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ACTION : ADVENTURE : TREASURE-TROVE

Sea Stories Magazine

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TWICE -A- MONTH

JAN. 5, 1923

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SEA STORIES

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TWICE-A-MONTH

Sea Stories Magazine

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Sea Stories Magazine

PUBLISHED TWICE A MONTH

Vol. III **January 5, 1923** **No, 5**

Doubloons

By Ralph D. Paine

Since the days of Sir Henry Morgan, the most celebrated of the buccaneers, who died in 1688, the legend of treasure buried by pirates and a chart to mark the spot has been a deep-rooted belief in the romantic faith of deep-sea sailormen. The legend reached high tide about eighty years ago when Edgar Allan Poe wrote his famous tale "The Gold Bug." Slowly the belief in buried pirate treasure has receded, yet even to-day there are thousands who constantly seek for such treasure, and there are few of the older deep-sea men who have not seen, at some time, a "chart" directing the searcher where to find buried treasure, usually upon some lonely island, or some deserted mainland beach. Mr. Paine, in this story, has told the tale of a pirate chart in his clear, convincing style. It reads, to the editors, like a true story with extraordinary happenings.

A COMPLETE NOVEL
(By Request)

CHAPTER I.

CAPTAIN JOSEPH KEMPTON had commanded one of the last of the stately square-rigged ships that flew the Stars and Stripes on blue water. It was the ignoble fate of this *Endymion* of his to be dismantled and cut down for a coal barge while still in her prime. No more would she lift topsail yards to the breath of the Pacific trades or nobly storm across the Western Ocean. In the battle for trade, she was unable to survive the rivalry of sooty tramp freighters that roamed for cargo everywhere.

In such ships as this had her master learned his trade and served his years. He was left without a calling, a man

hale and efficient, but too old to begin again in steam. His savings amounted to a few thousand dollars, not enough to live on, besides which idleness was hateful to contemplate. At length he found a berth as watchman or caretaker in a nautical graveyard on the New England coast, where vessels no longer worth repairing found their last resting place, to rot, or to be burned for the metal in their hulls, or broken up for junk.

It was a rather melancholy haven for one who loved the sea and ships and had briskly lorded it on his own quarter-deck. There were times when Captain Kempton winced and sighed at the sight of the nodding, rusty funnels and shabby deck houses beside the weedy wharves, and the gaunt fabrics of abandoned schooners resting on the mud flats. He was a brooding, disappointed man, but the bright presence of his daughter saved his thoughts from bitterness.

At nineteen, Eudora Kempton viewed life as anything else than a finished chapter, and this nautical graveyard was less sad than romantic, a place for dreaming dreams adventurous or pensive. Gifted with a serene optimism, she found contentment in her duty, which was to make the white cottage by the harbor as pleasant a home as possible for her father. These two comprised the household. There were estimable young men in the port of Falmouth who would have been glad to make other arrangements for Eudora, for they thought her exceeding fair; but she declared that her heart was fancy-free.

This was a feminine evasion, pardonable enough because it would never do to let a certain Dan Sloan think anything else. He was Eudora's problem, to be handled with care. She dared not reveal too much, by a smile or a glance, for a masterful wooer was this mate of the big seagoing tug *Endeavor* which fetched the coal-laden barges coastwise from Norfolk. Stalwart, alert, and a native gentleman, he had a fine reputation afloat, but, alas! a somewhat tempestuous one ashore. Plaintively he recited his troubles to Eudora, but she was not easily persuaded. Other young men of twenty-three were old enough to behave themselves and avoid rows and ructions. It was always Dan Sloan who had whipped three sailors or blackened the eye of a policeman. In short, the impetuous mate was severely on probation, and his footing with Eudora was that of a rather precarious friendship, nothing more.

It was on a day in early summer when a visitor sought this picturesque corner of the harbor and wandered among the untenanted vessels. Curiously he scanned them, halting now and then to scribble in a notebook. His appearance suggested neither a seafaring man nor a dealer in marine junk, and his behavior interested Captain Kempton, who was enjoying a pipe on the porch of the cottage. He was about to saunter to the wharf and accost this harmless trespasser when Eudora, who was plying a hoe in her flower garden, paused to remark:

"You might think he owned the place. Such a grand manner! Please find out who he is and what he wants."

"A summer boarder from along shore somewhere, most likely," said her parent. "But I can't make out why he is so infernally busy with a pencil. An artist, maybe; but they are rigged different."

Eudora turned to her flowers, which were much more important that a mere man, and the captain moved in the direction of the water front. A closer view disclosed to him that the stranger was thirty or thereabouts, rather heavy-featured, and of a portly figure. His complexion was florid, his taste in dress slightly so. As the shipmaster approached him, he clambered down from

the hulk of a river steamer and heartily exclaimed, with hand outstretched:

"Captain Kempton? They told me about you in Falmouth this morning. I want to ask you a lot of questions. Bully stuff, this!"

"An unsightly mess, it seems to me. I get tired of looking at it," was the friendly reply. "What can I do for you?"

"Tell me the stories of some of these relics, and something about your own career," smiled the other. "Mannice is my name—William Marmaduke Mannice. You may have seen some of my signed features in the Sunday sheets. I got wind of this salt-water bone yard of yours, and ran up from Boston to look it over for a special story. Color and human interest! I doped it out right. It's all here."

Now this happened to be a true statement, but Mr. Mannice had often found it inconvenient to tell the whole truth. Several metropolitan editors could vouch for his talent as a reporter, but they preferred not to discuss him otherwise. Their language was apt to become heated. In their milder moments, they called him lazy and unreliable and foresaw his finish. So accurate was this prediction that the gifted William Marmaduke Mannice, again dismissed for cause, had been forced into the ranks of the unemployed. His exit from New York had been hastened by the failure of an attempt to raise funds which skirted too near the edge of blackmail, and he uneasily surmised that he had not heard the last of it.

With a very few dollars, he was marooned in Boston, a free lance who had to peddle his stuff from one office to another until he could find a chance to employ his wits to better advantage. The trip to Falmouth was in the nature of a foraging expedition. With photographs, and done in his breezy style, here was a story that ought to sell.

His type of man was unfamiliar to Captain Joseph Kempton, who had the sailor's fine simplicity of character. Shrewd in his own domain, he had dealt mostly with those who hit straight from the shoulder, whose vices and virtues were plain to read. This affable journalist made a pleasant diversion in the monotony of his existence, and it was flattering to have him display an interest in the career of one of the last of the true-blue Yankee shipmasters.

Vivid were the episodes he was moved to recall, with the tang of briny seas and strong winds, as they lingered upon the wharf, and Mr. Mannice was a sympathetic listener. At length they boarded a forlorn wooden hull whose shapely prow still bore the white figurehead of some chaste goddess and whose name, *Wanderer,* was discernible in a gilded scroll.

"A sister ship to my *Endymion,*" said Captain Kempton. "They were launched from the same yard in Bath, and my uncle sailed this one in the China trade. I raced him from Shanghai to Liverpool once, and we finished six hours apart, for a bet of a thousand dollars. It was a record passage. We both carried away all our spare spars and lost men overboard, several of them."

Mannice glanced at the well-knit, keen-eyed mariner, so mild of mien and quiet of speech, and found it difficult to realize that he belonged to a vanished era of splendid endeavor. What he had seen and done thrilled one's fancy, and the reporter was genuinely sincere as he said:

"People have forgotten, and they don't care whether or not American shipping be crowded off the high seas. To find a man like you, with this background and all that—well, there is more of a punch to it than I could dig out of a barrel of statistics."

"Why not come up to the house and sit down?" said the captain, greatly pleased. "I'll be glad to have you stay

for dinner, Mr. Mannice. It's quite a walk to a hotel in Falmouth, and we can talk at our leisure."

Possibly because he had caught a distant glimpse of Eudora, the visitor accepted with instant alacrity. Misfortune had not dulled a belief in his prowess with the ladies. The captain's daughter was singing in the kitchen, for she was an old-fashioned girl who enjoyed the fine art of cookery, nor did she whisk off the white apron as she went to meet the guest. Courteous was her welcome as a hostess, but Mr. Mannice noted that her gaze was fearlessly direct and that she was trying to appraise him for herself. Always at ease, he made himself agreeable, taking no pains to hide his admiration. Eudora's lovely color was all her own, and the years of her girlhood at sea in the *Endymion* had given her fine figure a carriage singularly graceful and reliant.

While the trio sat at dinner, the guest was reminded of a fantastic sea tale which had been going the rounds of the newspapers. It concerned a buried treasure, a lonely Pacific islet, and an expedition fitting out at San Francisco.

"I presume you ran across these legends during your voyages, Captain Kempton," said Mannice. "Odd that people should take stock in them, don't you think?"

"I see nothing odd in it." And the reply was unexpectedly emphatic. The mariner straightened himself in his chair, his strong face glowed with feeling, and he was like a younger man as he continued: "The pirates and the buccaneers hid their hoards, no doubt. Their booty was immense, more than they could have squandered. The Captain Kidd tradition is a myth, exploded long ago; but in many other instances——"

"You have started my father off on a hobby of his, Mr. Mannice," laughingly interrupted Eudora. "He has been collecting material for years. Perhaps he will show you some of his rare books and prints."

"A fascinating subject," replied the reporter, scenting another marketable story. "Do you mind telling me, sir, where some of this plunder is buried?"

"Fourteen millions of it is on Cocos Island, saved from the sack of Lima," promptly answered the shipmaster. "I once sighted volcanic little Trinidad off the coast of Brazil, where more of the Spanish loot was left, but the sea was too heavy for me to send a boat ashore. Why, in twenty ports, from Manila to Rio, I have heard yarns like these, too circumstantial to be waved aside. They can't be pure invention, or sane men would not be spending fortunes every year to send out vessels to search for treasure."

"We are ever so much more sensible," came from Eudora. "Father and I dream our treasure finding right here at home and then plan how we shall spend it."

Captain Kempton silenced her with a gesture of annoyance, as though this were a theme too serious for jesting. She regarded him a little anxiously, and would have talked of something else, but Mannice persisted:

"But did those gay old cutthroats really leave any charts with the crosses and compass bearings all marked down? And if they didn't, how the deuce does anybody know where to look?"

"There are such charts," seriously affirmed the skipper. "They have been handed down from survivors who were not drowned or hanged. I have heard of one or two perfectly well authenticated. A party that chartered a schooner out of Havana three years ago had one of them. I knew the man they hired as master. He wrote me about it."

"And did they find the stuff?" queried the incredulous Mannice.

"If they did, they would keep mum.

It might be claimed by some government or other as treasure-trove. But if they didn't, the chart might not have been to blame. Landmarks change or vanish in two or three centuries, and the sea may shift a coast line beyond recognition."

"And it's a good gamble that somebody will turn up the jewels and the pieces of eight if they dig long enough?" cried the reporter, who was becoming excited.

"Provided they are equipped with a proper chart," and Captain Kempton smote the table with his fist. "Why, if I were lucky enough to stumble on a document of this kind, I wouldn't hesitate a minute to spend some money on it—go take a look, I mean."

"And put us in the poorhouse?" chided Eudora, who had returned from the kitchen to stand at his elbow like a guardian angel. "There would be a mutiny in his family."

"I'm not joking," asserted her father, addressing himself to Mannice. "I know what I am talking about. I have enough laid by to fit out a vessel, and a man might as well stake it all on one throw as to molder his life away with the other hulks in this graveyard."

Mannice stared, and was silent. He had stirred unsuspected currents of emotion. It was easy to read that the captain was in rebellion against his tragic destiny and hoped to find some way of escape. His mind unoccupied, his normal activity thwarted, he dreamed of treasure and adventure for lack of anything more tangible. This made the story so much the better, reflected William Marmaduke Mannice, whose attitude toward his fellow man was essentially selfish. While Eudora washed the dishes, he sat on the porch and smoked with Captain Kempton, who needed no persuasion to pursue the same subject. At his fingers' ends was an amazing amount of lore and legend, of facts that denoted a profound historical research, of conclusions worked out with the utmost ingenuity.

Reluctantly, at length, the journalist asked the time of day, for a pawn ticket reposed where his own watch should have been. Another half hour and he must think of taking a train to Boston. Eudora was among her flowers, and he desired to know her better before departing. His heart may have been calloused, but there was no denying the fact that it beat a trifle faster whenever he looked at the captain's winsome daughter. He became aware that he was still capable of an infatuation.

Eudora greeted him with a certain dignified aloofness, and appeared more interested in the weeds in the pansy bed. This he laid to feminine coyness. It was a way the pretty creatures had, but trust a man of the world to play the game with patience and finesse. Blandly, he exclaimed, hat in hand:

"May I beg a few forget-me-nots for remembrance, Miss Kempton? This has been one of those days—well, a sort of inspiration."

"Yes, my father can be very entertaining," she crisply replied, disregarding his plea. "Tell me, do you intend to put him in a newspaper?"

"Er—he appeals to me as a striking personality. Yes, I should like to describe him."

"Oh, I don't mind what you may say about his life and service. I'm sure it will please him, Mr. Mannice. But about his lost-treasure hobby—I forbid that, you know. He takes it too seriously now, and he mustn't be encouraged."

The journalist hesitated, and plausibly lied: "Your word is law. I could promise you anything if you would let me come to see you again."

