

Allusions in *Moby Dick*

Chapter 1

Ishmael

- 1) Biblical--son of Abraham; an exile.
- 2) Ishmael ben Elisha--2nd century A.D. Jewish teacher of Galilee; outstanding Talmudic teacher; compiled the 13 hermeneutical rules for interpreting the Torah; founded a school which produced the legal commentary, Mekhilta.

Cato

A Shakespearean character in Julius Caesar; committed suicide by falling on his sword.

Seneca and the Stoics

Seneca--among Rome's leading intellectual figures in the mid-1st century AD. He and Epictetus were leading voices of Stoicism. Stoics--1) Greek school of philosophy holding that human beings should be free from passion and calmly accept all occurrences as the unavoidable result of divine will.

Narcissus

Greek mythology--young man who fell in love with his own image in a pool of water and either wasted away or fell into the pool and drowned.

Fates

1) Greek mythology--the three goddesses who govern human destiny. While one sister dictates the events of an individual's life, another sister weaves them into a tapestry on the Loom of Life, and the third sister stands ready with a pair of shears to cut the thread, thus ending the life.

2) Predestination.

Tyre of Carthage

A principal port founded by the Phoenicians, among the greatest seafarers of the ancient world.

Euroclydon

Biblical (Acts 27:14)--the tempestuous east wind that shipwrecked Paul off the coast of Malta.

Moluccas

Spice Islands between Celebes and New Guinea.

Chapter 2

Black Parliament sitting in Tophet

1) Biblical (Jer. 7:31)--Tophet was a shrine in the valley of Hinnom south of ancient Jerusalem where human sacrifices, especially those of children, were performed to Moloch.

2) Hell.

Lazarus

Biblical (Luke 16: 19-31)--the diseased beggar in the parable of the rich man and the beggar.

Sumatra

The second largest island of Indonesia lying in the Indian Ocean west of Malaysia and Borneo by Sunda Strait.

Chapter 3

Hyperborean

1) Greek--Hyperboea was one known to the ancient Greeks from the earliest times. He lived in an unidentified country in the far north and was renowned as a pious and divinely favored adherent of the cult of Apollo.

2) very cold; frigid; north wind.

Jonah

Biblical (Book of Jonah)--an intolerant, unwilling servant of God. He was called by God to go to Nineveh and prophesy disaster because of the city's wickedness. He did not want to go and took passage in a ship at Joppa going in the opposite direction, thus escaping God's command. At sea, Jonah admits to the crew that it is his fault that a storm is about to destroy the ship. They throw him overboard. Jonah is swallowed by a great fish and stays inside it for three days and three nights. He prays for deliverance. He is vomited onto land and goes to Nineveh, as God had commanded.

Chapter 4

Cretan labyrinth

Greek--the building containing a maze which Daedalus constructed for King Minos of Crete as a place in which to confine the Minotaur. Those put in the maze could not find their way out and were destroyed by the Minotaur. Theseus was the only one to escape.

Chapter 6

Canaan

Biblical--Canaan was the land promised to Moses and his people by God after they fled from Egypt. It was an opulent land of milk and honey.

Herr Alexander

Alexander the great, the military mastermind who conquered the majority of the known world during the years 336-330 B.C. Because of his tactical genius, he was able to accomplish his conquest without superiority of numbers.

Chapter 7

Pequod

The Pequod--also spelled Pequot and Pequoit--was an American Indian tribe which, as Melville briefly mentions, was destroyed by the Puritans. Read Captain John Mason's account of the [Puritan attack of the Pequot fort](#).

cave of Elephanta

Elephanta is an isle off the western coast of India in Bombay Harbor famous for its 8th century temple caves carved out of rock, its walls sculpted with figures of Hindu deities.

Chapter 8

Victory's plank where Nelson fell

Horatio Nelson (1758-1805) was a British naval officer and national hero. His ship, Victory, was involved in a battle with the French. Someone on the French ship, *Redoutalde*, shot Nelson and broke his spine. Nelson died as the British won by annihilating the French.

Chapter 16

Medes

Inhabitants of ancient Media, a country northwest of Persia and south of Caspian Sea; an independent country and an empire at its height; conquered Babylon and Assyria; overthrown by Persian Cyrus.

