

I said, for I'd seen the thing tried. 'Golly! yis!' says the nigger; 'leave some bake yam on stone, with little rum in pumpkin—'at's how to do!' 'Very good!' says I; 'well, whatever you've got handy, Dido, lower it down to him, and I daresay he'll clear out by tomorrow.' 'Why, what the dibble, Jack?' says he again, scratching his woolly head, 'feed him in 'e ship, won't he stay—eh?' 'Oh, for that matter, Dido,' says I, 'just you send down a sample of the ship's biscuit, with a fid of hard junk, and d—n me if he stay long!' A good laugh I had, too, in my hammock, to see the cook follow my advice; he daren't open his hatch more than enough to shove down a line with some grub at the end of it, as much as would have provisioned half a dozer; so I knew there was a stopper clapped on the spot for that day.

When we began to get up anchor, a boat belonging to the schooner pulled round us, and they seemed to want to look through and through us, for them slavers has a nat'ral aversion to an English ship. They gave a squint or two at old black Dido, and he swore at 'em in exchange for it like a trooper; 'tis hard to say, for a good slack jaw, and all the dirty abuse afloat, whether a Yankee nigger, or a Billingsgate fishwoman, or a Plymouth Point lady, is the worst to stand. I go believe, if we'd been an hour later of sailing, they'd have had a search-warrant aboard of us, with a couple of Spanish guards, and either pretended they'd lost a fair-bought slave, or got us perhaps condemned for the very thing they were themselves. However, off we went, and by the first dog-watch we'd dropped the land to sou'-west, with stunsails on the larboard side, and the breeze on our quarter.

Next morning again the black cook gives me a shake in my hammock, and says he, 'Mus' have some coal now, Jack; he gone now, surely—eh, lad?' 'Go to the devil, you black fool,' says I, 'can't ye let a fellow sleep out his watch, without doing your work for you?' 'Oh, Golly,' says the cook in a rage, 'I sarve you out for dis, you dam tarry blackguard! Don't b'lieb no dibble ever dere! I water you tea dis blessed mornin' for dis!'—'Look out for squalls, then, doctor,' says I; and he lifts the trap, and began to go down the ladder, shaking his black fist at me. 'Good bye, Dido!' says I, 'make my respects to the old un!' 'Oh you darty willan! he sings out from the hole; and then I heard him knocking about amongst his lumber, till all of a sudden he gave a roar. Up springs the young nigger from under hatches, the ladder and through the trap, then up the fork'sle steps again, and out on deck, and I heard him running aft to the quarter-deck, where the mate was singing out to set another stunsail. Down fell the trap-lid over the coal-hole, and old Dido was caught like a mouse. If it had'n't been for our breakfast, I daresay we'd have left him there for a spell; but when the doctor got out he was as cowed as you please. 'Jack Wilson,' says he to me, 'you say quite right—him black dibble dere sure nuff, Jack! see him go up in flash of fire out of de coal, den all as dark as—Hullo, mates,' says he, 'you laugh, eh? Berry funny though, too—ho-ho-ho!' so he turned to grinning at it till the tears ran out of the whites of his eyes. 'What does the parson say, doctor?' asked an old salt out of his hammock, 'stick close to the devil, and he'll flee from ye!' 'Ho-ho-ho!' roars old Dido; 'bery good ho-ho-ho!' says he; 'old dibble not so very frightenful after all, now I see he right black!' 'I say though, old boy,' puts in the foremastman again, 'I does'n't like to hear ye laugh at the devil that way—ye don't know what may turn up—'tis good seamanship, as I reckon, never to make an enemy of a port on a lee-shore, cook!' 'Ay, ay, old ship,' said another; 'but who looks for a seaman's ways from a cook?—ye can't expect it!' 'I tar'ble fraid white dibble, though, lads,' said old Dido, giving an impudent grin. 'Well, if so be,' says the old salt, take my word for it, ye'd better keep a look out for him—that's all. White or black, all colors has their good words to keep, an' bad ones bring their bad luck, mate!'

