# Chapter XXXIX

## *First Night-Watch*

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Fore-top: a platform at the top of a ship's fore (front) mast

Fore-Top.

Solus: alone

Mogul: a king of the [Mughal Empire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mughal_Empire)that ruled most of the Indian subcontinent from the 16th to the 19th centuries

Twigged: saw, noticed

[Frigate:](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frigate) a medium-sized warship that typically had colored pennants at the top of its masts

*(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 carcase. 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 tonight...”* This is from the poem “Sparkling and Bright” by [Charles Fenno Hoffman,](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Fenno_Hoffman) a friend of Herman Melville's who went insane in 1849

*"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.