we're howled at and shot. Bigpig Monahan thinks he's goin' to die; he's bleedin'—they're all bleedin', like stuck pigs. Sorry Welch and Turkey Twain ha' got broken arms, and Jump Black and Ghost O'Brien got it in the legs and can't stand up. What kind o' work is this, anyhow?"

"That's perfectly right. You were shot for assaulting my officers. Do you call yourselves able seamen, and say you know nothing about square-rigged craft?"

"We're able seamen on the Lakes. We can get along in schooners. That's what we came down for."

Captain Benson's lips puckered, and he whistled softly. "The Lakes," he said—"lake sailors. What part of the Lakes?"

"Oswego. We're all union men."

The captain took a turn or two along the deck, then faced them, and said: "Men, I've been fooled as well as you. I would not have an Oswego sailor aboard my ship—much less a whole crew of them. You may know your work up there, but are almost useless here until you learn. Although I paid five dollars a man for you, I'd put you ashore and ship a new crew were it not for the fact that five wounded men going out of this ship requires explanations, which would delay my sailing and incur expense to my owners. However, I give you the choice—to go to sea, and learn your work under the mates, or go to jail as mutineers; for to protect my officers I must prosecute you all."

"S'pose we do neither?"

"You will probably be shot—to the last resisting man—either by us or the harbor police. You are up against the law."

They looked at each other with varying expressions on their faces; then one asked: "What about the bunks in the forecastle? There's no bedding."

"If you failed to bring your own, you will sleep on the bunk-boards without it."

"And that swill the Chinaman cooked at dinner-time—what about that?"

"You will get the allowance of provisions provided by law—no more. And you will eat it in the forecastle. Also, if you have neglected to bring pots, pans, and spoons, you will very likely eat it with your fingers. This is not a lake vessel, where sailors eat at the cabin table, with knives and forks. Decide this matter quickly."

The captain began pacing the deck, and the listening pilot stepped forward, and said kindly: "Take my advice, boys, and go along. You're in for it if you don't."

They thanked him with their eyes for the sympathy, conferred together for a few moments, then their spokesman called out: "We'll leave it to the fellers forrard, captain"; and forward they trooped. In five minutes they were back, with resolution in their faces.

"We'll go, captain," their leader said. "Bigpig can't be moved 'thout killin' him, and says if he lives he'll follow your mate to hell but he'll pay him back; and the others talk the same; and we'll stand by 'em—we'll square up this day's work."

Captain Benson brought his walk to a stop close to the shotgun. "Very well, that is your declaration," he said, his voice dropping the conversational tone he had assumed, and taking on one more in accordance with his position; "now I will deliver mine. We sail at once for Callao and back to an American port of discharge. You know your wages—fourteen dollars a month. I am master of this ship, responsible to my owners and the law for the lives of all on board. And this responsibility includes the right to take the life of a mutineer. You have been such, but I waive the charge considering your ignorance of salt-water custom and your agreement to start anew. The law defines your allowance of food, but not your duties or your working- and sleeping-time. That is left to the discretion of your captain and officers. Precedent—the decision of the courts—has decided the privilege of a captain or officer to punish insolence or lack of respect from a sailor with a blow—of a fist or missile; but, understand me now, a return of the blow makes that man a mutineer, and his prompt killing is justified by the law of the land. Is this plain to you? You are here to answer and obey orders respectfully, adding the word 'sir' to each response; you are never to go to windward of an officer, or address him by name without the prefix 'Mr.'; and you are to work civilly and faithfully, resenting nothing said to you until you are discharged in an American port at the end of the voyage. A failure in this will bring you prompt punishment; and resentment of this punishment on your part will bring—death. Mr. Jackson," he concluded, turning to his first officer,

"overhaul their dunnage, turn them to, and man the windlass."

A man—the bald-headed Sinful Peck—sprang forward; but his face was not cherubic now. His blue eyes blazed with emotion much in keeping with his sobriquet; and, raising his hand, the nervously crooking fingers of which made it almost a fist, he said, in a voice explosively strident:

"That's all right. That's *your* say. You've described the condition o' nigger slaves, not American voters. And I'll tell you one thing, right here—I'm a free-born citizen. I know my work, and can do it, without bein' cursed and abused; and if you or your mates rub my fur the wrong way I'm goin' to claw back; and if I'm shot, you want to shoot sure; for if you don't, I'll kill that man, if I have to lash my knife to a broom-handle, and prod him through his window when he's asleep."

But alas for Sinful Peck! He had barely finished his defiance when he fell like a log under the impact of the big mate's fist; then, while the pilot, turning his back on the painful scene, walked aft, nodding and shaking his head, and the captain's strong language and leveled shot-gun induced the men to an agitated acquiescence, the two officers kicked and stamped upon the little man until consciousness left him. Before he recovered he had been ironed to a stanchion in the 'tween-deck, and entered in the captain's official log for threatening life. And by this time the dunnage had been searched, a few sheath-knives tossed overboard, and the remaining ten men were moodily heaving in the chain.