Canterbury Cathedral where Beckett died

British--Thomas Beckett was named archbishop of Canterbury by Henry and became an uncompromising defender of the rights of the church against lay powers; refused to seal the constitution of Clarendon and fled to France. Persuaded Pope Alexander III to suspend bishops who crowned Prince Henry and force the king to reconciliation. Beckett was murdered in the cathedral by four knights of Henry's court. He was later canonized.

Chapter 18

Philistine

1) Biblical--a people who held the coastal area of southern Palestine and were frequently at war with the Israelites in the period of the judges and the early years of the monarchy.

2) A smug, ignorant, especially middle class, person, who is held to be indifferent or antagonistic to artistic and cultural values; boorish; barbarous.

Chapter 19

Elijah the prophet

Biblical (I Kings)--Hebrew prophet of the 9th century B.C.; lived during the time of Ahab, king of Israel. In his first recorded act, Elijah appeared before the evil King Ahab and predicted a severe drought. The drought occurred. After more than three years, the prophet came once more to Ahab and placed the blame for the famine on the king's sinful policies. Later, Elijah came in the vineyard of Naboth after the king had secured the land through the wickedness of his wife, Jezebel. Elijah placed a terrible curse on King Ahab and his descendants, promising that the entire house of Ahab would be exterminated. This prophecy was brutally fulfilled.

Chapter 24

Job (pronounced Jobe)

Biblical (Book of Job)--the upright, God-fearing and good man of Uz, who was made to suffer greatly when God tested his faith and loyalty by allowing Satan to have his way with him. Despite his undeserving misfortunes, Job remained steadfast and faithful. In the end, God restored his substance to him and granted him happiness and prosperity. Job's patience in the face of suffering is proverbial.

Alfred the Great

Ruler of Wessex, 870's, who drove the Norse out of England. He is famous for his cleverness, as he paid the Vikings to leave England for a certain period of time, during which he raised the proper military to defeat them.

Edmund Burke

English politician in the time of King George III; famous for defending liberty and justice.

Chapter 26

John Bunyan

1628-1688; English preacher; author of Pilgrim's Progress; one of the greatest literary geniuses of the Puritan movement in England.

Cervantes

A soldier until his hand was maimed by gunshot wounds and he was unable to fight; afterward, over his next twenty years, he became a brilliant author of novels, plays, and tales.

Andrew Jackson

Seventh President of the U.S.A. (1829-1837); the first poor man to rise to become President; known as the "people's President."

Chapter 32

Folio

book formed by folding a sheet of paper once; size of book is usually about 11 inches.

Chapter 35

Platonist

- 1) One who accepts and adheres to the philosophical thought of Plato.
- 2) Abstractionist .

Descartian vortices

- 1) Descartes the philosopher believed that everything had to be proven rationally; he based his proof of identity on the theory, "I think; therefore, I am."
- 2) vortice--situation drawing into its center all that surrounds it (i.e. whirlpool effect).

Pantheist

One who believes that God is all forces and powers of the universe; God in Nature, or God is Nature.

Chapter 38

Iron Cross of Lombardy

An ancient crown, supposedly made from one of the nails from the True Cross, used notably at the coronation of Holy Roman Emperors and at the coronation of Napoleon in 1805.

Chapter 40

Pirohitee's peak

Melville gives this descriptive reference to Pirohitee's peak in *Omoo*, Chapter 18: "Tahiti is by far the most famous island in the South Seas; indeed, a variety of causes has made it almost classic. Its natural features alone distinguish it from the surrounding groups. Two round and lofty promontories, whose mountains rise nine thousand feet above the level of the ocean, are connected by a low, narrow isthmus; the whole being some one hundred miles in circuit.

From the great central peaks of the larger peninsula—Orohena, Aorai, and Pirohitee—the land radiates on all sides to the sea in sloping green ridges. Between these are broad and shadowy valleys—in aspect, each a Tempe—watered with fine

streams, and thickly wooded. Unlike many of the other islands, there extends nearly all round Tahiti a belt of low, alluvial soil, teeming with the richest vegetation. Here, chiefly, the natives dwell."

