

the ear became sensible of a shrill, chirping sound, like that of no mouse, but much fainter,—a ceaseless cheep, cheep, cheep, occasioned apparently—for no true fish is furnished with organs of sound—by a sudden escape from the air-bladder. The shoal, a small one, had spread over only three of the nets,—the three whose buoys had so suddenly disappeared; and most of the others had but their mere sprinkling of fish, some dozen or two in a net; but so thickly had they lain in the fortunate three, that the entire haul consisted of rather more than twelve barrels.

* * * * *

We started up about midnight, and saw an open sea, as before; but the scene had considerably changed since we had lain down. The breeze had died into a calm; the heavens, no longer dark and gray, were glowing with stars; and the sea, from the smoothness of the surface, appeared a second sky, as bright and starry as the other; with this difference, however, that all its stars seemed to be comets: the slightly tremulous motion of the surface elongated the reflected images, and gave to each its tail. There was no visible line of division at the horizon. Where the hills rose high along the coast, and appeared as if doubled by their undulating strip of shadow, what might be deemed a dense bank of cloud lay sleeping in the heavens, just where the upper and nether firmaments met; but its presence rendered the illusion none the less complete: the outline of the boat lay dark around us, like the fragment of some broken planet suspended in middle space, far from the earth and every star; and all around we saw extended the complete sphere,—unhidden above from Orion to the Pole, and visible beneath from the Pole to Orion. Certainly sublime scenery possesses in itself no virtue potent enough to develop the faculties, or the mind of the fisherman would not have so long lain asleep. There is no profession whose recollections should rise into purer poetry than his; but if the mirror bear not its previous amalgam of taste and genius, what does it matter though the scene which sheds upon it its many-colored light should be rich in grandeur and beauty? There is no corresponding image produced: the susceptibility of reflecting the landscape is never imparted by the landscape itself, whether to the mind or to the glass. There is no class of recollections more illusory than those which associate—as if they existed in the relation of cause and effect—some piece of striking scenery with some sudden development of the intellect or imagination. The eyes open, and there is an external beauty seen; but it is not the external beauty that has opened the eyes.

* * * * *

“It was still a dead calm,—calm to blackness; when, in about an hour after sunrise, what seemed like fitful airs began to play on the surface, imparting to it, in irregular patches, a tint of gray. First one patch would form, then a second beside it, then a third, and then for miles around, the surface, else so silvery, would seem frosted over with gray: the apparent breeze appeared as if propagating itself from one central point. In a few seconds after, all would be calm as at first; and then from some other centre the patches of gray would again form and widen, till the whole Frith seemed covered by them. A peculiar popping noise, as if a thunder-shower was beating the surface with its multitudinous drops, rose around our boat; the water seemed sprinkled with an infinity of points of silver, that for an instant glittered to the sun, and then resigned their places to other quick glancing