

## CHAPTER 43. Hark!

‘Hist! Did you hear that noise, Cabaco?’

It was the middle-watch: a fair moonlight; the seamen were standing in a cordon, extending from one of the fresh-water butts in the waist, to the scuttle-butt near the taffrail. In this manner, they passed the buckets to fill the scuttle-butt. Standing, for the most part, on the hallowed precincts of the quarter-deck, they were careful not to speak or rustle their feet. From hand to hand, the buckets went in the deepest silence, only broken by the occasional flap of a sail, and the steady hum of the unceasingly advancing keel.

It was in the midst of this repose, that Archy, one of the cordon, whose post was near the after-hatches, whispered to his neighbor, a Cholo, the words above.

‘Hist! did you hear that noise, Cabaco?’

‘Take the bucket, will ye, Archy? what noise d’ye mean?’

‘There it is again?under the hatches?don’t you hear it?a cough?it sounded like a cough.’

‘Cough be damned! Pass along that return bucket.’

?There again?there it is!?it sounds like two or three sleepers  
turning over, now!?

?Caramba! have done, shipmate, will ye? It?s the three soaked biscuits ye  
eat for supper turning over inside of ye?nothing else. Look to the  
bucket!?

?Say what ye will, shipmate; I?ve sharp ears.?

?Aye, you are the chap, ain?t ye, that heard the hum of the old  
Quakeress?s knitting-needles fifty miles at sea from Nantucket; you?re the  
chap.?

?Grin away; we?ll see what turns up. Hark ye, Cabaco, there is somebody  
down in the after-hold that has not yet been seen on deck; and I suspect  
our old Mogul knows something of it too. I heard Stubb tell Flask, one  
morning watch, that there was something of that sort in the wind.?

?Tish! the bucket!?