"Again? You didn't come to see me to-day," quoth the unsatisfactory Eudora. "By the way, you are not allow-

ing yourself any too much time to catch that train. You are rather stout for rapid walking."

This was an insult deliberate and cutting. Mr. Mannice turned quite red, bit his lip, and for once was taken aback. With a low bow and a murmured farewell, he clapped his hat on his head and passed grandly from the garden. Eudora smiled, and overtook her parent, who was pacing the path to the wharf.

"An uncommonly pleasant visitor," said he. "He woke me up a bit. Able in his own line, I should say. How did you like him?"

"Not as much as he likes himself," was her analysis. "He impressed me as the least bit gone to seed. His clothes were not really shabby, and I couldn't call his face dissipated, but—perhaps I'll have to call it intuition. A cable length would be far enough to trust Mr. William Marmaduke Mannice, I think."

This seemed to ruffle Captain Kempton, usually so affectionate, and he hastily retorted:

"That sounds critical and unkind, Eudora. I don't agree with you at all. Really, I have so few pleasures, and——"

"And it is horrid of me," she penitently broke in. "It was lots of fun. Did you give him your photograph?"

"Yes. My old friends will be glad to see it published. I shall want some extra copies of the paper. I urged Mr. Mannice to drop in again."

"He will," was the verdict of Eudora, who had her own private opinion. William Marmaduke was an admirer not easily suppressed.

CHAPTER II.

It was in a Boston lodging house by no means luxurious that the accomplished journalist sat down at once to arrange his notes and write three columns of swinging prose in praise of Yankee ships and sailors that sail the seas no more. The image of Eudora was somewhat distracting, but there was no time to waste, for he needed the money. With the untiring facility of long training, he drove at his task until far in the night, and was nearing the end when a brilliant idea occurred to him. He had a fatal weakness for improving on the facts. Putting it more bluntly, he felt no scruples over faking a story when he thought he could get away with it.

In this instance, he hesitated, reluctant to offend Miss Eudora, but he might be adroit enough to explain it away were he to meet her again, and sentiment must yield to necessity. For an extra fifty dollars in his pocket, he was prepared to take chances. He dared not tarry much longer in Boston. It was not far enough away from New York.

Here was this Captain Kempton, he said to himself, with the buried-treasure bee in his bonnet. Why not counterfeit a pirate's chart, in exact imitation of the real thing, clever enough at least to fool a Sunday editor? There was the old clipper ship *Wanderer* rotting at the wharf. While poking about in her forecastle, so Mannice swiftly evolved the story, he had dislodged a board that was about to fall from its rusty nails above one of the bunks. Behind the board was a small space in which he discovered what looked to be an ancient, sea-stained document. It proved to be a chart, roughly drawn in ink upon a square of parchment. Some seamen had hidden it there for safe-keeping perhaps half a century ago.

So far so good. Mr. Mannice began to feel the satisfaction of an artist. The really dramatic touch, the situation, was to be in the alleged fact that he, a random visitor, should have stumbled upon this strange old chart while the

custodian of the *Wanderer,* Captain Joseph Kempton, was dreaming his days away in the hope of discovering this very thing.

"A Sunday editor ought to fall for it," thoughtfully reflected the scapegrace, "provided he isn't wise to my past."

From his trunk, he brought out several large envelopes filled with newspaper clippings, and dumped them upon the table. They had been saved from time to time as possible suggestions for special articles, grist for the mill, an assortment of odd or striking news paragraphs and the like. Recalling one in particular, he made a hasty search, and was delighted at finding it. Briefly, it referred to a certain industrious pirate, Peleg Peterson by name, who harried the New England coast in the eighteenth century and had buried his treasure on one of the Seven Islands in the Gulf of the St. Lawrence, west of Anticosti, and northwest of Cape Gaspe.

"Peleg Peterson is the boy," cheerfully observed Mr. Mannice. "And now I know where to plant his stuff. Watch me fake a chart to-morrow that will fool Captain Kempton himself when he sees it reproduced."

The first errand was to procure a piece of genuine parchment in a little shop on Cornhill. Then, with the skill of a born forger, he inked in the crude outline of a very small island, avoiding too much detail. A tree and a big rock and a small bay served as marks, so many paces this way and so many that, according to the compass, all noted in one corner of the chart as set down by the sprawling fist of the illiterate Peleg Peterson.

Then, with candle grease and coffee stains, cobwebs and dust, did William Marmaduke Mannice proceed to age and disguise his handiwork, even to spilling rum on it, as suggested by his boyhood acquaintance with Billy Bones and other literary worthies of this ilk. The result was gratifying. It would not have deceived an expert in old manuscripts, but for the purpose intended it was amazingly clever, and Mr. Mannice virtuously commented that he had the *Wanderer* and Captain Kempton around which to build the narrative. They actually existed, beyond a doubt.

Plausible, self-assured, with never a pang of conscience, William Marmaduke Mannice swaggered downtown to vend his wares. While crossing Washington Street, he suddenly halted, as if detained by an unseen hand, and was almost run over by an automobile. Retreating to the pavement, he vanished into a café and ordered a cocktail while he wrestled with the inspiration that had come like a bolt from the blue. It was big—something worth while.

"Boob!" he bitterly addressed himself. "A little more and you would have sold this perfectly good chart for a song. And there is a fine old sea dog at Falmouth who yearns to get his hands on it."

It was the spirit of Broadway that spoke, the spirit that tolerates the man who lives by his wits and regards the easy mark as fair prey. The scheme of hoaxing Captain Kempton with this bogus chart appealed to Mannice for several reasons. He hoped to share the dollars which the father of Eudora had said were ready to be staked on a treasure expedition, and he was exceedingly anxious to disappear somewhere until matters in New York looked less hostile. It was anything to tide over the crisis, to save him from being broke and stranded. Besides, he foolishly sighed to be near Eudora, and if he could not dip into the father's little fortune by means of the treasure-hunting scheme, he might possibly feather his nest in marrying the daughter.

The plot had this charming feature—it might be full of ethical flaws, but

there could be no way of enmeshing Mr. Mannice as obtaining money under false pretenses. This he was careful to elucidate to himself. It was a speculation in which he could not lose, and he saw a chance to win. As for Captain Joseph Kempton, it was doing him a kindness. He would be happy looking for treasure, whether he found it or not. People who went daffy over this sort of thing ought to be given an opportunity to get it out of their systems.

Mr. Mannice drank another cocktail, and carefully counted his cash reserve. He was near the end of his rope, but there was enough for another trip to Falmouth. He moved promptly, taking a train which landed him in that sea port shortly after nightfall of this same day. Cautiously, he made his way on foot to the corner of the harbor where the forsaken vessels lay in a row, and passed wide of the captain's cottage. The place was unwatched at night, and, unobserved, he stumbled out upon the dilapidated wharf at which the *Wanderer* was moored.

A pocket flash light enabled him to find his way into the musty forecastle which he had previously explored with Captain Kempton. It was not difficult to pry aside a decayed bit of the boarding behind a tier of bunks and shove therein the crumpled parchment. Assuring himself that it looked as if it had long lain there undisturbed, he replaced the board and hammered it fast. After looking about, to make certain he had left no traces, the guileful intruder stole out of the *Wanderer* and sought the darkened highway to Falmouth. There a small hotel sheltered him until morning, when he prepared to call at the cottage of Captain Kempton as though just arrived from Boston.

Shortly after breakfast Eudora bethought herself of an errand, and she took the longer road to a neighbor's house in order that she might overlook the harbor bar and the flashing sea beyond. Perhaps she would not have confessed it as a reason, but the powerful steel tug *Endeavor* had been reported as passing the cape, inbound from the southward, and Dan Sloan was the mate. Eudora gazed in vain, shrugged a shapely shoulder as if it made no difference whatever, and continued on her way.

Captain Kempton had gone down to the beach to oversee a gang of men who were scrapping the engines of a small steamer when Mr. William Marmaduke Mannice, having found the cottage empty, discovered him and advanced at a gait more hurried than usual. The visitor wore an air of suppressed excitement, rehearsed beforehand, and to the captain's cordial greeting he replied:

"You're not half as surprised as I am, my dear sir. I didn't expect to give myself the pleasure, but a most extraordinary thing has happened—if you are too busy for a chat, I'll wait, of course."

The mariner's curiosity was piqued, and he withdrew a few yards from his workmen as he said:

"I am glad you found an excuse to run down again, Mr. Mannice. Shall we sit down here on the bulwark?"

Mannice glanced to right and left, and lowered his voice. It was enough to give the interview a flavor of mystery.

"It is a matter between us. You will understand when I explain. I would rather not run any risk of being overheard."

The captain looked puzzled, but nodded, and moved in the direction of the cottage. Mannice made no disclosures, discussing the weather and politely inquiring about Miss Kempton and her health, until they had come to the porch. The shipmaster was a man who had learned to keep his own

counsel, and he awaited the import of this second pilgrimage. An ugly customer to hoodwink and be caught at it, even though his hair was silvered, reflected Mannice, as he scanned the resolute profile and glanced at the sinewy hands. But there was no hint of misgiving in the young man's demeanor as he smoothly began:

"Your yarns of buried treasure interested me so much that it was hard for me to think of anything else when I returned to Boston. It occurred to me that among my clippings there might be something worth sending to add to your collection. I had saved very little treasure stuff, and could dig up only one item. I must have put it away several years ago, and it was badly torn. But I pieced it together and made a typewritten copy. It's queer, awfully queer, Captain Kempton, a hundred-to-one shot, but——"

"Perhaps I have heard it from some other source," was the quick interruption. "Most of those newspaper reports are sheer moonshine."

"True enough," handsomely agreed Mannice. "My only reason for paying any attention to this was what you might call a coincidence. It seems that a very old man died in a Liverpool hospital, leaving a rambling statement to the effect that he had sailed before the mast in the deep-water trade. During one of his last voyages, the deuce of a while ago, I presume, he had been laid up with yellow fever in Valparaiso. The man in the next cot, another English sailor, was almost dead, but before he cashed in he gave this chap a little packet wrapped in canvas and told him to keep it for himself. It had come down from his grandfather and was the real goods, said the owner, straight from one of the crew who had sailed with a pirate known as Peleg Peterson."

"A chart, of course," exclaimed Captain Kempton, springing from his chair to stride the porch. "The story has a familiar sound, but you can never tell. Please go on. There was a Peleg Peterson, a lively rascal. He was hanged at Execution Dock, with five of his men."

The narrator felt increasing confidence, and he resumed more weightily: "This sailor lived to get out of Valparaiso in an American clipper ship. His mind weakened in old age, or sickness impaired it. At any rate, he was unable to remember the name of the ship. He did remember, however, that he had tucked the chart away behind the planking over his bunk in the forecastle, hoping some day to go looking for the treasure. He was badly smashed up in a storm on the homeward voyage and lugged ashore with a broken leg. The ship sailed away without him, and he was never able to run across her again. And so he lost his precious chart."

"The ship may have been lost after that, Mr. Mannice. An American clipper, did you say?"

"Yes. He could recall that she was very fast and quite new at the time."

"Anything else? What port she hailed from?" came the eager questions. "On one of his last voyages? He may have been afloat until he was sixty or more. Those old shellbacks are hard to kill. It's not impossible that the ship is still knocking about; there are a few of them left—my old *Endymion* and——"

"And the *Wanderer!*" exclaimed Mannice, choosing the right moment to drive the suggestion home. "I thought of her at once. That's why I came to tell you about it. The odds are all against it, of course."

Their eyes sought the wharf and the graceful hull of what had once been a queen of all the oceans. Captain Kempton's hobby made him credulous, ready to expect a coincidence. And

every man bred to the sea has beheld impossible things come true.

"Let me find an ax," cried he. "We'll rip out that fo'castle in a jiffy."

He checked himself and put a finger to his lips. Secrecy was the word. Already the lure of pirate's gold worked in him like a potent poison. Mannice smiled assent. They would keep this fascinating business to themselves. Almost by stealth, they fetched a circuit and gained the wharf from the other side, screened from the men at work on the beach. It was a zestful adventure for the mariner, and Mannice flattered himself that his stage management was excellent. Once in the forecastle of the *Wanderer,* he so maneuvered it that the search should be prolonged, suggesting an attack on the walls where he knew nothing was hidden. Timbers and planking flew like kindling. The captain was in a mood to hew the ship to pieces. The eager Mannice aided with a bit of iron as a crowbar. In a twinkling, they demolished a row of bunks.

Meanwhile, Eudora had come home, and was absorbed in the daily routine of keeping the cottage so neat and trim that the most exacting shipmaster could find no fault. Broom and dusting cloth were dropped as she descried through an open window her father and the important Mr. Mannice ascending the path. No wonder their aspect amazed her, for they were as battered and disheveled as a brace of tramps, collars wilted, trousers torn, coats begrimed. Some sort of elation made them gesticulate and talk with tremendous gusto. Eudora knew her father too well to suspect the demon rum, unless he had been somehow led astray by this Mannice person, and she waited with lively apprehension.

At sight of her, they paused, put their heads together, and exchanged confidential speech, as though something highly important was to be shared between them. This nettled Eudora, and her unfavorable impression of Mr. Mannice flamed into active dislike. He dropped behind, and permitted the captain to announce to his vigilant daughter:

"An old crank, was I? A rainbow chaser? I have found a pirate's chart, Eudora, and it was hidden right under my nose. Doubloons, my dear, and rings for your fingers."

