

III. HE ARRIVES IN TOWN

From the boat's bow, I jumped ashore, before she was secured, and following my brother's directions, proceeded across the town toward St. John's Park, to the house of a college friend of his, for whom I had a letter.

It was a long walk; and I stepped in at a sort of grocery to get a drink of water, where some six or eight rough looking fellows were playing dominoes upon the counter, seated upon cheese boxes. They winked, and asked what sort of sport I had had gunning on such a rainy day, but I only gulped down my water and stalked off.

Dripping like a seal, I at last grounded arms at the doorway of my brother's friend, rang the bell and inquired for him.

"What do you want?" said the servant, eying me as if I were a housebreaker.

"I want to see your lord and master; show me into the parlor."

Upon this my host himself happened to make his appearance, and seeing who I was, opened his hand and heart to me at once, and drew me to his fireside; he had received a letter from my brother, and had expected me that day.

The family were at tea; the fragrant herb filled the room with its aroma; the brown toast was odoriferous; and everything pleasant and charming. After a temporary warming, I was shown to a room, where I changed my wet dress, and returning to the table, found that the interval had been well improved by my hostess; a meal for a traveler was spread and I laid into it sturdily. Every mouthful pushed the devil that had been tormenting me all day farther and farther out of me, till at last I entirely ejected him with three successive bowls of Bohea.

Magic of kind words, and kind deeds, and good tea! That night I went to bed thinking the world pretty tolerable, after all; and I could hardly believe that I had really acted that morning as I had, for I was naturally of an easy and forbearing disposition; though when such a disposition is temporarily roused, it is perhaps worse than a cannibal's.

Next day, my brother's friend, whom I choose to call Mr. Jones, accompanied me down to the docks among the shipping, in order to get me a place. After a good deal of searching we lighted upon a ship for Liverpool, and found the captain in the cabin; which was a very handsome one, lined with mahogany and maple; and the steward, an elegant looking mulatto in a gorgeous turban, was setting out on a sort of sideboard some dinner service which looked like silver, but it was only Britannia ware highly polished.

As soon as I clapped my eye on the captain, I thought myself he was just the captain to suit me. He was a fine looking man, about forty, splendidly dressed, with very black whiskers, and very white teeth, and what I took to be a free, frank look out of a large hazel eye. I liked him amazingly. He was promenading up and down the cabin, humming some brisk air to himself when we entered.

"Good morning, sir," said my friend.

"Good morning, good morning, sir," said the captain. "Steward, chairs for the gentlemen."

"Oh! never mind, sir," said Mr. Jones, rather taken aback by his extreme civility. "I merely called to see whether you want a fine young lad to go to sea with you. Here he is; he has long wanted to be a sailor; and his friends have at last concluded to let him go for one voyage, and see how he likes it."

"Ah! indeed!" said the captain, blandly, and looking where I stood.

"He's a fine fellow; I like him. So you want to be a sailor, my boy, do you?" added he, affectionately patting my head. "It's a hard We, though; a hard life."

But when I looked round at his comfortable, and almost luxurious cabin, and then at his handsome care-free face, I thought he was only trying to frighten me, and I answered, "Well, sir, I am ready to try it."

"I hope he's a country lad, sir," said the captain to my friend, "these city boys are sometimes hard cases."

"Oh! yes, he's from the country," was the reply, "and of a highly respectable family; his great-uncle died a Senator."

"But his great-uncle don't want to go to sea too?" said the captain, looking funny.

"Oh! no, oh, no!--Ha! ha!"

"Ha! ha!" echoed the captain.

A fine funny gentleman, thought I, not much fancying, however, his levity concerning my great-uncle, he'll be cracking his jokes the whole voyage; and so I afterward said to one of the riggers on board; but he bade me look out, that he did not crack my head.

"Well, my lad," said the captain, "I suppose you know we haven't any pastures and cows on board; you can't get any milk at sea, you know."

"Oh! I know all about that, sir; my father has crossed the ocean, if I haven't."

"Yes," cried my friend, "his father, a gentleman of one of the first

families in America, crossed the Atlantic several times on important business."

"Embassador extraordinary?" said the captain, looking funny again.

"Oh! no, he was a wealthy merchant."

"Ah! indeed;" said the captain, looking grave and bland again, "then this fine lad is the son of a gentleman?"

"Certainly," said my friend, "and he's only going to sea for the humor of it; they want to send him on his travels with a tutor, but he will go to sea as a sailor."

The fact was, that my young friend (for he was only about twenty-five) was not a very wise man; and this was a huge fib, which out of the kindness of his heart, he told in my behalf, for the purpose of creating a profound respect for me in the eyes of my future lord.

Upon being apprized, that I had willfully forborne taking the grand tour with a tutor, in order to put my hand in a tar-bucket, the handsome captain looked ten times more funny than ever; and said that he himself would be my tutor, and take me on my travels, and pay for the privilege.

"Ah!" said my friend, "that reminds me of business. Pray, captain, how much do you generally pay a handsome young fellow like this?"

"Well," said the captain, looking grave and profound, "we are not so particular about beauty, and we never give more than three dollars to a green lad like Wellingborough here, that's your name, my boy? Wellingborough Redburn!--Upon my soul, a fine sounding name."

"Why, captain," said Mr. Jones, quickly interrupting him, "that won't pay for his clothing."

"But you know his highly respectable and wealthy relations will doubtless see to all that," replied the captain, with his funny look again.

"Oh! yes, I forgot that," said Mr. Jones, looking rather foolish. "His friends will of course see to that."

"Of course," said the captain smiling.

"Of course," repeated Mr. Jones, looking ruefully at the patch on my pantaloons, which just then I endeavored to hide with the skirt of my shooting-jacket.

"You are quite a sportsman I see," said the captain, eying the great buttons on my coat, upon each of which was a carved fox.

Upon this my benevolent friend thought that here was a grand opportunity

to befriend me.

"Yes, he's quite a sportsman," said he, "he's got a very valuable fowling-piece at home, perhaps you would like to purchase it, captain, to shoot gulls with at sea? It's cheap."

"Oh! no, he had better leave it with his relations," said the captain, "so that he can go hunting again when he returns from England."

"Yes, perhaps that would be better, after all," said my friend, pretending to fall into a profound musing, involving all sides of the matter in hand. "Well, then, captain, you can only give the boy three dollars a month, you say?"

"Only three dollars a month," said the captain.

"And I believe," said my friend, "that you generally give something in advance, do you not?"

"Yes, that is sometimes the custom at the shipping offices," said the captain, with a bow, "but in this case, as the boy has rich relations, there will be no need of that, you know."

And thus, by his ill-advised, but well-meaning hints concerning the respectability of my paternity, and the immense wealth of my relations, did this really honest-hearted but foolish friend of mine, prevent me

from getting three dollars in advance, which I greatly needed. However, I said nothing, though I thought the more; and particularly, how that it would have been much better for me, to have gone on board alone, accosted the captain on my own account, and told him the plain truth. Poor people make a very poor business of it when they try to seem rich.

The arrangement being concluded, we bade the captain good morning; and as we were about leaving the cabin, he smiled again, and said, "Well, Redburn, my boy, you won't get home-sick before you sail, because that will make you very sea-sick when you get to sea."

And with that he smiled very pleasantly, and bowed two or three times, and told the steward to open the cabin-door, which the steward did with a peculiar sort of grin on his face, and a slanting glance at my shooting-jacket. And so we left.