Chapter 47

Loom of Time

Greek mythology (see [Fates](#) in Chapter 1).

Chapter 54

Mark Antony and Cleopatra

One of the most famous romances in history. It is said that the marriage ruined Mark Antony's life and ultimately caused him to take it.

Chapter 58

terra incognita

Latin--unknown land.

Chapter 70

the giant Holofernes and Judith

Judith is the title of a book in the Apocrypha as well as the name of a Jewess from Bethulia. Holofernes was a general of the Assyrian king Nebuchadnezzar. To save her city, Judith killed Holofernes in his drunken slumber and showed his head to her countrymen. They then drove off the Assyrians.

Chapter 71

Neskyeuna Shakers

In 1776, Mother Anne Lee established the first settlement of American "Shakers" (the Millennial Church or United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing) at Niskayuna, a village in New York, on the Hudson River near Schenectady. The shakers observed celibacy, held all property in common, and believed that Mother Lee was Christ reincarnated. Their nickname, Shakers, derived from their peculiar bodily movements during religious meetings. (Information found in editor's note [Moby Dick](#), edited by Charles Feidelson, Jr., MacMillan 1985, ISBN 0-02-336720-2, p. 409.)

Gabriel

Biblical--masculine given name meaning "man of God"; an archangel who acts as the messenger of God.

Chapter 73

Immanuel Kant vs. John Locke

Kant and Locke both expressed agreement with the idea that the State is formed by a social contract--Individuals must give up some of their rights to enter into a social contract in society. However, they differed on the application of the idea.

Kant does not recognize the right of individuals to revoke the contract.

Locke maintained that the state formed by the social contract was guided by the natural law, which guarantees inalienable rights. He formulated the doctrine that revolution in

some circumstances is not only a right but an obligation. If the State fails to protect the individuals' inalienable rights, then revolution is a duty.

Chapter 80

sphinx

- 1) Egyptian mythology--a figure having the body of a lion and the head of a man, ram, or hawk.
 - 2) Greek mythology--a winged monster having the head of a woman and the body of a lion that destroyed all who could not answer its riddle.
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Chapter 82

Perseus

Greek--Andromeda, the daughter of a king, was tied to a rock on the sea coast and a whale came to carry her away. Perseus killed the whale and married Andromeda.

St. George and his Dragon

Probably third century A.D. Christian martyr. Nothing definite is known about his life. In time of Edward II adopted as patron saint of England. Among legends developed about him was that of his conquest of a dragon to rescue the king's daughter, Sabra.

Ezekiel 32:2

Biblical--"Son of man, take up a lamentation for Pharaoh king of Egypt, and say unto him, Thou art like a young lion of the nations, and thou art as a whale in the seas: and thou camest forth with thy rivers, and troubledst the waters with thy feet, and fouledst their rivers."

I Samuel 5:2-4

Biblical--"Then they carried the ark into Dagon's temple and set it beside Dagon. When the people of Ashdod rose early the next day, there was Dagon, fallen on his face on the ground before the ark of the Lord! They took Dagon and put him back in his place. But the following morning when they rose, there was Dagon fallen on his face on the ground before the ark of the Lord! His head and hands had been broken off and were lying on the threshold; only his body remained."

Chapter 84

Actium

a Roman colony in Greece, in 31 B.C. the site of the decisive naval battle in the war between the Roman emperor Octavian and the combined forces of Mark Antony and Cleopatra, queen of Egypt.

Old Monongahela

rye whiskey from the Monongahela River valley in Pennsylvania.

Chapter 85

Cretan labyrinth

Greek Mythology--an elaborate maze built to imprison the minotaur, a mythical half-man, half-bull, of Crete

Pyrrho

the Greek philosopher (c. 360-270 B.C.) who founded the school of Skepticism.

Dante

the Italian poet, (1265-1321), who wrote the Inferno.

Chapter 86

The bird that never alights

the Huma or Bird of Paradise, a creature from Persian mythology that was thought by Europeans to never land.

Titanism

as Titans, powerful gods thought by the Greeks to have preceded Zeus and the other gods of Mount Olympus.