She received the tidings calmly, but her head was in a whirl. Her eyes narrowed a trifle as she surveyed William Marmaduke Mannice, who stepped forward to add, with his jocular suavity:

"A fairy tale right out of a book, Miss Kempton, but they do come true now and then. Luck, pure luck, that couldn't happen again in a thousand years. I stumbled on the clew, and we ran it out, tucked away in the old *Wanderer,* the last will and testament of Peleg Peterson, gentleman rover."

Eudora's intelligent face expressed a variety of emotions, but those that were uppermost she managed to dissemble. Her father seemed hurt that she failed to display enthusiasm, so she lightly replied:

"How perfectly gorgeous! I choose the rubies and emeralds, if you please, and the tall candlesticks of beaten gold from the cathedrals on the Spanish Main. But you have to find the treasure first, don't you?"

"Unless somebody else has beat us to it, we are apt to turn up something with the pick and shovel," declaimed Mannice. "But it's mightly unlikely that more than one chart was left behind by this Peleg Peterson."

"Oh, you are already planning to look for it?" asked Eudora, a reflective finger on her chin. "You take my breath away. May I see the wonderful chart?"

"Not now. It must not be exposed to the strong light," testily explained

her father. "The ink may fade, or the parchment crumble, and then where are we?"

Something told Eudora that he was not wholly frank. They were unwilling to show her the chart for fear she could not keep a secret. She flushed, but held her temper, and demanded, with a laugh:

"You must tell me the whole story, every word. I am dying to hear it. Here I ran away for a little while and missed the most exciting thing that ever happened. Tell me, first, daddy, are you honestly going to sail in search of it? And how far away is it hidden?"

There was a note of anxiety in her voice, for a quick glance had caught Mannice unawares, and she detected on his florid lineaments a look greedy and intent before he could mask it.

"Not so far away but what I can afford to fit out a small schooner," promptly answered the captain. "Mr. Mannice will go along, naturally, as a partner, and at my expense. This is no more than fair, for the chart really belongs to him."

"Oh, indeed! He was very honest about it, wasn't he? He might have sneaked aboard the *Wanderer* in the night without saying a word to you, and kept the treasure all to himself."

"He has behaved handsomely," affirmed the captain.

"But this expedition will cost a great deal of money," protested Eudora, "and you may have to give up your position as caretaker. It seems like a sort of summer madness to me. What is your opinion, Mr. Mannice?"

"I merely helped Captain Kempton find the chart," he replied, with a shrug. "The rest of it is up to him."

"Let's go into the house," broke in the mariner. "I will show you to my room, Mr. Mannice. You want to wash and brush up, I'm sure."

Alone with her father for a few minutes, Eudora plied him with questions blunt and insistent. He had another excuse for withholding the chart from her, and would disclose nothing more than that the treasure was buried in the Seven Islands.

"You are afraid I'll tell Dan Sloan and he will go after it himself," she impetuously exclaimed. "I hate the whole idea. It has changed you already. And I distrust this Mannice from the bottom of my heart. I can't tell you why. A woman's reasons, I suppose. He didn't ring true to me when he was here before. Forget this absurd chart and let him keep it and the treasure, if he can find it."

"You had better leave the decision to me," he firmly replied. "I have been studying this thing for years. Let this go by, refuse to take a fling? I should never forgive myself. It is for you, my dear girl."

"I am happy without it. Then, if you are bound to go, leave Mannice behind and give him his share later," she argued. "I can't make myself clear, but he has put a sort of spell on you. And if you insist, I go, too, to look after your interests as best I can."

"I thought of leaving you with your aunt in Portland," he awkwardly returned. "S-ssh! Mr. Mannice is coming downstairs."

Eudora promptly fled the room, and scurried across the lawn to the road and led toward the outer harbor. Perhaps she was a goose to interfere and spoil her father's ardent enjoyment. He was hard-headed and experienced, seldom swayed by impulse. However, her heart leaped for gratitude when, around the southward headland, came into view a red-funneled tug hauling her barges in from sea with a certain quiet and massive strength. Not as a lover, but certainly as a friend in need, she would welcome Dan Sloan, for she knew not where else to turn.

CHAPTER III.

No sooner had the *Endeavor* passed her hawsers to the wharf at Falmouth than the stalwart young mate leaped ashore and struck out for a white cottage as his journey's end. His ruddy cheek was freshly shaven, and the blue serge suit was smartly cut. A very proper figure of a sailor and a man to steer clear of in a quarrel, he looked fit to fight Eudora's battles as well as his own. She had decided to forewarn him of the situation, but to say nothing in prejudice of William Marmaduke Mannice. Let Dan form his own judgment and then advise her.

They therefore met in the road near home, quite by chance, of course, because he must not think she had come to look for him. Wistfulness shadowed his engaging features, for he hoped that absence might have made her fonder, but she gave no sign beyond a gracious friendliness as they shook hands and moved toward the cottage.

"Yes, I am truly glad to see you, Dan," said Eudora. "A good run, was it, from Norfolk?"

"Fair. We lost a barge in a squall off Cape Cod, but picked her up again," said the resonant voice. "Snatched her off the shoals just before she bumped. A line parted and knocked me overboard. How goes it with you? Whew, but the days do drag when I'm away! It's worse every voyage, Eudora."

"Pooh! They say you have a girl in every port, Dan."

"They lie," exclaimed the mate, "and you know better. I'm making a good record these days. Won't you give me any credit for it?"

"Indeed I do, and there are times when I'm proud of you," was her sweetly candid assurance. "But we must talk about something else just now. My sensible father has decided to go roaming off to find a buried treasure, and I am completely upset."

"He has talked that foolishness until he believes there is something in it?" was the cheerful query. "Well, we'll just have to talk him out of it. A restless fit, I presume. He wants some excuse to go to sea again. What touched him off?"

"A man named Mannice, who found a pirate's chart in the old *Wanderer,* Dan. He is some kind of a newspaper writer. Father has taken a great fancy to him."

"A young man, is he?" And Mr. Sloan scowled. This exhibition of temper seemed to please Eudora, who smiled demurely as she replied:

"Fairly young, and quite captivating. Don't look so wrathy, please. I am only quoting his opinion of himself. I don't like him, and I wish that father had never laid eyes on him."

"Some kind of a crooked game in the wind, Eudora?" briskly demanded Dan, who was clearing for action.

"I don't know. There is nothing that I can put a finger on. But I feel uneasy and helpless. They won't tell me anything definite. Father and I have always been so chummy. Now he won't even consult me."

"About this chart," slowly remarked Dan. "Have you seen it? Can I get a squint at it? This Mannice rooster knew where to find it?"

"He got on the track of it, yes. I'm sure they will refuse to tell you anything about it. So please ask no questions when you meet them. It would only make it harder for me."

"I see. I might be able to give you some idea of what the chart amounts to. Your dad is a first-rate navigator, but in a case like this his judgment is befogged. It's easy for a man to believe a thing when his mind has a slant that way. He actually talks of sailing somewhere?"

"They are planning it now, Dan. In a vessel of their own. It will cost a lot of money."

"Well, it will take some time to charter and outfit, and all that," the sailor soothingly suggested. "Meanwhile, the skipper may wake up from this pipe dream. And I can look up this Mannice proposition. I'm acquainted with ship-news reporters from Boston to Baltimore, and if there is anything wrong with the man, they will be glad to run it out for me. I'll stand by, Eudora."

"I know you will," she softly told him, and the intonations moved him beyond words. They seemed to be drawn closer together than he had hitherto dared hope for. His hand sought hers, but she eluded him, and a moment later they were turning into the cottage. Mannice and the captain walked a path arm in arm, as though the little garden were their own quarter-deck. When Eudora appeared with the mate of the *Endeavor,* the two treasure seekers halted in their tracks and seemed a trifle startled. It amused Eudora, who had never seen her father look so like a naughty boy caught in the act. Evidently he regarded Dan Sloan as an untimely intruder, but he recovered his hearty manner and presented his friend, Mr. William Marmaduke Mannice.

The latter gentleman had a voluble greeting ready, but he inwardly wondered who the devil this Sloan fellow might be and in what relation he stood to Eudora. They disliked each other at sight, and the feeling was more than primitive jealousy. Mannice was afraid of this clean, virile sailor who looked him straight in the eye, while Dan was conscious of a rising contempt. The contrast between them instantly impressed Eudora, and she discerned in Mannice, for all his ingratiating airs, a soul that was flaccid and furtive.

"A newspaper man, I understand," said Dan, coming to the point at once. "What owners are you signed with at present?"

"Unattached, Mr. Sloan," smiled Mannice. "It pays me better to write on my own hook. My name has some value, don't you know."

"Ah, yes. I haven't happened to come across it. Have you found any interesting material in Falmouth? Fond of the sea?"

"In a literary way," replied the other, glancing at Captain Kempton. "Some great stuff here."

"I have persuaded Mr. Mannice to make us a visit, Eudora," said the skipper. "We can easily find room for him."

Dan glowered at this, and yearned to eject the trespasser, but he had promised to live down his cyclonic past. It was obvious that nothing was to be said to him about the treasure quest. He determined to talk with Captain Kempton alone at the first opportunity and beg him to do nothing rash until Mannice could be investigated.

Just then there sounded from the direction of Falmouth six long blasts of a steam whistle, deep and sonorous. An interval and they were repeated. The mate of the *Endeavor* looked dismayed as he explained to Eudora:

"The recall signal from my boat. Hurry orders to coal up and put to sea. And I expected to have several days in port. Well, it's good-by. Will you come as far as the road with me, Eudora?"

He turned quickly, with a farewell nod to the others, who showed no signs of sorrow. In fact, William Marmaduke Mannice displayed a beaming countenance which, luckily for him, the sailor failed to observe. Eudora went a little way with him, and he stood, reluctant, as he told her:

"This is hard luck for me. I ought to be on hand. I don't like the looks of things, but it may clear up without me. Don't worry any more than you can help, and be sure to write if you need me."

"But you don't know where you are going, Dan," ruefully cried the girl.

"I'll send you a note from Falmouth to-day before we sail. A letter in care of our agents will find me without much delay. Bless your heart, I'll jump ship anywhere if you send me a call."

"Don't do that, Dan. Duty first. God bless you. I will let you know just what is going on, and you may be back in port to-morrow for all we know."

His hard, brown hand clasped hers with a lingering caress, and he left her gazing after him as he broke into a swinging trot and hastened to rejoin his vessel. In a low-spirited mood, Eudora turned toward the outer harbor and waited until the *Endeavor* passed out to sea, trailing a long banner of smoke. At home, she found a brief message, scrawled in pencil and delivered by a boy:

Big steamer in distress with a broken shaft. A hundred miles offshore. Will probably tow to Boston. As always, your faithful DAN.

The captain and his companion were not to be found, nor did they return until supper had been waiting for some time. Eudora heard her father say as he crossed the porch:

"Much better luck than I expected. The schooner was chartered for the fishing season, but there was some trouble over terms, and she has been lying idle for two months. We are getting her dirt cheap, and she can be made ready for sea in a few days."

"A crew and provisions, and it's 'once aboard the lugger——'" blithely returned Mr. Mannice.

"You had better run into Boston and get your things together. It's short notice for you, of course, and whatever cash you need, why, we'll drop into the bank in the morning."

Eudora, an indignant eavesdropper, perceived that matters were moving much faster than she had anticipated. Dan Sloan was out of reach, and it was futile for her to fight lone-handed. She therefore did the next best thing, which was to announce, in her pleasantest manner:

"Please reserve the most comfortable stateroom for me and a one-third share of the treasure."

"Delighted, Miss Kempton," exclaimed Mannice. "A true viking's daughter. I should refuse to sail without you."

"If she insists, there's no stopping her," said the captain, who comprehended that Eudora had made up her mind.

"I'm sure I can handle a shovel with either of you," she observed, looking hard at the poorly conditioned figure of Mr. Mannice. "The Seven Islands! You were kind enough to tell me that much. May I ask where they are? If I am to get my clothes ready right away, I should like some idea of the length of the voyage."

Her father was grimly taciturn, and left it to Mannice to say: "Mum's the word, Miss Kempton. You know how it is with a treasure expedition. The merest hint, and away they all go after you. As a partner, you are entitled to know all about it, but the captain has put the lid on until we leave port. It will be a short voyage on this side of the Atlantic, say two or three weeks. None of the tropical stuff, palms and coral reefs and brown-skinned natives."

Eudora picked up spirits at this. Dan Sloan would not seem so hopelessly far away as she had feared. Her father felt relieved that she had turned tractable and made no more effort to dissuade him. For Eudora another ray broke through the cloud when he informed her:

"I crossed the hawse of old Harvey Mattoon in Falmouth this afternoon and coaxed him to join as cook for a sort of yachting cruise, as I called it.

He will make it seem like the days gone by in the *Endymion.*"

"Is he still tending his lobster pots? Why, he sailed with you when I was a little girl, and you never had a more faithful man. I'm so glad. And the rest of your crew?"

"Four Falmouth lads will do, fishermen ashore. I'll round them up tomorrow. I shall carry no mate."

