

deceiver ashore; addicted to every youthful indiscretion. He would read over to him the story of Joseph and Potiphar's wife; and hold Joseph up to him as a young man of excellent principles, whom he ought to imitate, and not be guilty of his indiscretion any more. And Lavender would look serious, and say that he knew it was all true--he was a wicked youth, he knew it--he had broken a good many hearts, and many eyes were weeping for him even then, both in New York, and Liverpool, and London, and Havre. But how could he help it? He hadn't made his handsome face, and fine head of hair, and graceful figure. It was not he, but the others, that were to blame; for his bewitching person turned all heads and subdued all hearts, wherever he went. And then he would look very serious and penitent, and go up to the little glass, and pass his hands through his hair, and see how his whiskers were coming on.

XVIII. HE ENDEAVORS TO IMPROVE HIS MIND; AND TELLS OF ONE BLUNT AND HIS

DREAM BOOK

On the Sunday afternoon I spoke of, it was my watch below, and I thought I would spend it profitably, in improving my mind.

My bunk was an upper one; and right over the head of it was a bull's-

eye, or circular piece of thick ground glass, inserted into the deck to give light. It was a dull, dubious light, though; and I often found myself looking up anxiously to see whether the bull's-eye had not suddenly been put out; for whenever any one trod on it, in walking the deck, it was momentarily quenched; and what was still worse, sometimes a coil of rope would be thrown down on it, and stay there till I dressed myself and went up to remove it--a kind of interruption to my studies which annoyed me very much, when diligently occupied in reading.

However, I was glad of any light at all, down in that gloomy hole, where we burrowed like rabbits in a warren; and it was the happiest time I had, when all my messmates were asleep, and I could lie on my back, during a forenoon watch below, and read in comparative quiet and seclusion.

I had already read two books loaned to me by Max, to whose share they had fallen, in dividing the effects of the sailor who had jumped overboard. One was an account of Shipwrecks and Disasters at Sea, and the other was a large black volume, with Delirium Tremens in great gilt letters on the back. This proved to be a popular treatise on the subject of that disease; and I remembered seeing several copies in the sailor book-stalls about Fulton Market, and along South-street, in New York.

But this Sunday I got out a book, from which I expected to reap great profit and sound instruction. It had been presented to me by Mr. Jones, who had quite a library, and took down this book from a top shelf, where

it lay very dusty. When he gave it to me, he said, that although I was going to sea, I must not forget the importance of a good education; and that there was hardly any situation in life, however humble and depressed, or dark and gloomy, but one might find leisure in it to store his mind, and build himself up in the exact sciences. And he added, that though it did look rather unfavorable for my future prospects, to be going to sea as a common sailor so early in life; yet, it would no doubt turn out for my benefit in the end; and, at any rate, if I would only take good care of myself, would give me a sound constitution, if nothing more; and that was not to be undervalued, for how many very rich men would give all their bonds and mortgages for my boyish robustness.

He added, that I need not expect any light, trivial work, that was merely entertaining, and nothing more; but here I would find entertainment and edification beautifully and harmoniously combined; and though, at first, I might possibly find it dull, yet, if I perused the book thoroughly, it would soon discover hidden charms and unforeseen attractions; besides teaching me, perhaps, the true way to retrieve the poverty of my family, and again make them all well-to-do in the world.

Saying this, he handed it to me, and I blew the dust off, and looked at the back: "Smith's Wealth of Nations." This not satisfying me, I glanced at the title page, and found it was an "Enquiry into the Nature and Causes" of the alleged wealth of nations. But happening to look further down, I caught sight of "Aberdeen," where the book was printed; and thinking that any thing from Scotland, a foreign country, must prove

some way or other pleasing to me, I thanked Mr. Jones very kindly, and promised to peruse the volume carefully.

So, now, lying in my bunk, I began the book methodically, at page number one, resolved not to permit a few flying glimpses into it, taken previously, to prevent me from making regular approaches to the gist and body of the book, where I fancied lay something like the philosopher's stone, a secret talisman, which would transmute even pitch and tar to silver and gold.

Pleasant, though vague visions of future opulence floated before me, as I commenced the first chapter, entitled "Of the causes of improvement in the productive power of labor." Dry as crackers and cheese, to be sure; and the chapter itself was not much better. But this was only getting initiated; and if I read on, the grand secret would be opened to me. So I read on and on, about "wages and profits of labor," without getting any profits myself for my pains in perusing it.

Dryer and dryer; the very leaves smelt of saw-dust; till at last I drank some water, and went at it again. But soon I had to give it up for lost work; and thought that the old backgammon board, we had at home, lettered on the back, "The History of Rome" was quite as full of matter, and a great deal more entertaining. I wondered whether Mr. Jones had ever read the volume himself; and could not help remembering, that he had to get on a chair when he reached it down from its dusty shelf; that certainly looked suspicious.

