

CHAPTER LVI.

HOMeward BOUND! A loud report from the frigate's bow gun, and before the smoke had vanished, the cornet was fluttering at the mast-head—a signal for sailing. The brave boatswain and his lusty mates blew ear-splitting notes from deck to deck—the roar of hoarse voices resounded deep within the bowels of the ship, "All hands, up anchor for home!" The capstans spun around like tops—the fifers played their merriest jigs—the crew danced with glee—"pall the capstan!" The well-worn sails again fell from the yards, and as the puffs of wind came stealthily over the Point of Angels, the noble frigate turned slowly on her keel, in gladness sprang away, and bade adieu to Valparaiso.

In a few days the batteries of heavy guns were drawn in, their frowning muzzles lashed to the staunch bulwarks, and the windows of the ship closed to the buffetings of the sea. We passed in sight of Juan Fernandez, and, soon after, the wind befriended us, and with broad wings we flew towards Cape Horn. One dark night, another of the unfortunate maintop men was lost overboard: he had been born and bred upon the ocean, and thus singularly met his watery grave.

Rain, snows, and storms came over us, but on the seventeenth day we doubled the tempestuous Cape Horn, where we saw a

dozen ships, with gold! gold! painted in perspective, on every seam of their broad topsails. Leaving the Falkland Islands, we steered boldly into the Atlantic, and went on our swift course joyfully.

The strong favoring gales seemed never to tire in efforts to urge us onward. The very sea-birds gave over chasing us, all save a venerable couple of grey-backed albatross, who with indefatigable energy followed us for three thousand miles. Again we crossed the tropics—the southern cross paled below the horizon—the pole-star, gleaming dimly at first, rose and rose until sparkling high in the heavens. Again we splashed through the haunts of flying-fish and nautilus, until, on the sixty-third day, there came the loud cry of "Land, ho!"

Shortly after, our noble ship—that had borne us in safety fifty-five thousand miles—let fall her anchors, for the last time, within the waters of the Chesapeake.



















