

CHAPTER 39. First Night Watch.

Fore-Top.

(STUBB SOLUS, AND MENDING A BRACE.)

Ha! ha! ha! ha! hem! clear my throat!--I've been thinking over it ever since, and that ha, ha's the final consequence. Why so? Because a laugh's the wisest, easiest answer to all that's queer; and come what will, one comfort's always left--that unfailing comfort is, it's all predestinated. I heard not all his talk with Starbuck; but to my poor eye Starbuck then looked something as I the other evening felt. Be sure the old Mogul has fixed him, too. I twigged it, knew it; had had the gift, might readily have prophesied it--for when I clapped my eye upon his skull I saw it. Well, Stubb, WISE Stubb--that's my title--well, Stubb, what of it, Stubb? Here's a carcass. I know not all that may be coming, but be it what it will, I'll go to it laughing. Such a waggish leering as lurks in all your horribles! I feel funny. Fa, la! lirra, skirra! What's my juicy little pear at home doing now? Crying its eyes out?--Giving a party to the last arrived harpooneers, I dare say, gay as a frigate's pennant, and so am I--fa, la! lirra, skirra! Oh--

We'll drink to-night with hearts as light, To love, as gay and fleeting
As bubbles that swim, on the beaker's brim, And break on the lips while
meeting.

A brave stave that--who calls? Mr. Starbuck? Aye, aye, sir--(ASIDE) he's my superior, he has his too, if I'm not mistaken.--Aye, aye, sir, just through with this job--coming.