

## CHAPTER LVIII.

### A QUARTER-DECK OFFICER BEFORE THE MAST.

As we were somewhat short-handed while we lay in Rio, we received a small draft of men from a United States sloop of war, whose three years' term of service would expire about the time of our arrival in America.

Under guard of an armed Lieutenant and four midshipmen, they came on board in the afternoon. They were immediately mustered in the starboard gangway, that Mr. Bridewell, our First Lieutenant, might take down their names, and assign them their stations.

They stood in a mute and solemn row; the officer advanced, with his memorandum-book and pencil.

My casual friend, Shakings, the holder, happened to be by at the time. Touching my arm, he said, "White-Jacket, this here reminds me of Sing-Sing, when a draft of fellows in darbies, came on from the State Prison at Auburn for a change of scene like, you know!"

After taking down four or five names, Mr. Bridewell accosted the next man, a rather good-looking person, but, from his haggard cheek and sunken eye, he seemed to have been in the sad habit, all his life, of

sitting up rather late at night; and though all sailors do certainly keep late hours enough--standing watches at midnight--yet there is no small difference between keeping late hours at sea and keeping late hours ashore.

"What's your name?" asked the officer, of this rather rakish-looking recruit.

"Mandeville, sir," said the man, courteously touching his cap. "You must remember me, sir," he added, in a low, confidential tone, strangely dashed with servility; "we sailed together once in the old Macedonian, sir. I wore an epaulet then; we had the same state-room, you know, sir. I'm your old chum, Mandeville, sir," and he again touched his cap.

"I remember an officer by that name," said the First Lieutenant, emphatically, "and I know you, fellow. But I know you henceforth for a common sailor. I can show no favouritism here. If you ever violate the ship's rules, you shall be flogged like any other seaman. I place you in the fore-top; go forward to your duty."

It seemed this Mandeville had entered the Navy when very young, and had risen to be a lieutenant, as he said. But brandy had been his bane. One night, when he had the deck of a line-of-battle ship, in the Mediterranean, he was seized with a fit of mania-a-potu, and being out of his senses for the time, went below and turned into his berth,

leaving the deck without a commanding officer. For this unpardonable offence he was broken.

Having no fortune, and no other profession than the sea, upon his disgrace he entered the merchant-service as a chief mate; but his love of strong drink still pursuing him, he was again cashiered at sea, and degraded before the mast by the Captain. After this, in a state of intoxication, he re-entered the Navy at Pensacola as a common sailor. But all these lessons, so biting-bitter to learn, could not cure him of his sin. He had hardly been a week on board the *Neversink*, when he was found intoxicated with smuggled spirits. They lashed him to the gratings, and ignominiously scourged him under the eye of his old friend and comrade, the First Lieutenant.

This took place while we lay in port, which reminds me of the circumstance, that when punishment is about to be inflicted in harbour, all strangers are ordered ashore; and the sentries at the side have it in strict charge to waive off all boats drawing near.