The best reading was on the fly leaves; and, on turning them over, I lighted upon some half effaced pencil-marks to the following effect: "Jonathan Jones, from his particular friend Daniel Dods, 1798." So it must have originally belonged to Mr. Jones' father; and I wondered whether he had ever read it; or, indeed, whether any body had ever read it, even the author himself; but then authors, they say, never read their own books; writing them, being enough in all conscience.

At length I fell asleep, with the volume in my hand; and never slept so sound before; after that, I used to wrap my jacket round it, and use it for a pillow; for which purpose it answered very well; only I sometimes waked up feeling dull and stupid; but of course the book could not have been the cause of that.

And now I am talking of books, I must tell of Jack Blunt the sailor, and his Dream Book.

Jackson, who seemed to know every thing about all parts of the world, used to tell Jack in reproach, that he was an Irish Cockney. By which I understood, that he was an Irishman born, but had graduated in London, somewhere about Radcliffe Highway; but he had no sort of brogue that I could hear.

He was a curious looking fellow, about twenty-five years old, as I should judge; but to look at his back, you would have taken him for a

little old man. His arms and legs were very large, round, short, and stumpy; so that when he had on his great monkey-jacket, and sou'west cap flapping in his face, and his sea boots drawn up to his knees, he looked like a fat porpoise, standing on end. He had a round face, too, like a walrus; and with about the same expression, half human and half indescribable. He was, upon the whole, a good-natured fellow, and a little given to looking at sea-life romantically; singing songs about susceptible mermaids who fell in love with handsome young oyster boys and gallant fishermen. And he had a sad story about a man-of-war's-man who broke his heart at Portsmouth during the late war, and threw away his life recklessly at one of the quarter-deck cannonades, in the battle between the *Guerriere* and *Constitution*; and another incomprehensible story about a sort of fairy sea-queen, who used to be dunning a sea-captain all the time for his autograph to boil in some eel soup, for a spell against the scurvy.

He believed in all kinds of witch-work and magic; and had some wild Irish words he used to mutter over during a calm for a fair wind.

And he frequently related his interviews in Liverpool with a fortune-teller, an old negro woman by the name of De Squak, whose house was much frequented by sailors; and how she had two black cats, with remarkably green eyes, and nightcaps on their heads, solemnly seated on a claw-footed table near the old goblin; when she felt his pulse, to tell what was going to befall him.

This Blunt had a large head of hair, very thick and bushy; but from some cause or other, it was rapidly turning gray; and in its transition state made him look as if he wore a shako of badger skin.

The phenomenon of gray hairs on a young head, had perplexed and confounded this Blunt to such a degree that he at last came to the conclusion it must be the result of the black art, wrought upon him by an enemy; and that enemy, he opined, was an old sailor landlord in Marseilles, whom he had once seriously offended, by knocking him down in a fray.

So while in New York, finding his hair growing grayer and grayer, and all his friends, the ladies and others, laughing at him, and calling him an old man with one foot in the grave, he slipt out one night to an apothecary's, stated his case, and wanted to know what could be done for him.

The apothecary immediately gave him a pint bottle of something he called "Trafalgar Oil for restoring the hair," price one dollar; and told him that after he had used that bottle, and it did not have the desired effect, he must try bottle No. 2, called "Balm of Paradise, or the Elixir of the Battle of Copenhagen." These high-sounding naval names delighted Blunt, and he had no doubt there must be virtue in them.

I saw both bottles; and on one of them was an engraving, representing a young man, presumed to be gray-headed, standing in his night-dress in

the middle of his chamber, and with closed eyes applying the Elixir to his head, with both hands; while on the bed adjacent stood a large bottle, conspicuously labeled, "Balm of Paradise." It seemed from the text, that this gray-headed young man was so smitten with his hair-oil, and was so thoroughly persuaded of its virtues, that he had got out of bed, even in his sleep; groped into his closet, seized the precious bottle, applied its contents, and then to bed again, getting up in the morning without knowing any thing about it. Which, indeed, was a most mysterious occurrence; and it was still more mysterious, how the engraver came to know an event, of which the actor himself was ignorant, and where there were no bystanders.