For three days thereafter, the two adventurers were prodigiously busy and seldom at home. Mannice went to Boston, and was intrusted with the purchase of sundry supplies at a ship chandler's in that port. Captain Kempton, wrapped in mystery, inspected his schooner, mustered his crew, and looked after a thousand and one details. He enjoyed it all, and was much happier than Eudora had seen him in years. His training came back to him, and he drove the work without bluster or flurry, a man supremely competent at his own trade.

Hearing nothing more from Dan and the *Endeavor,* Eudora waited until the last day before the schooner was to flit from the harbor. Then she wrote, with a sorely troubled mind:

MY DEAR FRIEND DAN: Father is carrying me off to-morrow in the *Challenge* for parts unknown. It is a coastwise voyage—I know that much. I never got so much as a peep at the chart. Does Seven Islands convey any meaning to you? I am more and more convinced that Mannice is up to something, although I can't fathom it at all. He had no money. A lot owing to him and no time to collect it, said he, which seemed to satisfy poor dad, who couldn't sleep for impatience to start. For fear folks might think it queer and ask questions at seeing Captain Kempton fitting out a vessel, he has let Mannice pose as the financier, and, I am afraid, given him some of the funds to handle.

I shall keep my eyes open every minute. Mannice has been courteous enough to me, but he knows I suspect and dislike him, I am sure. I will write again, Dan, if we touch at any port. I wish you were in the party. I should feel ever so much easier about the venture. Please don't worry. Father will take the best of care of me. My anxiety is on his account. I shall think of you very often. Isn't it nice of me to say that much?

EUDORA.

CHAPTER IV.

In the Gulf of St. Lawrence, the slim schooner *Challenge* was standing on a long tack to fetch a group of islets which had lifted from the horizon like tiny dots. Captain Kempton was at the wheel, his gray hair bared to the sun, his shirt sleeves rolled up to disclose the tattooed pattern of a mermaid. Dapperly clad in white flannels, William Marmaduke Mannice stood at the rail and aimed a pair of binoculars at the distant Seven Islands. Eudora was in the cabin. It was confoundedly odd, but whenever he appeared on deck she found something to do below, and vice versa; and he was sure of meeting her only at meals. He had expected to make more headway during the voyage, but for once the irresistible suitor had encountered the immovable maid.

Now, however, he forgot the chilling indifference of Eudora in contemplating a problem even more serious. There were the Seven Islands, right enough, but they seemed to be no more than so many naked rocks. In this event, the skipper might turn about and sail straight home again, which meant that Mr. Mannice would shortly be turned adrift to shift for himself. Anxiously, therefore, he stared at the blue sky line and watched the black dots grow larger. The captain shouted an order. The men shortened sail and dropped the sounding lead as the schooner crept to leeward of the southernmost pinnacle of the group. Eudora came on deck, shaded her eyes with her hand, and exclaimed to her parent:

"I suppose I ought to apologize for being such a horrid little skeptic. The Seven Islands really exist, but they look

dreadfully skimpy. We shall have to dig one at a time or crowd each other overboard."

"We are not close enough to get the lay of the land," he replied, with a nervous gesture. "The admiralty chart shows one island a mile or so long, but much lower than the others. We shall get a sight of it presently."

Mannice felt much better. The chart of Peleg Peterson was vague enough to fit almost any island big enough to land on. And Captain Kempton was not apt to be too critical. All he desired was the sand and a shovel. The breeze held until the schooner had picked her course so near the largest island that the party could see a strip of white beach in a notch of coast and the land behind it strewn with boulders and thinly covered with a stunted growth. It was a desolate bit of landscape, but charming to the eyes of Captain Kempton, who ran to the companionway to unfold the chart of Peleg Peterson and jubilantly impart:

"A pocket of a bay, precisely as the rogue set it down, and those thundering big rocks were what he took his bearings from. Hooray! Mannice, my boy, we're on the right track."

Mannice matched his enthusiasm, saying to himself that this was his lucky day. He had drawn a bay on the chart, of course, for most islands had them, and how else could a pirate put his boat ashore while his low, rakish craft lay in the offing? Eudora, poor girl, was in a confused state of mind. She was no less mistrustful of the dashing Mannice, but he did seem to know his business when it came to directing this singular voyage. She would suspend judgment for the present.

There was sufficient water in the bay for the schooner to swing at a sheltered anchorage. It was in the afternoon when she rested with canvas furled and a boat was dropped from the davits astern. It had been decided, so long as the weather should be fair, to erect a shelter ashore for use during the day, and to return aboard at night. There was a large amount of material to disembark—tools, tarpaulins, wheelbarrows, and so on, and this preliminary task was lustily undertaken by all hands, barring the cook, Harvey Mattoon. A venerable man was he, gnarled and tough, with despondent views concerning human nature. Confidentially, he croaked to Eudora as they watched the seamen load the yawl:

"I never would ha' thought it of your old man. Did it take him sudden, or was there any previous spells by way of warnin'?"

"It attacked him all at once, Harvey," she laughed. "Then you don't approve?"

"A-racketin' off at his age to cut up didoes like this? It's awful. Seems as if he had more sense than to tie up to a human sculpin like this Mannice. I'd pisen his grub if I dared."

"Then you and I think the same way, and we'll have to stand together," said Eudora; "but we must keep very quiet about it."

The cook went grumbling to the galley, manifesting no interest in the thrilling scene. No sooner had the captain finished his work on the beach than, regardless of the supper hour, he unfolded his precious chart and endeavored to find the marks and bearings as recorded by the wicked Peleg Peterson. Mannice dutifully accompanied him, and kept a straight face while the honest mariner trudged from one boulder to another and painfully studied a pocket compass.

It was a puzzling quest, but your treasure seeker is swayed by his imagination, and the captain steered his course by the precious chart with all the confidence in the world.

"'*From ye Grate Rock forty paces to ye Shoare, S. S. E.,*'" he solemnly quoted from the dingy parchment

which Mannice kindly helped him decipher, for the pirate had been a villainous hand with a pen. "Here we are, my boy. The biggest rock on the island. No doubt of it. Now for *'ye tall oke tree.'* Gone, confound it, but perhaps we can find the stump. It's not essential. We'll turn up every inch of the beach before we quit."

Breakfast was served at daybreak next morning, and only the cook was left on board the schooner. The seamen had been promised extra wages, and they were eager to make the sand fly. Eudora lent her encouraging presence, deciding to save her energy until later. At the indicated spot, the party opened a trench above high-water mark, while the summer sun climbed higher from a windless sea, and the heat became uncomfortable.

Conscious of Eudora's scrutiny, Mr. Mannice labored valiantly, an example for the others. Sweat ran from him in rivers, and his unaccustomed muscles ached acutely. He grunted as he raised the shovel, and stifled a curse whenever he straightened himself. He dared not loaf. He had to go through with the thing, or the captain's daughter might denounce him as a fraud. A day or so of this, however, and the captain's frenzy would abate. There was no sense in digging themselves to death.

The end of the day found all hands so weary that they crawled into their bunks immediately after supper, Mannice falling asleep at the table. Eudora sat on a bench outside the galley with old Harvey Mattoon and listened to his droning memories of vanished ships and seamen. Soaked with the superstitions of his kind, he told of things incredible, until the listening girl turned to ask: "Then why don't you believe in pirates' gold, Harvey? It's not as wild as this yarn of yours that the ghost of the bos'n swam after the ship for days and days."

"Pirates there was, and mebbe they hid it," said he, with a rusty wheeze, "but all the gold we'll see this voyage comes out of the old man's pocket. Mannice is a Jonah, I tell ye. He instigated suthin'. I feel it in my bones."

"He worked like a man in earnest to-day, Harvey. I almost pitied him."

"Don't do it. Pity is akin to love, and it 'u'd be a dreadful mistake. Yep, he worked, but his heart wa'n't in it like the rest of 'em. I watched him. And I heard him swearin' to himself through the skylight when he turned in."

"Oh, dear, I wish I were home," sighed Eudora. "This is a blind alley. You are a great comfort, Harvey. I used to tell you my troubles when I was a wee little girl and we were shipmates."

Next day, the excavating was resumed with unflagging zest, although Mr. Mannice had to ease his blistered palms at frequent intervals. Eudora offered sympathy in which he detected a mocking note, and offered to wield his shovel while he rested. Tiring at length of his company, she walked along the shore, and climbed the rocks beyond the bight of sand. A small schooner was bowling straight toward the islands, with the wind behind her, and the girl gazed, idly interested, expecting to see the craft pass on her way.

Soon, however, the sails were flattened, the course changed, and the schooner appeared to be making for the bay in which Captain Kempton's *Challenge* rode at anchor. A quick hope made Eudora's pulse flutter. It would be like her headstrong knight-errant, Dan Sloan, to come speeding to the rescue as soon as he received her plaintive message of farewell. Bright-eyed and breathless, she watched the schooner veer closer to find the winding passage until the people on deck were plainly visible. Alas, they were all strangers! Not only disappointed, but puzzled, was Eudora, for this ves-

sel could not be on fishing or trading business bound. There were passengers aboard, one of them a woman, and from an open hatch two of the crew were hoisting what looked like rolls of tents and other camping gear.

Eudora tarried no longer, but picked a path down the rocks and ran along the beach to tell her father. He dropped his shovel, and the other toilers joined him to watch the mysterious schooner float gracefully into the entrance of the bay and heave to a few hundred feet from the *Challenge*. This was an intrusion, resented by all hands, and their mood was far from cordial.

The most conspicuous figure of the schooner's company was a middle-aged man very accurately clad for roughing it, khaki clothes, leather puttees, campaign hat, a water bottle slung from a strap. He was thin, and stooped a little. His spectacles flashed in the sunlight, and the brown beard was nicely trimmed to a point.

His energy dominated the crew, who continued to drag out of the hold an astonishing amount of equipment. Presently he assisted into a small boat a short-skirted woman of a substantial, more deliberate aspect, and they were rowed ashore by two sailors. Captain Joseph Kempton advanced to meet them at the water's edge, muttering something about a dashed interloper. The gentleman thus designated appeared rather excited, and his wife was plainly endeavoring to calm him. As the boat grounded in the ripples, he stepped out, took three long strides, and found himself confronted by Captain Kempton, who nodded curtly and exclaimed:

"How do you do? May I ask what it's all about? Without meaning to be rude, this beach seems to be pretty well occupied."

The stranger was undaunted. In fact, he smiled in a condescending manner as he wiped his spectacles and replaced them to gaze over the captain's shoulder at the piles of freshly dug sand and the group of laborers. Carefully modulated were the accents as he replied:

"I am Professor James Hyssop Bodge, of Hemphill University. May I ask who you are, sir? It is easy to perceive what you are doing here. Amusing, very."

"I don't see the joke," said the mariner. "I'm Captain Kempton, retired shipmaster, and I was here first."

"Permit me to present Mrs. Bodge," politely returned the professor. Her plain, wholesome features indicated amusement as she spoke up:

"My husband doesn't seem so awfully pleased to meet you, Captain Kempton, but perhaps we can arrive at some understanding. We have come to find a pirate's treasure. And you are at this same game? How extraordinary!"

"I am sorry to disappoint you, madam," said the skipper more graciously, "but there isn't the slightest use in your bringing your stuff ashore. I have the only authentic information about this treasure, and I propose to keep it to myself."

"Nonsense! Please let me talk to him, Ellen," firmly quoth Professor Bodge. "He is laboring under a delusion. We possess the only clew to the whereabouts of Peleg Peterson's hoard. These other people are merely wasting time and money."

"And you are wasting your breath," snapped Captain Kempton. "You propose to land anyhow, do you?"

"Have you any authority to prevent it, sir?" And the spectacles glistened. "Does this island belong to you? If not, have you obtained exclusive permission from the owner?"

"It belongs to nobody, so far as I know," answered the skipper, who was a bit nonplused. "I don't think it necessary to look up any owner for this God-forsaken, wind-blown patch of real

estate. Have you any papers to show?"

The professor was stumped in his turn, but he logically flung back:

"No, sir, and for the same reason as yours. You have no right, therefore, to dispute my possession."

"But you haven't a glimmer of a chance of finding any treasure," obstinately pursued the other. "You will only be in our way. You've been misled somehow."

"Ridiculous!" cried Professor Bodge, whose ire was rising. "What's that, Ellen? I am perfectly composed, my dear. This poor man is chasing a will-o'-the-wisp. We shall proceed exactly as was planned."

He called to one of the sailors, who splashed ashore with a surveyor's measuring chain, a bundle of stakes, and a sledge hammer. Paying no more heed to the captain, Professor Bodge stalked across the beach and entered the sparse undergrowth among the boulders. Mrs. Bodge considered it her duty to go with him, although she had spied Eudora in the background and desired to make her acquaintance. The professor was seen to be poring over some kind of a document on his hands and knees. Then began a methodical exploration which led him some distance away from the landmarks chosen by Captain Kempton. No more than half an hour passed before he appeared to have found what he sought, for the whack of the hammer was heard as he drove in the first stake by which to guide the measuring chain.