Eckerman

Johann Peter Eckermann (1792-1854) a German poet who was a friend, follower, and biographer of the better-known poet Goethe.

Goethe

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832) an influential German writer whose works include Faust.

Roman triumphal arch

a freestanding archway built as a monument.

Angelo

Michelangelo(1475-1564) the Italian artist.

God the Father in human form

reference to Michelangelo's painting on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel.

Darmonodes' elephant

reference to a story in Plutarch's *Moralia* in which an elephant falls in love with a flower-girl and caresses her breasts with its trunk..

Flame Baltic

a sea of flame, after the Baltic Sea.

Isaiah

Biblical--the Old Testament prophet who predicted that the entire world would come under the control of the Hebrew God.

Ptolemy Philopater

Ptolemy IV Philopator, a pharaoh of Egypt who reigned from 221-205 B.C..

King Juba

Juba I (85-46 B.C.) of Numidia, which today would cover Algeria and part of Tunisia.

Free-Mason

Freemasonry, a fraternal society with many symbols and rituals.

Thou shalt see my back parts

Biblical--Exodus 33:23, God tells Moses, *Thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen..*

Chapter 87

Circus-running

running in a loop, as a circus

King Porus

a ruler of Paurava, in the modern-day state of Punjab, India, in the fourth century B.C.

Saxonisms

remnants of old English, spoken by the Anglo-Saxons who invaded and ruled England during the middle ages.

The time of the Commonwealth

1649 to 1660, the period after the English Civil War when the British Isles had no monarch.

Esau and Jacob

Biblical--twin brothers in the Bible.

More hominum

like humans.

Dardanelles

the narrow strait in Turkey that connects the Aegean Sea to the Sea of Marmara.

Chapter 88**En bon point**

plumpness

Bashaw

pasha, a military or civil official in Turkey.

Solomon

Biblical--I Kings 11:3. King Solomon had 700 official wives and 300 concubines.

Grand Turk

the sultan, the ruler of the Ottoman Empire.

Vidocq

Eugene Francois Vidocq (1775-1857), a French private investigator who started life as a criminal and wrote about the young women he had seduced

Daniel Boone

the American pioneer (1734-1820).

Chapter 89**Justinian's Pandects**

a 50-book digest of Roman laws compiled for Emperor Justinian I in the 6th century.

Chinese Society for the Suppression of Meddling

Melville is joking here.

Coke-upon-Littleton

an important commentary on British property law written by Sir Edward Coke (1552-1634).

John Bull

the national personification of Great Britain, similar to Uncle Sam in the U.S. At the time of Moby-Dick's publication, Ireland was under British control and was suffering from the Irish Potato Famine. One million people died due to a blight on potatoes and the British government refused to help.

Brother Jonathan

an early personification of the United States, similar to Uncle Sam. At the time of Moby-Dick's publication, the U.S. had recently defeated Mexico in a war over the right to admit Texas as a U.S. state..

Chapter 90

De balena vero sufficit...

"The king owns the head of a whale; the queen owns the tail." English jurist Henry de Bracton)1210-1268(

Blackstone

Commentaries on the Laws of England, by Sir William Blackstone, published 1765-1769.

The Duke of Wellington

Arthur Wellesley)1769-1852(, led the United Kingdom forces that defeated Napoleon at Waterloo. He later served as Prime Minister. Wellington was also the Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports.

The three kingdoms

England, Scotland, and Ireland. Wellesley briefly came out of retirement in 1848 to organize a military force to protect London from a potential popular uprising.

Plowdon

Edmund Plowden (1518-1585), an English legal scholar.

King's Bench

a court of law of England.

William Prynne

the English author and polemicist (1600-166).

Ordinary revenue

the English monarch's income from crown lands, trade tariffs, dues and other sources.

Chapter 91

Sir T. Browne, V.E.

by Thomas Browne (1605-1682), an English author of "Pseudodoxia Epidemica, or Vulgar Errors."

Cachalot Blanche

French: white sperm whale.

Chapter 92

Captain Coffin

Joshua Coffin, who recovered 362 ounces of ambergris in the anus of a female sperm whale killed on the coast of Guinea, West Africa.

Mecca

a city in Saudi Arabia believed by Muslims to be holy.