And so, with a crippled crew of schooner sailors, the square-rigger *Almena* was towed to sea, smoldering rebellion in one end of her, the power of the law in the other—murder in the heart of every man on board.

PART II

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Five months later the *Almena* lay at an outer mooring-buoy in Callao Roads, again ready for sea, but waiting. With her at the anchorage were representatives of most of the maritime nations. English ships and barks with painted ports and spider-web braces, high-sided, square-sterned American half-clippers, clumsy, square-bowed "Dutchmen," coasting-brigs of any nation, lumber-schooners from "'Frisco," hide-carriers from Valparaiso, pearl-boats and fishermen, and even a couple of homesick Malay proas from the west crowded the roadstead; for the guano trade was booming, and Callao prosperous. Nearly every type of craft known to sailors was there; but the postman and the policeman of the seas—the coastwise mail-steamer and the heavily sparred man-of-war—were conspicuously absent. The Pacific Mail boat would not arrive for a week, and the last cruiser had departed two days before.

Beyond the faint land- and sea-breeze, there was no wind nor promise of it for several days; and Captain Benson, though properly cleared at the custom-house for New York, was in no hurry, and had taken advantage of the delay to give a dinner to some captains with whom he had fraternized on shore. "I've a first-rate steward," he had told

them, "and I'll treat you well; and I've the best-trained crew that ever went to sea. Come, all of you, and bring your first officers. I want to give you an object-lesson on the influence of matter over mind that you can't learn in the books."

So they came, at half-past eleven, in their own ships' dinghies, which were sent back with orders to return at nightfall—six big-fisted, more or less fat captains, and six big-fisted, beetle-browed, and embarrassed chief mates. As they climbed the gangway they were met and welcomed by Captain Benson, who led them to the poop, the only dry and clean part of the ship; for the *Almena's* crew were holystoning the main-deck, and as this operation consists in grinding off the oiled surface of the planks with sandstone, the resulting slime of sand, oily wood-pulp, and salt water made walking unpleasant, as well as being very hard on polished shoe-leather. But in this filthy slime the men were on their knees, working the six-inch blocks of stone, technically called "bibles," back and forth with about the speed and motion of an energetic woman over a wash-board.

The mates also were working. With legs clad in long rubber boots, they filled buckets at the deck-pump and scattered water around where needed, occasionally throwing the whole bucketful at a doubtful spot on the deck to expose it to criticism. As the visitors lined up against the monkey-rail and looked down on the scene, Mr. Becker launched such a bucketful as only a second mate can—and a man who happened to be in the way was rolled over by the unexpected impact. He gasped a little louder than might have been necessary, and the wasting of the bucketful of

water having forced Mr. Becker to make an extra trip to the pump, the officer was duly incensed.

"Get out o' the way, there," he bawled, eying the man sternly. "What are you gruntin' at? A little water won't hurt you—soap neither."

He went to the pump for more water, and the man crawled back to his holystone. It was Bigpig Monahan, hollow-eyed and thin, slow in his voluntary movements; minus his look of injury, too, as though he might have welcomed the bowling over as a momentary respite for his aching muscles.

Now and then, when the officers' faces were partly turned, a man would stop, rise erect on his knees, and bend backward. A man may work a holystone much longer and press it much harder on the deck for these occasional stretchings of contracted tissue; but the two mates chose to ignore this physiological fact, and a moment later, a little man, caught in the act by Mr. Jackson, was also rolled over on his back, not by a bucket of water, but by the boot of the mate, who uttered words suitable to the occasion, and held his hand in his pocket until the little man, grinning with rage, had resumed his work.

"There," said Captain Benson to his guests on the poop; "see that little devil! See him show his teeth! That is Mr. Sinful Peck. I've had him in irons with a broken head five times, and the log is full of him. I towed him over the stern running down the trades to take the cussedness out of him, and if he had not been born for higher things, he'd have drowned. He was absolutely unconquerable until I found him telling his beads one time in irons and took them away from

him. Now to get an occasional chance at them he is fairly quiet."

"So this is your trained crew, is it, captain?" said a grizzled old skipper of the party. "What ails that fellow down in the scuppers with a prayer-book?" He pointed to a man who with one hand was rubbing a small holystone in a corner where a large one would not go.

"Ran foul of the big end of a handspike," answered Captain Benson, quietly; "he'll carry his arm in splints all the way home, I think. His name is Gunner Meagher. I don't know how they got their names, but they signed them and will answer to them. They are unique. Look at that outlaw down there by the bitts. That is Poop-deck Cahill. Looks like a prize-fighter, doesn't he? But the steward tells me that he was educated for the priesthood, and fell by the wayside. That one close to the hatch—the one with the red head and hang-dog jib—is Seldom Helward. He was shot off the cro'-jack yard; he fell into the lee clew of the cro'-jack, so we pulled him in."

"What did he do, captain?" asked the grizzled skipper.

"Threw a marlinespike at the mate."

"What made him throw it?"

"Never asked. I suppose he objected to something said to him."

"Ought to ha' killed him on the yard. Are they all of a kind?"