

CHAPTER XXVI

Containing A Pennyweight Of Philosophy

Still many days passed and the Parki yet floated. The little flying-fish got used to her familiar, loitering hull; and like swallows building their nests in quiet old trees, they spawned in the great green barnacles that clung to her sides.

The calmer the sea, the more the barnacles grow. In the tropical Pacific, but a few weeks suffice thus to encase your craft in shell armor. Vast bunches adhere to the very cutwater, and if not stricken off, much impede the ship's sailing. And, at intervals, this clearing away of barnacles was one of Annatoo's occupations. For be it known, that, like most termagants, the dame was tidy at times, though capriciously; loving cleanliness by fits and starts. Wherefore, these barnacles oftentimes troubled her; and with a long pole she would go about, brushing them aside. It beguiled the weary hours, if nothing more; and then she would return to her beads and her trinkets; telling them all over again; murmuring forth her devotions, and marking whether Samoa had been pilfering from her store.

Now, the escape from the shoal did much once again to heal the differences of the good lady and her spouse. And keeping house, as they did, all alone by themselves, in that lonely craft, a marvel it is, that they should ever have quarreled. And then to divorce, and

yet dwell in the same tenement, was only aggravating the evil. So Belisarius and Antonina again came together. But now, grown wise by experience, they neither loved over-keenly, nor hated; but took things as they were; found themselves joined, without hope of a sundering, and did what they could to make a match of the mate. Annatoo concluded that Samoa was not wholly to be enslaved; and Samoa thought best to wink at Annatoo's foibles, and let her purloin when she pleased.

But as in many cases, all this philosophy about wedlock is not proof against the perpetual contact of the parties concerned; and as it is far better to revive the old days of courtship, when men's mouths are honey-combs: and, to make them still sweeter, the ladies the bees which there store their sweets; when fathomless raptures glimmer far down in the lover's fond eye; and best of all, when visits are alternated by absence: so, like my dignified lord duke and his duchess, Samoa and Annatoo, man and wife, dwelling in the same house, still kept up their separate quarters. Marlborough visiting Sarah; and Sarah, Marlborough, whenever the humor suggested.