St. Peter's in Rome

St. Peter's Basilica in Vatican City, the home church of the Catholic Pope.

Brandreth's pills

laxative pills heavily advertised by Dr. Benjamin Brandreth. .

Paracelsus

a Swiss alchemist, physician, and astrologer (1493-1541) considered the father of pharmacology.

Lying-in Hospital

a hospital for women giving birth. "Lying-in" is a term for a lengthy period of bedrest (weeks or months) before or after childbirth..

Chapter 94

Constantine's Bath

a large public bath complex in Rome built by Emperor Constantine I in the fourth century A.D.

Paracelsan

having to do with Paracelsus (1493-1541), the Swiss alchemist who is considered the father of modern pharmacology.

Berlshire marble

marble quarried in the Berkshire Mountains in western Massachusetts.

Louis le Gros

Louis VI of France (1081-1137). "Le Gros" means "the Fat."

Champagne

a wine-producing region in northern France.

Chapter 95

Bible leaves

inch-thick slices of blubber that fan out like pages of a book.

Chapter 96

Hydriote

a person from Hydra, an island in Greece.

Canaris

a city in Saudi Arabia believed by Muslims to be holy.

Virginia's Dismal Swamp

St. Peter's Basilica in Vatican City, the home church of the Catholic Pope.

Rome's accursed Campagna

laxative pills heavily advertised by Dr. Benjamin Brandreth.

Man of Sorrows

a Swiss alchemist, physician, and astrologer (1493-1541) considered the father of pharmacology.

Solomon's

Biblical--the Old Testament book, Proverbs, credited to King Solomon. According to tradition, he also wrote Ecclesiastes and Song of Songs.

All is vanity.

laxative pills heavily advertised by Dr. Benjamin Brandreth.

Cowper

William Cowper (1731-1800), an English poet and writer of hymn.

Young

Edward Young (1683-1765), an English poet.

Pascal

Blaise Pascal (1623-1662), a French mathematician and religious philosopher.

Rousseau

Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), a French philosopher.

Rabelais

Francois Rabelais (1494-1553), a French satirist.

The man that wandereth...

Biblical--from Proverbs 21:16.

A Catskill eagle

an eagle from the Catskill Mountains in upstate New York.

Chapter 97

Aladdin's lamp

from the story, Aladdin's Lamp, which tells of a lamp that, when rubbed, releases a magical genie that must obey the person holding the lamp.

Chapter 98

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego

Biblical--Old Testament. Daniel 3:12-30. Three men refuse a king's order to worship a golden idol. They are punished by being thrown into a furnace, but they survive without harm. The king then orders his people to worship their God.

Chapter 99

Pactolus

a river in Turkey that once contained gold sands.

Quito

Quito, Ecuador, where the Ahab's gold coin was minted.

Lucifer

Biblical--the prideful angel who was cast out of heaven and became Satan.

The sign of storms

Libra, the sign of the autumnal equinox and, usually, stormy weather. .

Aries

a constellation best visible near the Equator, in the month of December.

Belshazzar's awful writing

Biblical--an ominous message to a king: "Thou art weighed in the balance and art found wanting."

Negro Hill

, a vice district in Boston, Massachusetts, in the early 19th century.

Corlaer's Hook

a vice district in Manhattan in the early 19th century.

Golconda

a ruined city in India, once famous for its wealth.

Bowditch

Nathaniel Bowditch (1773-1838), founder of modern navigation techniques.

Daboll's arithmetic

a textbook used widely in U.S. schools.

Massachusetts calendar

an almanac.

Blackberrying

collecting souls like blackberries.

Jenny, get your hoe-cake done

the title of a popular banjo song of the time. Hoecake is a cornmeal flatbread.

Chapter 100

En passant

in passing.

Chapter 101

Tudors

the Tudor dynasty ruled England from 1485 to 1603.

Bourbons

the House of Bourbon dynasty ruled France, Spain, and other European countries at various periods since 1555.

Syren

in Greek mythology, the sirens were seductive women who called out to sailors and caused their ships to wreck on the nearby rocks.

Saxon

Anglo-Saxon; British.

Platonic

having to do with transcending the physical plane and existing in a spiritual one.