'Well, sir, as for the young runaway, 'twas all of a kick-up on the quarterdeck about him; he could'n't speak a word of English, but he hung on the mate's feet, like one for bare life. Just then the captain came on deck with two lady passengers, to take a look of the morning; the poor fellow was spar-naked, and the ladies made a dive below again. The captain saw the slave-brand on his shoulder, and he twigged the whole matter at once; so he told the mate to get him a pair of trousers, and a shirt, and put him to help the cook. Dido laughed louder than ever when he found out the devil wasn't so black as he was painted; and he was for indopting the youngster, by way of a sort of jury son. However, the whole of the fork'sle took a fancy to him, considering him a kind of right to all hands. He was christened Jack, as I said before, and instead of hanging on, cook's mate, he was put up to something more seaman-like. By the time the Mary Jane got home, black Jack could set a stunsail, or furl a royal. We got Dido to give him a regular-built sartificate on his breast, of his being free to blue water, footing paid, and under the British unio-jack, which 'twas the same as you saw just now, sir.'

'Well,' said I, 'but you haven't explained why he was called by such a curious appellation as Moonlight, though?'

'Held on a bit, sir,' said the boatswain, 'that's not the whole affair from end to end, yet. The next voyage I sailed again in the Mary Jane to Jamaica, for I always had a way of sticking to the same ship when I could. I remember Dido, the cook, had a quarrel with his wife, Nancy; and one of the first nights we were at sea, he told black Jack, before all the fok'sle, how he meant to leave him all his savings, and which, everybody knew was no small thing, for Dido never spent any of his wages and many the good cask of slush the old nigger had pocketed the worth of. We made a fine run that time down the Trades, till we got into the latitude of the Bahams, and the ship struck like a log, with blue water

round her, as hot as blazes, and as smooth as glass, or a bow of oil. Once or twice we had a black squall that sent her on a bit, or another that drove her back, with a heavy swell, and now and then a light air, which we made the most of—setting stunsails, and hauling 'em down again in a splash of rain. But altogether, we thought we'd never get out of them horse latitudes at all, having run over much to westward, till we saw the line of the Gulf Stream treading away on the sea line to nor'-west, as plain as on a chart. There was a confounded devil of a shark alongside, that stuck by us all through, one of the largest I ever clapped eyes on. Every night we saw him cruising away astern, as green as glass, down through the blue water; and in the morning, there he was under the counter, with his back fin above, and two little pilot-fish swimming off and on round about. He wouldn't take the bait either; and every one found said there was some to lose his mess before long; however, the cook made a dead set to hook the infernal old monster, and at last he did contrive to get him fast, with a piece of pork large enough for supper for the larboard watch. All hands tailed on to the line, and with much ado we got his snout over the traffrail, till one could look down his throat, and his tail was like to smash in the starn windows; when of a sudden, snap goes the rope where it spliced to the chain, down went the shark into the water with tremendous splash, and got clear off, hook, chain, bait 'em all. We saw no more of him, tho', and by sunset we had a bit of a light breeze, that began to take us off pleasantly.