Three times in the twenty-four hours, Blunt, while at sea, regularly rubbed in his liniments; but though the first bottle was soon exhausted by his copious applications, and the second half gone, he still stuck to it, that by the time we got to Liverpool, his exertions would be crowned with success. And he was not a little delighted, that this gradual change would be operating while we were at sea; so as not to expose him to the invidious observations of people ashore; on the same principle that dandies go into the country when they purpose raising whiskers. He would often ask his shipmates, whether they noticed any change yet; and if so, how much of a change? And to tell the truth, there was a very great change indeed; for the constant soaking of his hair with oil, operating in conjunction with the neglect of his toilet, and want of a brush and comb, had matted his locks together like a wild horse's mane, and imparted to it a blackish and extremely glossy hue. Besides his

collection of hair-oils, Blunt had also provided himself with several boxes of pills, which he had purchased from a sailor doctor in New York, who by placards stuck on the posts along the wharves, advertised to remain standing at the northeast corner of Catharine Market, every Monday and Friday, between the hours of ten and twelve in the morning, to receive calls from patients, distribute medicines, and give advice gratis.

Whether Blunt thought he had the dyspepsia or not, I can not say; but at breakfast, he always took three pills with his coffee; something as they do in Iowa, when the bilious fever prevails; where, at the boarding-houses, they put a vial of blue pills into the castor, along with the pepper and mustard, and next door to another vial of toothpicks. But they are very ill-bred and unpolished in the western country.

Several times, too, Blunt treated himself to a flowing bumper of horse salts (Glauber salts); for like many other seamen, he never went to sea without a good supply of that luxury. He would frequently, also, take this medicine in a wet jacket, and then go on deck into a rain storm. But this is nothing to other sailors, who at sea will doctor themselves with calomel off Cape Horn, and still remain on duty. And in this connection, some really frightful stories might be told; but I forbear.

For a landsman to take salts as this Blunt did, it would perhaps be the death of him; but at sea the salt air and the salt water prevent you from catching cold so readily as on land; and for my own part, on board

this very ship, being so illy-provided with clothes, I frequently turned into my bunk soaking wet, and turned out again piping hot, and smoking like a roasted sirloin; and yet was never the worse for it; for then, I bore a charmed life of youth and health, and was dagger-proof to bodily ill.

But it is time to tell of the Dream Book. Snugly hidden in one corner of his chest, Blunt had an extraordinary looking pamphlet, with a red cover, marked all over with astrological signs and ciphers, and purporting to be a full and complete treatise on the art of Divination; so that the most simple sailor could teach it to himself.

It also purported to be the selfsame system, by aid of which Napoleon Bonaparte had risen in the world from being a corporal to an emperor. Hence it was entitled the Bonaparte Dream Book; for the magic of it lay in the interpretation of dreams, and their application to the foreseeing of future events; so that all preparatory measures might be taken beforehand; which would be exceedingly convenient, and satisfactory every way, if true. The problems were to be cast by means of figures, in some perplexed and difficult way, which, however, was facilitated by a set of tables in the end of the pamphlet, something like the Logarithm Tables at the end of Bowditch's Navigator.

Now, Blunt revered, adored, and worshiped this Bonaparte Dream Book of his; and was fully persuaded that between those red covers, and in his own dreams, lay all the secrets of futurity. Every morning before taking

his pills, and applying his hair-oils, he would steal out of his bunk before the rest of the watch were awake; take out his pamphlet, and a bit of chalk; and then straddling his chest, begin scratching his oily head to remember his fugitive dreams; marking down strokes on his chest-lid, as if he were casting up his daily accounts.

Though often perplexed and lost in mazes concerning the cabalistic figures in the book, and the chapter of directions to beginners; for he could with difficulty read at all; yet, in the end, if not interrupted, he somehow managed to arrive at a conclusion satisfactory to him. So that, as he generally wore a good-humored expression, no doubt he must have thought, that all his future affairs were working together for the best.

But one night he started us all up in a fright, by springing from his bunk, his eyes ready to start out of his head, and crying, in a husky voice--"Boys! boys! get the benches ready! Quick, quick!"

"What benches?" growled Max-"What's the matter?"

"Benches! benches!" screamed Blunt, without heeding him, "cut down the forests, bear a hand, boys; the Day of Judgment's coming!"

But the next moment, he got quietly into his bunk, and laid still, muttering to himself, he had only been rambling in his sleep.

I did not know exactly what he had meant by his benches; till, shortly after, I overheard two of the sailors debating, whether mankind would stand or sit at the Last Day.

XIX. A NARROW ESCAPE

This Dream Book of Blunt's reminds me of a narrow escape we had, early one morning.

It was the larboard watch's turn to remain below from midnight till four o'clock; and having turned in and slept, Blunt suddenly turned out again about three o'clock, with a wonderful dream in his head; which he was desirous of at once having interpreted.

So he goes to his chest, gets out his tools, and falls to ciphering on the lid. When, all at once, a terrible cry was heard, that routed him and all the rest of us up, and sent the whole ship's company flying on deck in the dark. We did not know what it was; but somehow, among sailors at sea, they seem to know when real danger of any land is at hand, even in their sleep.

When we got on deck, we saw the mate standing on the bowsprit, and