Meanwhile, Captain Kempton had decided to hold a council of war with his partner, the amiable William Marmaduke Mannice, but the latter had strayed to a secluded corner of the beach, leaving word that the sun had given him a severe headache and he needed rest. This was partly true, for his wits were in a scrambled state. While listening to the statements of Professor James Hyssop Bodge, his mouth had hung open for dumb, distracted amazement. There wasn't any treasure, of course, and he had faked the only chart in existence, yet here was another party with another chart which might be the real thing, after all.

"This guy with the Vandyke beard certainly has me up in the air," lamented Mannice, who was breathing hard. "Dear, dear, what a tangled web we weave when we try to slip one over. And now what? Bluff it out! Show a firm front, William! You're living on somebody else's money, and there's a pretty girl in sight. You should worry!"

Now, Eudora had beheld the singular effect of the Bodge interview upon Mr. Mannice, and she drew her own conclusions. He was a man far more frightened than surprised. Guilt of some sort had openly betrayed itself. When he returned, and her father began talking with him, she joined the conference as a partner determined to be heard. Summoning his bravado, Mannice said, with a laugh:

"Why not let them amuse themselves? They'll soon tire of it and go away. Their silly bearings and marks have led them a couple of hundred yards up the beach. They won't be in our way."

"I am sorry to see an intelligent man, a college professor, make such an ass of himself," gravely quoth the father of Eudora. "You may be right Mannice. I want to avoid a clash, if possible. They are harmless lunatics. We'll mind our own business and watch them break their backs for nothing."

"Now can't you see yourself as others see you?" impulsively exclaimed Eudora. "Our expedition is as crazy as Professor Bodge's. Your chart is as worthless as his. This ought to cure you. Why not sail for home to-morrow and let them have the island to themselves?"

"And leave these infernal trespassers to finish our excavation and find the treasure that belongs to us?" retorted the obdurate mariner. "It's out of the question, Eudora. There is more reason than ever for us to stick to it if we have to lay here all summer."

"And you agree to that?" she hotly demanded of Mannice. His eyes wavered and evaded hers as he answered:

"Most certainly. We have the winning dope. This Bodge outfit is a merry jest, pure vaudeville"

Eudora turned her back on them, sick at heart. Day by day the cost of this folly was eating into her father's slender fortune, and, worse than this, he was a man changed and warped, as though the ghost of Peleg Peterson had bewitched him. Sadly she went out to the *Challenge* and watched Professor Bodge send his freight ashore and the white tents rise against the somber background of rock. At supper, the captain announced:

"We shall move ashore to-morrow and stay there. It's wiser to be right on the ground every minute. That rascally professor may try to steal a march on us. His information is pure buncombe, and, when he finds it out, he's likely to crowd closer to our diggings and try to beat us to the treasure. And, by Judas, I don't propose to give an inch!"

"What if he should find the treasure? Would you try to take it away from him?" asked Eudora.

"It belongs to us," blazed her father. "I'm as mild a man as ever commanded a ship, but I'll fight before I'll let any goggle-eyed shrimp of a professor cheat me out of my lawful rights."

CHAPTER V.

The situation was strained, but actual hostilities were not foreshadowed until two days later. Captain Kempton's crew encountered a granite ledge five feet down which barred their progress in one direction. For this reason, they dug more and more toward the part of the beach where the minions of Professor Bodge were creating an immense hole. Unfortunately, he discovered an error in his calculations which caused him to shift operations considerably nearer the captain's excavation. It was inevitable that, in a short time, the rivals would have shoveled themselves into such close proximity to each other that there must be a clash. The well-known law that two bodies cannot occupy the same space at the same time was bound to apply to treasure seekers. Eminently respectable men at home, Captain Joseph Kempton and Professor James Hyssop Bodge had suffered a sea change. The quest for lawless loot had gone to their heads, and they had broken the bonds of decorous habit. In spirit, they were fast relapsing into buccaneers. If it came to the issue, Kempton would not cringe nor Bodge budge.

Poor Eudora was so thoroughly alarmed that she defied her father, who had forbidden her to become friendly with the enemy. Watching the opportunity, she overtook the professor's wife, who had rambled some distance away from the camps. The worthy woman greeted Eudora like a long-lost daughter, kissed her on both cheeks, slipped an arm around her waist, and cried:

"I have been simply dying to have a talk with you, my dear child, but the suggestion annoyed my husband."

"My plight exactly, Mrs. Bodge. It has made me feel forlorn and homesick to look at you from our camp. Perhaps they won't miss us."

"I say we walk to the other side of the island, where they can't possibly see us," replied the older woman, leading the way. "Tell me, do you enjoy this enterprise? I fancy not. You have appeared rather unhappy."

"I abominate it," fiercely exclaimed Eudora.

"And the florid young man who seems to be such an important member of your party? I had an idea at first that I had stumbled on a romance."

"I detest him. He is at the bottom of all the trouble."

Mrs. Bodge was pleased as she said: "I'm so glad he hasn't taken you in. I put him down as a bounder. A pretty kettle of fish, isn't it? I was dragged into it, too. I had to come along to look after my husband. Between us, my dear, while we're talking it out, it's my money he is spending, and I wouldn't care a rap for that if I thought it was a proper sort of vacation for him. But his nerves can't stand excitement, and I'm sure he will go to pieces if I can't coax him away from here, and he is on the edge of a private war with that stubborn father of yours. There's no telling what they will do to each other. Gracious! I wish that wretched old pirate of a Peleg Peterson could be hanged over again. How in the world did the red-faced young man get you people into it?"

"He found a chart in an old, abandoned sailing ship, Mrs. Bodge," sighed Eudora. "And it was all up with father."

"My deluded husband came home with a chart, but he refused to tell me where and how he had discovered it," vehemently confided his wife. "And it was all up with James. He teaches mathematics, but he has rested his mind for years by reading about gory pirates and bags of doubloons. Your chart is the only genuine article, I presume. So is ours."

"I don't know. It make no difference. Is there anything we can do to cure them?"

"Nothing short of an earthquake or finding the wretched treasure will pry James off this island."

They were silent for a while, for the walking was rough and awkward, and they had to help each other cross bits of quaking bog and stretches of densely tangled brushwood. Coming at length to an open space and a slight rise, Eudora halted, stared, and rubbed her eyes. Nestled in the lee of a great bare rock by the shore was a little hut, gray, low-roofed, clinging close to the ground, scarcely distinguishable from its surroundings. A thin streamer of smoke curled upward from the chimney.

"But nobody lives on this island," gasped Mrs. Bodge. "I'm sure I heard my husband say it was deserted."

"They were all too busy and greedy to look around and make sure," sensibly observed Eudora. "But it seems strange that nobody saw the smoke. Shall we investigate?"

"Most assuredly. I am very anxious to meet the owner of this island. It is our only hope of escape."

Unhesitatingly, the robust woman preceded Eudora, and marched down to the weather-beaten dwelling which had been built of wreckage stranded from lost ships. Smartly she rapped on the door, and shuffling feet moved within. Timidity took hold of Eudora, but the professor's wife grasped her hand, and a moment later they faced an elderly man, who threw up his hands in astonishment and burst into a fit of coughing so violent that Mrs. Bodge pounded him between the shoulders.

"Thank you kindly, ma'am," he sputtered. "I swallered my quid, ladies bein' unexpected, teetotally so, you might say. Was you blown ashore or hung up on a reef? I'd ask you to walk in, but the sheebang is chuck-full of smoke from that dratted stove."

"It is very pleasant outside," said Mrs. Bodge, surveying the hermit's costume, which consisted of sea boots, ragged overalls, and a shirt patched in many colors. His features were somewhat begrimed, but not in the least for-

bidding. He led them to a rude bench, explaining:

"I've been over to the mainland for a fortnight—had a few kegs o' salted fish to sell and needed groceries—landed no more'n an hour ago, and ain't had a chance to look around."

"There are two parties on your island, Mr.—Mr.——" The professor's wife hesitated, and he informed her:

"Elmer Stackpole, at your service, ma'am. Two parties on my island? I thought I saw masts in the bay, but my sight's failin'. And what might they be doin' of?"

"Seeking buried treasure," answered Mrs. Bodge. "It was left here by a legendary pirate, Peleg Peterson, although I don't take the slightest stock in it myself."

"How interestin', not to say curious," drawled Mr. Stackpole, risking a fresh quid. "A pirate called Peterson? Never heard of him. He must ha' flourished before my time. Diggin' up his treasure! Well, well! I'll be scuppered!"

"That expresses my emotions," said his interviewer. "Now, Mr. Elmer Stackpole, I propose to talk business with you. I am the wife and this lovely young creature is the daughter of the misguided persons responsible for the invasion of your peaceful island. For their own good, they should be evicted at once. I assume you are the owner."

"I guess so, ma'am. Nobody ever disputed my title. Drive 'em away? How many is there?"

"It is not a question of force. You have only to threaten them with the law and summon the authorities from the mainland."

"But what harm are they?" he queried, unmoved. "It seems sort o' sociable to me. And I was just thinkin' about levyin' a tax on 'em."

"But I intend to make it worth your while. I will give you more money than you can extort from them."

Mrs. Bodge spoke bravely, but her confusion was manifest. It occurred to her that the professor held all the available funds, and she could offer no more than a promise to pay, as good as gold, but difficult to negotiate with Elmer Stackpole.

"How much will you lay down in cash?" said he, and there was a covetous gleam in his faded blue eye.

"I shall have to send it to you. Will five hundred dollars be satisfactory?"

"A bird in the hand is my motto, ma'am. You're a stranger to me, and wimmen is apt to be fickle about money matters. I'd love to oblige, but I like the notion of collectin' ten dollars per day as rent from each of them parties of yourn for all rights and full permission to dig 'emselves clean through to Chiny."

"You are heartless and mercenary, and I'm sure you haven't washed your face in a week," indignantly cried Mrs. Bodge, and they left the wretch to gloat over his windfall.

Eudora was quite downhearted, but her vigorous companion asserted that the darkest hour was just before dawn and that such a human being as this unkempt hermit justified woman's suffrage. Somewhat fatigued, but comforting each other, they recrossed the island, and emerged near the populous beach. The camp of Professor Bodge was in violent commotion, and Eudora for the moment, feared that war had been declared in her absence, but the shouts were those of joy, not anger, and the sailors were brandishing their shovels in a kind of jubiliant dance.

The professor ran to meet his wife, and in his hand was a metal object which age had incrusted and overlaid with verdigris.

"A big brass buckle, Ellen!" he shouted, his voice unsteady. "The pirates used to wear them on their shoes

and the knees of their baggy breeches. You've seen the pictures."

"And you think one of them lost it when they were burying the treasure, James?" she commented. "Perhaps he had no wife to sew his buckles on."

"Either that, or he was knocked on the head by Peleg Peterson," dramatically suggested the professor. "Dead men tell no tales. His bones would have crumbled by this time."

"This is very bad for your nerves, James. Your color is bad, and your hands are shaking. Why not lie down for the rest of the afternoon?"

"Never felt finer in my life," cried he. "We are going to take turns digging by moonlight."

"You will do no such thing. I shall have you to take care of. Not much! How did you happen to open that trench straight toward Captain Kempton's hole in the sand? Why, you pushed it yards and yards farther while I was gone."

"We discovered some fragments of old timber," he rapidly exclaimed, "and so we drove ahead like fury. Spanish oak, you know, is what they built their treasure chests of. It lasts for hundreds of years under sand and water. Captain Kempton be hanged! What if we do get in his way? We have the chart. We are the heirs of Peleg Peterson, by Jove, and this brass buckle proves it."

After supper, the obstinate shipmaster mustered his men for a conference. It was time to act. This unscrupulous fool of a Professor Bodge had gone too far. The sailors of the *Challenge* were hard-fisted lads from the Falmouth water front, as ready for a fight as a frolic, and they were loyal to the last hair on their heads. Their sunburned features expressed the liveliest elation as the captain explained his plans. This day's work had made it evident that Professor Bodge had no more conscience than a pirate. He must be firmly dealt with. The sailors cheered, but Mr. William Marmaduke Mannice looked anxious, and suggested arbitration. The stratagems of peace were much more to his liking.

His cowardice annoyed the skipper, who told him to mind his own business, and went on to say that, without doubt, they would have discovered the brass buckle and the old timber for themselves. The professor had conducted his operations in such a way as to invade their territory as marked and bounded. And because he was used to bullying a lot of college boys in a classroom, he thought he could do as he pleased on the beach. The captain had handled a mutiny or two in his time, and he guessed he could protect his interests against this shameless gang.

"A show of force will be enough," said he. "We'll throw up a bank of sand right away to-night, square across the beach from high-water mark to the bushes, like a line of breastworks. That will stop the professor from coming any farther our way. And to prevent his working at night, which he is liable to do from now on, a sentry will stand watch. While I mean to avoid bloodshed, the sight of a shotgun and a rifle and my old pistol that saw service aboard the *Endymion* may convince the pin-headed professor that he is on the wrong tack."

"Put me down for sentry duty," exclaimed one of the sailors. "It sounds like a lark."

"You lads need your sleep, Tom. You have to dig all day. The cook will bear a hand for one. He has time to snooze between meals."

The shrinking Mr. Mannice caught the captain's eye, and he added:

"An easy job for you. Four hours on and four off. You're too fat to do much with a shovel, and your hands are badly blistered."

"Thank you, sir," was the feeble reply. "You don't honestly expect any rough-house, shooting and all that?"