Chapter 102

Arsacides

the Solomon Islands.

The hair-hung sword that so affrighted Damocles

Greek legend-- Damocles envied a king and was granted a day to switch places with him. He enjoyed a feast until he noticed a sword hanging directly above his head, supported by a single strand of horsehair.

Icy Glen

a park near Stockbridge, Massachusetts that features moss-covered rocks.

Chapter 103

Pompey's Pillar

an ancient, freestanding column in Alexandria, Egypt, built in honor of the Emperor Diocletian, who ruled Rome in the third century A.D.

Great knobbed blocks on a Gothic spire

decorations used in the construction of Gothic-style churches in the late middle ages.

Chapter 104

Napoleon's time

the time of French emperor Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821).

Zeuglodon>

"yoke teeth," a reference to double-rooted teeth, common to marine mammals."

Methuselah

Biblical--a man who, according to the Old Testament, lived to be 969 years old.

Shem

Biblical--a son of Noah who, according to the Bible, lived to be 500 years old.

Solomon

the biblical King Solomon.

John Leo

Joannes Leo Africanus (1488-c. 1554), a Muslim charged by the Pope to write a guide and description of Africa.

Barbary

the northern African coast.

Mahomet

the main prophet of Islam (570-632).

Jonas

the biblical Jonah.

Chapter 105

Aldrovandus

Ulisse Aldrovandi (1522-1605), an Italian naturalist.

Banks and Solande, Cooke's naturalists

Joseph Banks (1743-1820), an English naturalist, and Daniel Solander (1733-1782), a Swedish botanist, who traveled with Captain James Cook (1728-1779), the British explorer, on his first voyage to Australia.

Smithfield

a popular meat market in London.

Goa

a state on the west coast of India.

Semiramis

an ancient Assyrian queen.

Porus

an ancient ruler of the Indian state of Punjab, defeated by Alexander the Great.

Hannibal

a military commander from ancient Carthage (modern-day Tunisia) who crossed the Alps with elephants.

New Holland

Australia

Grand-Lama-like

hidden away like the Buddhist ruler of Tibet, which at the time was closed to Europeans.

Chapter 106

Bull's eyes

a thick, circular piece of glass set in a deck to act as a skylight to chambers below.

Chapter 107

Multum in parvo

Latin for "much in little".

Sheffield

a town in Yorkshire, England, known for its knife industry.

Chapter 108

Smut

a name for any blacksmith.

Prometheus

Greek mythology--the Titan who created men out of clay.

Blind dome

a dome without a skylight.

Thief-catcher

in this case, lantern. A "thief-catcher" is also a type of prisoner restraint.

Praetorians

the Roman emperor's bodyguards and police force.

auction of the Roman Empire

in 193 A.D., the Praetorian Guard assassinated the emperor Pertinax and sold the throne to Didius Julianus.

The resurrection fellow

Jesus Christ. I Thessalonians 4:16: on Judgment Day Christ will descend from heaven to the sound of the trumpet of God, and dead Christians will be resurrected.

Chapter 111

Potters' Fields

burial sites for unknown or indigent people.

Magian

contemplative, like a Zoroastrian priest.

Chapter 112

The Bottle Conjurer

The "Great Bottle Conjurer" was a performer who, in 1749 in London, England, claimed to be able to fit himself into an ordinary quart bottle. After a theater full of people paid to see his act, they learned it was a scam and destroyed the theater. Here, Melville may mean simply, alcohol.

Chapter 113

Mother Carey's chicken

a storm-petrel, a seabird that follows ships at sea and hides from storms on a ship's leeward side.

"Ego non baptizo te in nomine patris, sed in nomine diaboli"

I baptize you not in the name of the Father, but in the name of the devil.

Chapter 115

The cursed Bastille

the Bastille prison in Paris, France, stormed in 1789 at the start of the French Revolution.

Chapter 116

Niger's

the Niger River in west Africa. Its course is shaped like a boomerang, which confused European explorers and mapmakers of the time.

