

CHAPTER LXXXI.

HOW THEY BURY A MAN-OF-WAR'S-MAN AT SEA.

Quarters over in the morning, the boatswain and his four mates stood round the main hatchway, and after giving the usual whistle, made the customary announcement--"All hands bury the dead, ahoy!"

In a man-of-war, every thing, even to a man's funeral and burial, proceeds with the unrelenting promptitude of the martial code. And whether it is all hands bury the dead! or all hands splice the main-brace, the order is given in the same hoarse tones.

Both officers and men assembled in the lee waist, and through that bareheaded crowd the mess-mates of Shenly brought his body to the same gangway where it had thrice winced under the scourge. But there is something in death that ennobles even a pauper's corpse; and the Captain himself stood bareheaded before the remains of a man whom, with his hat on, he had sentenced to the ignominious gratings when alive.

"I am the resurrection and the life!" solemnly began the Chaplain, in full canonicals, the prayer-book in his hand.

"Damn you! off those booms!" roared a boatswain's mate to a crowd of top-men, who had elevated themselves to gain a better view of the scene.

"We commit this body to the deep!" At the word, Shenly's mess-mates tilted the board, and the dead sailor sank in the sea.

"Look aloft," whispered Jack Chase. "See that bird! it is the spirit of Shenly."

Gazing upward, all beheld a snow-white, solitary fowl, which--whence coming no one could tell--had been hovering over the main-mast during the service, and was now sailing far up into the depths of the sky.