"Not a bit of it. A display of firmness will be plenty."

The moon serenely silvered the strip of beach when the willing sailors, refreshed by food and smoke, began to throw up the breastworks at the very brink of the professor's excavation. They made a speedy job of it and were unmolested, the Bodge forces withdrawing for a conference. Captain Kempton gave the shotgun to his cook, and told him to hold the fort until midnight, when Mr. Mannice would relieve him.

Discipline held old Harvey Mattoon dumb, but he was now convinced that his commander had gone clean daft, and his leathery lineaments were sorrowful as he sat himself down on the rampart of sand, the gun between his knees. Presently he opened the breech and extracted the shells, pensively soliloquizing:

"This dummed play actin' has gone far enough. Somebody's liable to get hurt before they finish with it, but they don't ketch me aidin' and abettin'."

From the door of his tent, Professor Bodge spied the dejected figure of the sentinel, and his anger was intense. This was positively the last straw. His emotions may seem preposterous, but family feuds have begun over so trifling a matter as a boundary fence or a stray pig. In a great flurry, he exclaimed to his wife:

"Look yonder, Ellen! An armed man posted to prevent us from working at night. And they will attempt to get into the hole where we found the brass buckle. This Captain Kempton is absolutely lawless."

"Let the armed man amuse himself by looking at the moon, and please go to sleep, James," she wearily advised him. "The captain will soon tire of it if you pay no attention."

"I shall sit up and play at this sentry game, too," he declared. "Does he think he can bluff me out of my boots, when I am on the very point of finding the treasure? This is not a woman's affair, Ellen."

"I wish to Heaven it were, James. The captain's daughter and I would dispose of it in a jiffy."

He snorted, dived under his cot, and appeared in the moonlight with a rifle, which he clutched in gingerly fashion.

"Tut, tut, Ellen! Don't try to hold me back. You will tear my shirt. The weapon isn't loaded. I merely wish to display it."

At a loping trot, he made for the bank of sand, intending to take a position near and opposite to the hostile watcher. Harvey Mattoon uttered a dismal cry and scrambled to his feet. He was too steadfast an old salt to retreat without an order from the quarter-deck, but the empty shotgun wabbled in his hands and his wits were at a loss. At this critical instant, Professor Bodge stumbled over a shovel and sprawled headlong. His spectacles flew one way, and the rifle left his hands to fall upon a wheelbarrow. There was a flash, a startling report, and Harvey Mattoon dropped from sight, his hands clasping his right leg.

"I didn't shoot him," wildly yelled Professor Bodge. "I tell you I didn't! The rifle wasn't loaded."

"They never are, James. That is how so many accidents occur," replied his common-sense wife, as she dragged him to his feet. "Come with me and find out if you have killed him. Oh, if you had only listened to me!"

Wan and speechless, he followed her. The stricken sea cook sat gazing at a patch of blood on his duck trousers, below the knee. Deftly Mrs. Bodge ripped a slit with her husband's pocketknife, disclosed the wound, and stanched it with her handkerchief.

"Clean through the calf. Nothing serious," was her verdict. "Stay with him, James, while I run back to the tent for the antiseptic and bandages."

In both camps there was a great stir by now; and the captain's crew, who had been sleeping like the dead, came buzzing out like hornets. The row was on, they assured each other, and they picked up whatever weapons were handiest. To the aid of the professor rushed his own gallant men, but he waved them back and hurriedly explained the situation. They were to keep cool while he held a parley with Captain Kempton. It was a deplorable accident, and further bloodshed must be avoided at any cost short of dishonor.

"Winged my cook, did you?" roared the shipmaster, as he advanced to the front.

"It is the unhappiest moment of my life," faltered Professor Bodge, expecting to be exterminated in his tracks. "I had no idea of potting the poor old duffer, I give you my word."

"And I wouldn't believe you under oath. Where did he drill you, Harvey? Hurt bad?"

"Mrs. Bodge says I'll live, sir. I suppose he's sorry he didn't blow my head off."

"Carry him to camp, boys, as soon as the lady has finished tying him up. Thank you ma'am. You have a kind heart. It's a great pity you are spliced to this murderous bookworm."

"I am prepared to offer an apology and pecuniary damages to the victim," interposed the professor. "And I advise you to keep cool, Captain Kempton, or I shall be unable to restrain my men."

"A flag of truce? I'm willing. We have to consider the women, for if my lads once jump in they'll wipe your camp clean off the map."

A growl from the group behind Professor Bodge implied that this was open to argument. He pacified his followers, and was about to address the captain when Mrs. Bodge stepped between them and laid down the law:

"You are to postpone all this until morning. We two women have received no consideration whatever. My patience is exhausted. If you wish to put these ridiculous sentries on guard, it will do no more harm, so long as you give them no guns. They can stand and makes faces at each other. James, go to bed! Captain Kempton, put your pistol away and march yourself into camp!"

CHAPTER VI.

The big tug *Endeavor* had encountered trouble and delay in towing the crippled steamer which she was sent out from Falmouth to rescue. Strong head winds kicked up an uncomfortable sea, hawsers parted, and twice the tug was compelled to let go and stand by until the weather moderated. It was all in the day's work, but the mate grew impatient and was poor company at mess. Dan had left Eudora in trouble, and he yearned for some word. A minor regret was that he had not punched the head of William Marmaduke Mannice, who had so disturbed the peace of the white cottage by the harbor.

A week of battering struggle, and the *Endeavor* hauled her prize in past the Boston Light. At the agents' office, Dan Sloan found a letter forwarded from Falmouth, and his frank eyes were suffused as he read Eudora's message in which she had tried to hide the appeal to his courage and devotion. Wasting no time, he raced back to the *Endeavor* and interviewed her master as follows:

"I shall have to ask for a month's leave, if you please, sir. If you can't hold the berth for me, I'll have to ship in some other boat when I come back. This is a hurry call."

"Somebody sick, or have the police caught up with you, Dan?"

"Personal business, sir. And where the dickens are the Seven Islands? Ever hear of them?"

"If I bumped into 'em, I didn't know it. On the level, are you in trouble again? No, you wouldn't blush if you were, you hardened young sinner. Well, I hate to lose you. Come back as soon as you can. I'll find some kind of a mate to fill in with. We'll be idle, anyhow, for a couple of weeks. This last stunt plumb near jerked the engines out of her."

Dan thanked him and jumped for a roll of charts in the wheelhouse. Coastwise, said Eudora, and a short voyage. It couldn't be to the southward, for he knew his way through to the Florida Straits. Nova Scotia? The hasty search was in vain. He would try the hydrographic office and the government charts. Ramming some clothes into a bag, he waved his hand to the amused skipper, who assumed that a girl was at the bottom of it, and the *Endeavor* saw him no more. As he dashed into the hall of a building familiar to mariners, a spruce chap in a blue uniform hailed him gladly. Dan halted to smite his friend on the back and exclaim:

"Max Leonard, you loafer! How's the navy? Somebody told me battleships were hollow. Have you learned that much?"

"Promoted twice, you roughneck. Gunner's mate, second class, and eating up the book stuff in the hope of winning out an ensign's commission. Still in the *Endeavor?*"

"On and off, Max. Glory, I wish you were foot-loose for a few weeks. I need a pal."

"I am," grinned the petty officer. "My enlistment runs out to-morrow, and there's a furlough coming to me before I take another hitch. Name the proposition."

"To capture a schooner and a few little things like that. Come into the hydrographic office with me. I'm on a blind course so far."

"Sure, Dan," replied the gunner's mate, who appeared to take life as it came. "The lieutenant in charge is a friend of mine—not one of the chesty kind that tries to put it all over an enlisted man. We were in a destroyer together. I'm on my way to see him now."

They were affably received; and, better still, the lieutenant showed himself an expert navigator by finding the Seven Islands after pawing over several charts. He suggested:

"Go to Prince Edward Island and pick up some sort of a sailing craft or power boat from there. Drop me a line, will you, Leonard? It's a safe bet you are up to something. Two of a kind, at a guess."

"The St. John's steamer sails to-morrow," said Dan. "We are much obliged, lieutenant. Come along, Max. We'll eat and discuss things."

When the chivalrous mission had been confided to him, the navy man insisted on sharing the expenses of the relief expedition, but confessed that his balance with the paymaster at the Charlestown Yard was painfully small.

"It's not up to you to spend a solitary cent," warmly protested Dan. "This is my picnic. The saving habit didn't take hold of me until lately, but I'm a couple of hundred strong. We'll go as far as we can and swim the rest of the way."

A week later, they were bargaining with an amphibious citizen of Georgetown for the hire of a leaky sloop which looked unfit to take to sea. They could afford nothing better after reserving cash enough for provisions. So long as this dilapidated tub could stay afloat and carry sail, they saw no cause for worry. Notwithstanding the verdict of Eudora, a reckless lover had his advantages. A prudent one would have remained at home.

Light-heartedly they hoisted a threadbare jib and a rotten mainsail and filled away in a wind that pelted

them with spray. This was sheer romance, and they loved it for its own sake, because they were in the lusty twenties. The sloop had a cabin for shelter, two bunks, and an oil stove. While one man steered, the other struggled with the frying pan and coffeepot; and at night they kept her going watch and watch. When the straining seams took in too much water, they fell to with a hand pump and a bucket. A few days of this, and Max Leonard was haggard and heavy-eyed, for he was of a lighter build than the deep-chested mate of the *Endeavor*. But there were no complaints, and never a sign of shirking. The sloop held together, thanks to good luck and better seamanship, and they were putting the miles over her stern every day. What more could a man ask?

"It begins to look as if we might really fetch somewhere with this bundle of boards, Dan," said the gunner, as he sprawled in the cockpit for a brief respite and rolled a cigarette. "Far be it from me to crab the game, but your plans are a bit hazy. If it's a case of sealed orders, isn't it about time to pipe all hands aft and loosen up?"

Mr. Sloan rubbed his head and appeared perplexed as he replied: "Eudora wants to see me. That's the answer. She's not the kind to borrow trouble. After we get ashore, do you mean, Max? I had no time to size this Mannice up, barring the fact that he left a bad taste in my mouth. Wait till we live with him a day or two."

"Get his number, eh? Is he bad medicine? Will he start something? How many men are there in the outfit?"

"Enough to make it squally for us if he has fooled them as he did Captain Kempton," said Dan; "but we'll drop in pleasant and peaceful for a friendly visit. I don't propose to queer myself with Eudora by hurting anybody unless I have to. She has a funny idea that I like disturbances. It was this way, Max. Towboat hands are a hard lot, and whenever I disciplined a roustabout, he would think it his duty to muster his friends in the next port and try to give me a trimming."

"Sure. You're a peace congress," scoffed the other, "and we are bound for Seven Islands on a diplomatic mission, all grape juice and kind words."

While the sloop labored on her course, the embattled treasure seekers were deadlocked in an armed truce. The only sane solution, of course, was for them to join forces and agree to divide the spoils, as suggested by Mrs. Bodge. The professor and Captain Kempton objected because each believed himself to be the possessor of the only genuine document bequeathed to posterity by the red-handed Peleg Peterson. Sentries continued to guard the excavations in which the eager shovels no longer made the sand fly. The sailors from the two schooners were ready to renew hostilities at the drop of the hat.

It was early in this lull that the owner of the island wandered over to pay his respects and transact business. Captain Kempton was in a testy mood, and this complication annoyed him. Elmer Stackpole hitched up his overalls, bit off a sector of plug cut, and pleasantly reiterated:

"Ten dollars a day for each and every day from when you landed. I dunno as I ought to be so liberal. Accordin' to the laws of this here Dominion of Canady, the treasure belongs to me; but I'm not a graspin' man and money is the root of all evil."

"But we're not digging, and I don't see any way to tackle it again without killing a few of those other fools," rapped out the skipper.

"Makes no difference to me, cap'n Settle your own squabbles. You're here, and you look like a man that is

sot in his ways. Be on my island some time longer, won't ye?"

"I intend to wear that addle-headed professor out," declared the mariner.

"Then I'll collect to date," cheerfully replied Mr. Stackpole. "No use to fuss. You ought to seen me before you come here and landed. I'm a poor man, but there's justice for all in the Dominion of Canady."

"How do I know you own this island?"

"Step across and see my house, and I've got papers to prove it. Ten dollars a day is terrible reasonable."

With a sigh, Captain Kempton counted out the money. When not led astray by the glitter of pirates' gold, he had an instinctive respect for the rights of property. And he had troubles enough. He chuckled as Elmer Stackpole trudged along the beach to collect tribute from Professor Bodge.

Toward nightfall of this same day, a shabby sloop, her sails torn, crept toward the island. A gale had almost finished her, but no distress signal flew from the mast. Slowly she drifted into the bay and came to anchor between the two schooners. Two men jumped into a dory and pulled for the beach. Eudora's glad cry of recognition startled her father, who roughly exclaimed:

"I wasn't quite sure of it. Dan Sloan? What's he doing here? You told him, did you? He is after the treasure."

"How absurd! He—he never dared to call me a treasure," and she colored vividly, for her thoughts had betrayed her.

"I don't trust him," returned the captain, who was a man of one idea. "He may have half a dozen men hiding in the cabin of that sloop. I have heard some hard things said of Dan Sloan. He wouldn't stop at a thing like this. He must have figured that he could get here ahead of us."