'We had had full moon nearly the night before, and this night, I remember, 'twas the very pearl of moonlight—the water all of a ripple sparkling in it, almost as blue as by day; the sky full of white light; and the moon as large as the capstan-head, but brighter than silver. You might ha' said you saw the very rays of it come down to the bellies of the sails, and sticking on the same plank in the deck for an hour at a time, as the ship surged ahead. Old Dido, the cook, had a fashion of coming upon deck of a moonlight night, in warm latitudes, to sleep on top o' the spars; he would lie with his black face full under it, like a lizard basking in the sun. Many a time the men advised him against it, at any rate to cover his face; for if it wouldn't spoil, they said, he might wake up blind, or with his mouth pulled down to his shoulder, and out of his mind to boot. It wasn't the first time neither, sir, I've known a fellow moon-struck in the tropics, for 'tis another guess matter altogether from your hazy bit o' white paper yonder: why, if you hang a fish in it for an hour or two, 'twill stink like a lucifer match, and be poison to eat. Well, sir, that night sure enough, up comes Dido with a rug to lie upon and turns in upon the spars under the bulwarks, and in five minutes he was fast asleep, snoring with his face to the moon. So with the watch being tricky inclined-ways, on account of the breeze, took it into their heads to give him a fright. One got hold of a paint-pot out of the half-deck, and lent him a whipe of white paint with the brush all over his face; Dido only gave a grunt, and was as fast as ever. The next thing was to grease his wool, and plaster it up in the shape of a couple o' horns. Then they drew a bucket of water, and set it on the deck, along side, for him to see himself. When our watch came on deck, at eight bells, the moon was as bright as ever in the west, and cook stretched out like Happy Tom on the spars, with his face shined round to meet it. In a little the breeze began to fall, and the light canvass to flap aloft, till all was of a shiver, and the topsails sticking in to the masts, and shaking out again, with a clap that made the boon-irons rattle. At last she wouldn't answer her wheel, and the mate had the courses hauled up in the trails; 'twas a dead calm once more, and the blue water only swelled in the moonlight, like one sheet of rear-admiral's flags a-washing in a silver steep,—'tha's the likeliest thing I can fancy. When the ship lay still, up gets the black doctor, half asleep, and I daresay he had been laying in a cargo of Jamaica rum overnight: the bucket was just under his nose as he looked down to see where he was, and the moon shining into it. I heard him roar out, 'O de dibble!' and out he sprang to larboard, over the bulwarks, into the water. 'Man overboard, aboy!' I sang out, and the whole watch came running from aft and for'd to look over. 'Oh, says one o' the men, pointing with his finger—'Look!' Dido's head was just rising along side; but just under the ship's counter what did we see but the black-fin of the shark, coming slowly round, as them creatures do when they are not quite sure of anything that give 'em the start—'The shark, the shark!' said every one; 'he's gone by, Down with the quarter-boat, men!' sings out the mate, and he ran to one of the falls to let it go. The young nigger, Jack, was amongst the rest of us; in a moment he off with his hat and shoes, took the cook's big carving knife out of the galley at his back, and was overboard in a moment. He was the best swimmer I ever chanced to see, and the most fearless: the moonlight showed everything as plain as day, and he watched his time to jump right in where the shark's back-fin could be seen coming quicker along with a wake shining down in the water at both fins and tail. Old Dido was striking out like a good un, and hailing for a rope, but he knew nothing at all of the shark. As for young Jack, he said afterwards he felt his feet come full slap on the fish's back, and then he laid out to swim under him and give him the length of his knife close by the jaw, when he'd turn up to bite—for 'twas what the youngsters along the Guinea coast were trained to do every day on the edge of the surf. However, curious enough, there wasn't another sign of this confounded old sea-tiger felt or seen again; no doubt he got a fright and went straight off under the keel; at any rate the boat was alongside of the cook and Jack next minute, and picked 'em both up safe. Jack swore he heard the chain at the shark's snout rattle, as he was slueing round his head within half a fathom of old Dido, and just as he pounced upon the bloody devil's back-bone; the next moment it was clear water

below his feet, and he saw the white bells rise from a lump of green going down under the ship's bends, as large as the gig, with its belly glancing like silver. If so, I daresay the cook's legs would have stuck on his ownhook before they were swallowed; but, anyhow, the old nigger was ready to believe in the devil as long as he lived. The whole matter gave poor Dido a shake he never got the better of; at the end of the voyage he vowed he'd live ashore the rest of his days, to be clear of all sorts of devilry. Whether it didn't agree with him or not, I can't say, but he knocked off the hooks in a short time altogether, and left young Jack the most of his earnings, on the bargain of hailing by his name ever after. 'Twas a joke the men both in the Mary Jane and the old Rajah got up, when the story was told, to call the cook Dido Moonlight, because, after all, 'twas the death of him; and when Jack shipped with the rest of us here aboard of the Rajah, having seen Dido to the ground, why, all hands christened him over again Jack Moonlight; though to look at him now, I daresay, sir, you wouldn't well fancy how such things as black Jack's face and moonlight was logged together, unless the world went by contraries!'