Chapter 117

Asphaltites

the Dead Sea between modern-day Israel and Jordan. The Greeks called this salt lake Lake Asphaltites because of the asphalt that naturally comes to the surface of the water.

ghosts of Gomorra

Biblical--Old Testament, Genesis 19:24. Gomorra was one of two ancient cities near the Dead Sea, the other being Sodom, that were destroyed by God as a punishment for the wickedness of their inhabitants.

Chapter 118

Sea-mark

a landmark visible from sea.

Horatii

Roman triplets who, in the seventh century B.C., were made to fight a set of enemy triplets to determine the outcome of a war. Two of the Horatii died, but the remaining one killed all three of his opponents.

Knight-heads

the two timbers that support the bowsprit at the front of the ship.

Chapter 119

St. Elmo's Lights

St. Elmo's fire, an electric glow seen on ships during storms, and considered supernatural by superstitious sailors.

&parl;Corpus sancti||corpusants

other names for St. Elmo's fire; from the Latin for "holy body".

Mene, Mene, Tekel Upharsin

Biblical--Daniel 5:27.the writing on the wall in the book of Daniel. Translation: "Your rule is over; you have been weighed in the balance and found wanting; your kingdom will be divided".

Herculaneum

an ancient Roman town in Italy that was destroyed by the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius in 79 A.D.

Chapter 125

Log and line

a device for measuring a ship's speed. A "log"—a triangular piece of wood—attached to a knotted rope is thrown into the water, and then watched to see how many knots run out on the rope within a set time period.

Chapter 126

All Herod's murdered Innocents

Biblical--Mathew 2:16-18. The male babies of Bethlehem killed by King Herod at the time of Christ's birth.

Aroostook hemlock

wood from a Tsuga tree, formerly called "hemlock," from Aroostook County in Maine.

Crupper

strapped to. A crupper is a strap that runs under a horse's tail and keeps its saddle from shifting forward.

Turk's-headed

decorated with ornamental knots called Turks' heads.

Chapter 127

Middle aisle of a church

that is, where the coffin is placed during funerals.

Chapter 128

Rachel

Biblical: Genesis 29. Jacob's favorite wife. He was tricked into marrying her older sister, Leah, and worked seven years for the right to marry Rachel, too.

Rachel, weeping for her children

Biblical: Matthew 2:18. After King Herod's slaughter of the innocents, recounted in Matthew 2:16-18, the sound of weeping was heard, and it was said to be the long-dead Rachel—the matriarch of the Jewish people—weeping for the dead children.

Chapter 129

True as the circumference to its center

The circumference of a circle depends entirely on where its center is.

Chapter 130

The unsetting polar star

the North Star, used for navigation in the Northern Hemisphere because of its fixed place in the sky.

Clamped mortar

a vessel used to grind spices into powder, secured to a table by means of a clamp. Some 19th-century mortars had handles for this purpose.

Tarquin

Lucius Tarquinius Priscus, the fifth King of Rome, who ruled from 616 B.C. to 578 B.C. According to tradition, when he first arrived in Rome, an eagle stole his cap and then replaced it.

Chapter 132

Miriam and Martha

unknown/undetermined. From context, these may be children at home.

Guinea-coast slavery

absolute tyranny. Most West African slaves were shipped to the Americas from an area on the coast of the Bay of Guinea.

Chapter 133

Dog-vane

a weathervane of feathers or other light material attached to a masthead.

Luff a point

one point of the compass, or 11.25 degrees.

Channel

the English Channel.

Antiochus's elephants

Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Bibles: 1 Maccabees. The Greek King Antiochus V gave his elephants grape and mulberry juice to drink before battle, to incite them to fight.

Platonic

having to do with transcending the physical plane and existing in a spiritual one.

Chapter 135

All the angels that fell from heaven

Some Christians believe that one-third of heaven's angels have been cast out, and roam the earth.

Monadnock

a single small hill or mountain that rises out of a surrounding plain.

A plaid

a plaid woolen scarf worn by Scottish Highlanders over one shoulder.

Fata Morgana

an optical illusion that makes objects on the horizon appear longer and higher up than they are.

Epilogue

And I only....

Biblical--Job 1:15-19. A messenger uses these words after reporting to Job that all his livestock and children are dead.

Ixion

a figure in Greek mythology punished for various sins by being bound to a winged wheel of fire.