William Marmaduke Mannice, uneasily hovering within earshot, had been smitten with a sense of panic. He took no stock in the captain's mad and foolish surmise, for he knew better. This formidable Dan Sloan had come to square accounts with him. Eudora had sent him some word, before leaving home, that she was unhappy and afraid and suspicious of the voyage. The island was not large enough to hide Mr. Mannice, and he therefore summoned his wits to aid him. The captain's outburst gave him a cue. Slipping away from the group, he hastened along the beach, crossed the barrier, and sought an interview with Professor Bodge.

The latter gentleman backed away as though expecting to be assaulted, but Mannice flourished a white handkerchief and explained:

"It's for your interests as well as ours. If we allow the men from that sloop to come ashore, there will be hell to pay and more of it. I know one of them. He got the tip before we sailed. Do you want another party in this quarrel?"

"God forbid!" the professor ejaculated. "Are you sure of this? They look like tough customers."

"No doubt of it. Captain Kempton thinks there are more of them aboard the sloop. This Dan Sloan, the leader, would rather scrap than eat. He comes from Falmouth, the captain's home town. Do you get me?"

"And your advice is to bury the hatchet and act together in the face of this mutual danger?"

"You're on. If they need food or repairs, all right. Our sailors can fit them out to make the next port. But they mustn't set foot on the island, understand?"

"I quite agree with you," assented Professor Bodge, who saw no reason to doubt the word of the enemy.

Mannice turned to look at the dory which had halted at some distance from

the beach and was lifting on the small swells that rolled in from outside. Dan Sloan rested on his oars, and his fond vision searched out Eudora, who stood apart from the others.

"I came as fast as the wind would let me," he shouted to her across the water. "Are you all safe and sound?"

"Oh, thank you, thank you, Dan!" the dearly remembered voice came back to him. "I didn't expect you to——"

Captain Kempton waved an impatient arm and interrupted: "It won't do, Sloan. Go back to your vessel. This place is overcrowded."

"Well, you have turned pirate for fair," was the reply. "And the other bunch of outlaws is swarming over to join you. Warned off, am I?"

"You are welcome to stay anchored in the bay. And I'll send whatever you need."

"Lend a man, then, to pump the old coffin out. Our backs are broken. A dozen of you against us? We seem to be outvoted."

Ingloriously Dan whirled the dory about, and, with unhurried stroke, rowed back to the forlorn sloop. It was an anticlimax, but Max Leonard accepted it like a philosopher, observing, as he scrubbed the frying pan:

"No landing party is supposed to storm a position against odds like that. What's the other outfit, the lanky gent with the gold glims? Who opened the door of *his* cage, I wonder? All bughouse, Dan. Here's this Captain Joseph Kempton. A lovely father-in-law he'll make, unless he comes to. He treats you like a burglar."

"Captain Kidd sounds more like it," said Dan, with a trace of resentment. "I was never any too popular with him, but this is the limit. They intend to patrol the island to keep us from sneaking ashore anywhere. Mannice will look after that. He is scared to death."

"Do we beat it, or do we stand pat?"

"We take the dory after dark, and we run the blockade, Max. Do you expect me to sit out here and twiddle my thumbs while the finest girl in the world is no farther away than that? Shame on you! Beat it? Is that what they teach you in the navy?"

CHAPTER VII.

A black shadow of foreboding enveloped William Marmaduke Mannice. It might be possible to postpone the crisis, but sooner or later the implacable and muscular lover of Eudora would get him if he didn't watch out. As a profitable holiday season, life on the island had lost its charms. It behooved him to have other plans in readiness. At a pinch, he might pretend illness and persuade Captain Kempton, who could not be deaf to the dictates of humanity, to send him to the mainland in the schooner. And, while he warily awaited the turn of events, and kept one eye on the menacing sloop in the bay, he would endeavor to increase his emergency funds. He had done fairly well before leaving Falmouth, thanks to the captain's high regard, what with padding expense bills and extracting loans. But every little bit helped, and a modern gentleman of fortune could not afford to overlook the humble opportunities.

The moon rose late, and he therefore made an unostentatious exit from the camp while the night was still obscure. Blundering with difficulty across the island, barking his shins and swearing often, he discerned at length a lighted window of Elmer Stackpole's hut which served him as a beacon. The ragged lord of the isle was mending a net and contentedly humming that salt-water classic, "Whisky Johnny." At the entrance of Mr. Mannice, he produced a bottle of the same and two teacups.

"I was comin' over after supper, but my rheumatics is bad again," said he. "Fetched it to me, did ye? Ten dol-

lars lawful money for your crew? Pay as you go is my motto."

"Guess again," sociably smiled the visitor, as he let three fingers gurgle into the teacup. "Happy days, old top. It occurred to me to talk a little business to you. We are both practical men. With a proper start, you would have made a high-class grafter."

"Meanin' to say I charge 'em more'n I ought for ransackin' my premises?" protested Mr. Stackpole.

"Twenty dollars a day is too much," he was earnestly informed. "You never knew there was so much money in the world. Let me see. That first haul of yours amounted to a hundred, didn't it? And every twenty-four hours you ring the bell again. It won't do, Elmer."

"It was all settled with the cap'n and the perfesser, an' they didn't kick no more'n was natural, Mr. Mannice. You are wastin' your breath."

"Not much. We split it fifty-fifty. That means the roll in your jeans and the daily holdup hereafter. I shall stroll over in the evening and collect."

The businesslike announcement staggered the honest fisherman. He pinched his nose with a pair of tarry fingers, then solemnly gulped down another drink and querulously declaimed:

"A pirate couldn't use no awfuller language. Jokin', be ye? Red licker affects you that way? It was all settled an' agreed. I'll report this to the cap'n, that's what I'll do, as sure as guns."

"You will look pleasant and shut up," briskly replied Mannice. "And you will also put up now at once."

"What if I don't?" And there was an ugly note in the other man's voice.

"That's easy. The captain's pirate's chart is a fake. If he finds it out, he will quit the island. In that case, the professor will soon dig up the rest of the beach and pass up the job in disgust. Then you lose both parties. With my arrangement, you can still get your rake-off of twenty per, and net half of it."

"His pirate's chart is a fake—it don't amount to nothin'?" demanded Mr. Stackpole. "You're afraid to tell him so."

"I'll find a way to get out from under. That's my affair. It's safe to be frank with you, for you won't peep. Spill the secret, and it's all off."

Cupidity blinded the fisherman, and, besides, he was impressed by Mannice's air of importance. Even ten dollars a day was affluence. Reluctantly he reached for his wallet, but paused to say:

"It's to your interest to keep 'em all here as long as you can. S'posin' we call it an understandin' by which you use your influence to patch up the quarrel between 'em, so as all hands go on diggin' a few weeks longer. An' I'm payin' you as a kind o' silent partner."

"It sounds a bit less raw," agreed the young man. "Thank you. The amount is correct. The drinks are on you."

During the course of this interesting interview, a dory moved out from the sloop in the bay and vanished behind a promontory with no more noise than a ghost. Like a gray shadow, it slid seaward, safe from the observation of a shore patrol, and then drifted while the two occupants looked and listened. Again the oars dipped gently in the muffled tholepins. The dory was guided among the submerged rocks by a kind of sixth sense, the quick ear detecting the murmuring wash of the tide where the eye failed to see through the gloom. The keel grated at length, and Dan Sloan waded to land, Leonard at his heels. Straight for the camp they headed, to approach it in the rear. There was no misadventure until they had drawn near enough to glimpse the flicker of a fire on the beach.

Dan halted and peered at something which moved in the undergrowth.

Three strides, and he collided with the sailor who had been detailed to watch this landward side. The tussle was silent and exceedingly brief. The back of the man's neck smote the earth as his heels flew up, and a hand was clapped across his mouth.

"Stay with him and sit on his head, Max," whispered the victor. "If he acts fussy, poke him in the stomach."

"Leave me your necktie, you dude," replied the willing shipmate. "I'll rig a stopper for his jaw tackle. Good luck! Give her my regards."

That wounded sea cook, Harvey Mattoon, had been given a tent to himself. It stood at one end of the camp, a little removed from the others. He was sitting in a canvas chair with his leg propped up on a box, thinking his own thoughts, which were more distressful than ever. Another crew of treasure seekers to snarl the situation! Apart from this, he had nothing against Dan Sloan, a good-natured lad who had often tossed him a line and towed him into Falmouth with his lobster pots. Just then Harvey's sleeve was twitched, and he knew it was Dan himself that said:

"Steady! I made you out by the light of the fire. They can't see me through the wall of the tent."

"Jerusalem the Golden!" was the old man's epithet as he twisted himself in the chair. "The devil himself couldn't surprise me worse."

"I am a man of peace, Harvey, so don't yell for help. I want to see Miss Eudora. Will you pass her the word to slip out of the camp and—— But what's wrong with your leg? Docked for repairs? Gout, you rascal?"

"I was durned near assassinated, Dan —smack through this poor old leg of mine. The lunatic professor done it. Miss Eudora has had to take charge of the cookin'. Don't get mixed up in this mess, whatever you do. It's discouragin' enough now."

"A squabble over a treasure they haven't found?" grinned Dan. "It's high time I took a hand and discouraged them some more. And so you can't take a message to Miss Eudora?"

"I can call her over here," answered the cook, groping for a wooden potato masher beside the cot. "She hung a tin pan close by me, so I could whack it when I needed her. A clever girl, and kind as can be."

"The wisest ever," promptly agreed the infatuated young man. "And wisdom seems to be at a premium in this ship's company. Sound the alarm, Harvey. I'm pressed for time."

The cook struck the tin pan, and Dan Sloan could have sworn that his heart was beating even louder. A graceful figure detached itself from the group seated upon logs around the fire and came swiftly toward the tent. In the eyes of old Harvey, she was a ministering angel, but the mate of the *Endeavor* saw the maid of his desire, very human, warm, and true and tender but not yet won.

"Are you uncomfortable? What can I do to cheer you up?" she said, outside the tent.

"S-ssh! Steady it is!" chuckled the cook. "If you want to do me a favor, take this worthless roustabout of a Dan Sloan off somewhere and lose him."

Eudora's hand flew to her breast; she swayed a little and stared into the shadowy tent. Dan murmured a greeting. No explanation was needed. Without a word, she followed him until they were safely away from the beach, among the gray boulders and the twisted firs. Too much the gentleman was this bold sailor of hers to demand a hearing for himself. Eudora's sense of obligation he felt to be a barrier, and it was unfair to take advantage of her gratitude. Let his presence speak for itself, his service plead his cause. Her arm brushed his sleeve, and her face was turned up to his as they halted.

Her nearness troubled him, but his honor was strong to withstand temptation, and he fought down the words he longed to say.

"Oh, Dan! Did you really come because I needed you?" whispered Eudora, with a sigh like that of a contented child.

"Of course you thought I would light my pipe with your letter and promptly forget it?" he asked, in his masterful way. "It found me in Boston, and I made two jumps, one to say good-by to the skipper and the other to reach the dock."

"I didn't imagine you would linger very long," she honestly confessed. "Whom did you bring with you?"

"An old pal, Max Leonard. We used to sail out of Falmouth together as boys in a four-master. He volunteered for this cruise, on leave from the navy. I'd introduce him, Eudora, but he is busy sitting on the head of one of your father's crew, out here in the bushes somewhere."

"How awkward for both of them, Dan! Then I must stay only a minute."

"Oh, don't worry about us," was the careless reply. "We enjoy it. Now tell me about your troubles."

"They have all flown away," said Eudora, with a low, happy laugh. "I feel as though you had taken command."

"That's my humble intention, as soon as I get my bearings," he declared, not in a boasting manner. "You see, my dear, Leonard and I have come too far to loaf and look on. He is strong for kidnaping this swab of a Mannice and dumping him where the walking is poor. Would that help?"

"I don't know, Dan. He deserves it, but the mischief is done. My father is determined to stay here. This ridiculous Professor Bodge has a pirate's chart which I am quite sure is genuine. At least he found an old brass shoe buckle in the sand. And there is no reason to suspect his chart, while I am more and more skeptical about ours. But father flies off the handle if I dare hint at it."

"Then why not shanghai your father?" hopefully ventured the briny cavalier. "Snatch him away from the island, and he may get over these delusions. Max and I can turn the trick as easy as falling overboard. Wait until he happens to be in your schooner. He goes off to her every day, I presume. We'll lay alongside in our dory, slam the companion hatch shut while the skipper is below, cut the cable, and make sail for Halifax. You can be with him, Eudora, and if you'll tend the wheel now and then we can handle the schooner after a fashion."

"But that is out-and-out piracy," mirthfully objected the girl. "And what becomes of the crew?"

"Let Professor Bodge fetch them away in his vessel. It's in a good cause, and what's another pirate more or less?"

"If you could only convince him that Mannice is a fraud! I am sure of it because he acts like one. Father is so honest that if this could be proved he would think he had no right to interfere with Professor Bodge. But what about you, Dan? It is so selfish of me to talk about our troubles when you and your splendid friend, Mr. Leonard, are even worse off."

"How do you figure that?" he blithely demanded. "We are busy and happy."

"They are bound to keep you off the island, and your boat looks as if she had made her last voyage."