THE CORNED BEEF BOARDER.

A few years since, the capital of one of the New England States boasted of but one public house—which was a very creditable establishment, by the way, and at which, as at the present time, you can make sure of a very comfortable and satisfactory accommodations, on reasonable terms. Then, as now, this house was the temporary home of the Solons and Lycurgueses of the State, when their legislative duties drew them to the capital.

Mr. F—, the proprietor of the house at time to which I allude, found that he had all sorts of men to deal with, the State Representatives being composed of farmers, ship builders, land speculators, lumber merchants &c.

Of all men, however, the queerest customer was a representative who had not certainly been chosen for any remarkable oratorical talents, or for any extensive knowledge of political economy. In fact, his notions of private economy altogether predominated, as the following anecdote will show.

With his associates, Mr. G— took up his quarters at the public house kept by Mr. F—. He was delighted with the breakfasts of venison steak, the dinners of turkeys and moose meat, and other corresponding accommodations; but really the rate of board was more than he felt able to pay. Accordingly, he applied to the landlord to know if he could not board him for less than the usual price.

'I should be very happy to accommodate you,' said Mr. F—, politely, but I should loose by the operation. I have the best of everything on my table, and my expenses are so large that I could not live if I were to reduce my prices.'

'No way at all in my case?' inquired the representative, ruefully.

'No—I don't see how I can. I have to pay uncommonly high this season, for my turkeys, venison, eggs, and other eatables.'

'Now, see here,' interrupted Mr. G—, I suppose these fixins' are worth all you charge for board. I would not complain if I felt as though I could afford to eat such dinners. Now why not let them that want to eat the turkeys, pay for them? For my part, I'd as lief eat corn'd beef every day as not. I won't eat your turkeys, and do't see why I should pay for them.'

'Very well,' said the obliging landlord, with an indulgent smile, 'if you are willing to confine yourself to corn'd beef, as far as meats are concerned, and to eat other things accordingly, I suppose I can make some deduction in your case.'

The representative was highly gratified. He promised to eat corn'd beef, and to abstain from various costly dishes which were named, upon which condition a satisfactory bargain was made.

Accordingly, everybody who observed Mr. G— at table, from that day, were very much astonished at his singular choice of food. Of course the bargain was a secret—confined to the two parties by whom it was made; and the unconscious waiters laid before the representative temptation after temptation, which he no doubt found it hard to resist.

'What shall I help you to, sir?' they would ask him. 'Turkey, chicken pie, venison steak, roasted—'

'Corn'd beef!' would be the self-denying exclamation of the scrupulous boarder.

Day after day it was the same. Sometimes the waiters would, through mistake, we may suppose, place before him a choice plate of the forbidden luxuries, which it made his heart ache to send away again, with his modest call for 'corn'd beef.'

At length the waiters grew so stupid—or waggish, we suspect—that Mr. G— would have to send away half a dozen appetising dishes, before they could be made to understand that his unalterable choice was 'corn'd beef.'

This state of affairs afforded a great deal of amusement to the waiters, boarders, guests—everybody except Mr. F— himself, who was grievously annoyed. At last human nature could bear it no longer. One day Mr. G— called for his favorite dish three times, and received successively roasted veal, moose steak, and broiled chicken! Glowing and sweating with perplexity and wrothful impatience, he sent away the last named dish, with an emphatic request for 'corn'd beef!'—The waiter—stupid fool! returned with smoking, ordorous turkey!

'You thick-skulled rascal!' cried the furious representative, 'can't you understand? I ain't a turkey boarder, I'm a corn'd beef boarder! Do you hear? I'm a corn'd beef boarder.'

The waiter heard—the table roared—the representative perspired profusely; but he was never afterwards troubled with refusing the dishes he had foresworn.—The waiters enjoyed the joke, and the representative the corned beef, in quiet.—Albany Dutchman.