"Oh, that frigate of ours has a few kicks left in her. We passed a sand bank a little to the west of here. We can beach her at low water and calk the seams."

Dan wheeled and stood listening, his head up, his tall figure tautly poised. There was a noise of floundering in the

bushes and the rattle of loose stones. Surmising that Max was in difficulties with his prisoner, Dan begged Eudora to wait for him, and ran to the rescue. To his great surprise, he found the twain precisely where he had left them, and, instead of pounding each other's countenances, they sat amicably side by side, and two cigarettes glowed like sparks.

"Ahoy, there! Is that you, Dan?" queried the naval aid. "It's all right. I've met this lad before. I put a kink in his windpipe, but he managed to cuss a few, and I guessed him as Tom Fallon. He owes me money."

"Out of Falmouth, is he? The red-headed dock rat! Wasn't he a deck hand in the *Dauntless* tug three years ago?"

"Sure I was, Mr. Sloan," huskily muttered the captive, rubbing his throat. "Why didn't you tell me you had come to call on a young lady? I'd ha' kept clear."

"He has to, Dan," said Leonard, "until he pays me that fourteen dollars," said Leonard. "I've got him sewed up. There's a spark of decency in him."

"Then what was the racket I heard? Listen! Somebody is coming from the other side of the island, and he's making heavy weather of it. Shut up, you two, and let me investigate!"

Mr. William Marmaduke Mannice had set out on the return journey after the business interview with Elmer Stackpole, and was indeed finding progress arduous. Once he wandered into a bog, and again the darkness so confused him that he mistook the direction and all but fell down a steep slope into the sea. Clumsily he trudged and groped until voices were heard; and, with a grunt of relief, he believed himself almost within sight of camp. Then a towering shape, of the dimensions of a giant to his affrighted vision, appeared athwart his path. Mannice stood as if petrified for a moment, remembered the sentry, and nervously exclaimed:

"It's all right, Tom. By Jove, you loomed up as big as a house. Spooky out here."

The apparation scratched a match to make sure of the fact. He had a distasteful recollection of that blandly patronizing voice. The flare illumined one face, florid, heavy, a little flabby, the other intrepid, candid, and humorous. Mannice yelped and dodged, his arm upraised. It was enough to upset a chap's nerves, this meddlesome sailor being positively the last person in the world whom he desired to meet alone in the dark. He tried to shout for reënforcements, but Dan Sloan was too quick for him. The mate of the *Endeavor* had been trained to action instantaneous and efficient. In his pocket was the wooden potato masher which he had thoughtfully purloined from the tent of Harvey Mattoon in the event of collision with more sentries. It was beneath his dignity to offer Mannice a fair fight. The slippery blackguard didn't deserve it. Deftly, therefore, he jumped to meet the awkward lunge and swung the humble potato masher. It tapped Mr. Mannice just behind the right ear, as intended, and he sat down violently. His eyes were full of stars, comets, and asteroids, not to mention rockets and pinwheels.

"If I have to do it again, I am liable to crack your crust," he heard young Mr. Sloan remark in a matter-of-fact manner, and the voice seemed to come from a great distance. "If I wasn't making a record for peace and order, I'd jolt the head clean off your shoulders."

The dizzy William Marmaduke put his hands to his head, as if to assure himself that it was still there. He was under the impression that nothing less weighty than a boulder had hit him. The sailor stopped to prod him in the

ribs with the handle of the potato masher, suggesting that he set his engines going as they must be starting for the beach.

"Me? Go with you? What the——" Mannice expostulated.

"Not so loud, my boy. Please don't give me an excuse to put your friends in mourning."

Mightily jerked to his feet, Mr. Mannice tottered in the direction indicated by the grip of calloused fingers which were using his left ear in the fashion of a rudder. A twinge more acute, and he obediently veered to starboard, the fear of death in his heart. It was far worse than humiliating. Max Leonard called out cautiously to discover whether these were friends or foes, and Dan informed him:

"Great luck! It's the fat villain of the piece. I stopped his flow of language, and he is coming along with us. Go back to your camp, Tom Fallon, or parade up and down and earn your pay. This is no business of yours."

"Tom is neutral, fourteen dollars' worth," said the gunner. "And he loves this Mannice."

"I'm a cross-eyed Finn if I don't hope you murder him," devoutly exclaimed Fallon, with which he showed a nice tact and withdrew from the scene.

"Forward march!" commanded Dan. "Give me a lift, Max. His knees have begun to sag, the big kettle of mush! We'll throw him into the dory."

"Aye, aye, admiral. Do we tie a weight to his feet, or does he walk the plank?"

"He would look ornamental hanged at the yardarm, Max. Let's get him aboard the sloop first. Then we shall have to sail out of the bay with what wind there is and find another anchorage. We want no interference while we are prying the truth out of this festive beach comber."

CHAPTER VIII.

As a man who had hitherto trusted to his powers of persuasion, Mannice was unfitted to cope with this cruel emergency. He was a liar himself, but he sadly feared that this brute of a Dan Sloan had a habit of keeping his word. Moreover, it would be no trouble at all to dispose of a corpse and leave never a trace behind. It was a piratical game from start to finish, and he had fallen into the hands of the most desperate freebooter of the lot. If jealousy were a motive, the abduction was a bad joke because Eudora, in spite of his ardent efforts to win her regard, had shown an increasing dislike for him—to the utter surprise of Mannice, whose vanity was great.

"I came here partly to win the little spitfire," thought Mannice, as they hustled him toward the dory. "But, confound her, I believe she would be mean enough to give me the laugh if she saw me now. I'm in the devil of a fix unless Captain Kempton pulls off some kind of a rescue stunt."

This was a hope to cling to. Meanwhile, the wise course was to be docile and irritate his captors no more than possible. Meekly, therefore, he suffered himself to be shoved down the rocks and dumped into the dory; nor did he have anything to say. Dan began to fear he had swung the potato masher too hard and inflicted some real injury.

"Piffle! You didn't dent his bean," said the unfeeling Max, as the dory moved seaward. "He's playing possum or scared stiff. I'll bet I could bring him to with a rope's end."

"No violence! I'm opposed to it," declared Dan. "At least, not till we have held a proper court-martial."

They steered for the bay, but drifted outside, for the moon was climbing from the sea, and already a soft radiance etched in dark relief the rugged

contour of the island and trembled on the rippling water. This made it difficult to put Mannice aboard the sloop and smuggle him into the cabin without arousing the attention of those on the beach.

"Leave him in the dory with me, then," suggested Max. "I'll make him lie flat and stay put, if I have to fan him with the butt end of an oar."

"I get you. Slip me alongside the sloop, and I'll work her out with the jib until she is clear of the bay. They'll be glad enough to see us go. The old man will think we have chucked it up."

"Not if he knows you as well as his daughter does."

Most of the people in the camps went early to bed, and no alarm was raised when a windlass creaked and the unwelcome sloop moved slowly toward open water until her dory appeared to take her in tow. Harvey Mattoon still sat in the door of his tent, with his leg propped upon a box. The forced inaction made him restless, and this had been an exciting evening, what with the visit of Dan Sloan and the stolen tryst with Eudora. She, too, was wakeful and disinclined to leave the beach. When the sloop began to slide away so silently, she hastened to confer with the cook, who vouchsafed:

"He wouldn't run off and desert you, no, not for a million dollars' worth of Peleg Peterson's gold and diamonds. Mebbe he cal'ates it's rash to lay too close to a hostile coast, and I told him how dreadful careless the professor was with a rifle."

"And he will come back, you are sure, Harvey? He told me to wait for him, but I heard a scrimmage and that was the last of Dan. Tom Fallon said not to worry, but he wouldn't explain."

"Dan is maneuverin'," confidently replied the cook. "He may ha' been free with his fists in times past, but he knows when strategy is the winnin' card in the deck. You've steadied him, Eudora, and afore we left Falmouth I heard his uncle was mighty well pleased with him—Henry F. Bowers, the big man of the Blue Star Towin' and Transportation Company. If Dan gets out of this without landin' in jail, he's more'n likely to get a boat of his own. Cap'n Sloan, hey?"

"It's good news, and you do know how to cheer me up," smiled Eudora, "but poor Dan is not yet out of this. Neither are we."

"You can sleep easier than you have in weeks," said old Harvey. "Dan is maneuverin', I tell ye."

With a languid breeze, the sloop crept away from the reefs and then coasted along the western side of the island until her crew felt secure in anchoring so long as the weather should hold fair. William Marmaduke Mannice, who had been rudely flung into the cabin, was invited to present himself on deck and be sociable. His aspect was disconsolate, and he tenderly caressed his left ear. Courteously Dan waved him to a seat and observed:

"Tell a funny story. Make us laugh. Show us how your entertaining ways made such a hit with Captain Kempton."

"Nothing doing," was the sulky reply. "It's your move. Supposing you explain this outrage."

"Right you are," briskly spoke Dan. "Straight talk, eh? I'll put the questions, and you are the lad to give the answers. Here, Max, drop that potato masher! Don't intimidate the witness. Now, Mr. Mannice, are you a newspaper man in good standing? I left port too quick to overhaul your record, but I have a hunch that you were fired as a crook and were shy a job when you turned up at Falmouth."

"I found a story there that I could sell," muttered the other. "Anything wrong in that?"

"But you sized the captain up as an easy mark and better graft?" persisted

the inquisitor. "You discovered that he was daffy on this pirate's treasure proposition before you found the chart in the *Wanderer?*"

"You accuse me of planting it?" hotly exclaimed Mannice. "You're thick-headed enough to believe anything."

"Anything good of you? Wrong again. So you prefer to turn nasty and spar for time. Lead him to the pump, Max, and give him a two-hour turn at it. I didn't see anything of the man the captain offered to lend us. Make this sundowner sweat, understand?"

"Fine! Turn in for a nap, Dan. Where did I lay that potato masher? Come along, William. Make yourself useful."

There was no refusal. It suggested itself to Mannice that these scoundrels were stupidly playing into his hands. If he could manage to keep a stiff upper lip until daylight, his friends would miss him and at once search for the sloop. This was his chance of salvation, to avert summary justice on the heels of an enforced confession. This Dan Sloan was only guessing. He hadn't caught him with the goods. Obediently Mannice bent over the handle of the pump and began to lift the Gulf of St. Lawrence out of this leaky basket of a sloop. At first the motion seemed absurdly easy, this slow swaying up and down with so little weight to lift. He endured the first hour of it without protest while Max Leonard, the taskmaster, lounged with his back against the mast. Then, quite unexpectedly, the labor became a torture. He faltered, tried to stand erect, and was sternly exhorted:

"Pump, you beggar, pump, or tell me the truth, so help you! Man, I'm ashamed of you, so grand and handsome, and curling up like a yellow dog. I had to stand one spell of four hours with that pump yesterday. Great exercise! Go to it!"

They were alone on deck, and Dan's snores were audible. Mannice was taller and heavier than his lithe, sinewy tormentor, and the dory trailed alongside. Overpower him, and freedom beckoned. Mannice considered it, shook his head, and knew he was a physical coward. Doggedly he resumed pumping, hating himself for his fear, and miserably conscious that he must collapse long before daylight. The gush of water from the spout became an intermittent trickle, the strokes feebly irregular. Max yawned, berated him for a worthless lubber, and invented dire threats. Mannice let the handle drop, slumped to the deck in an unsightly heap, and buried his face in his hands. He was weeping with exhaustion, pain, chagrin.

Max was profoundly disgusted, and yet he could not banish an impulse of pity. Instead of kicking the object in the ribs, he aroused Dan and announced:

"He's all in. You were too harsh with little Willie. On the level, he is a total loss, and no insurance."

"What! Did you break his proud spirit so soon? Is he ready to tell his right name?"

"Not to-night, Dan. He's fast asleep by now. It has been one of those nights for Mr. Mannice. This last stunt broke him."

This was the fact. They found him inert, wrapped in soothing slumber. By his head and his heels they carried him into the cabin, and Dan returned to the deck to stand his lonely watch. The sun had risen when Max poked a drowsy head from the hatch to say:

"Not a drop of water in the tank. I just drank the last cup. No coffee for breakfast? I can't stand for that."

"Then we'll have to go ashore and look for it. It's safe to leave Mannice. Lock him in. He is still pounding his sprained ear in earnest slumber."

"It is wiser for the two of us to

land. If they are as fond of Mannice as we are, the whole beach will be turning out to find him."

So unobtrusive was the driftwood shack of Elmer Stackpole that they had failed to sight it from seaward, and therefore assumed that the treasure seekers were the only tenants, nor in this hasty quest for fresh water did they delay to explore the island. At random they walked inland until a patch of greener vegetation caught Dan's eye. It was a bog surrounding a small pond of water which, although brackish, was fit for use. Bemired to the knees, after a long time for so short a distance to traverse, they filled two pails and toiled back to the shore and the carefully hidden dory.

It was very shortly after they left the sloop that Mannice had awakened with sundry groans and a dismal countenance. It would have been difficult to identify him as the debonair adventurer who had so beguiled Captain Joseph Kempton. He wondered what new disaster awaited him. The sloop was curiously silent; no voices, not a footfall on deck. He found that he had been locked in. Through the small, round windows, he was able to view the little vessel from bow to stern. Neither of his captors was visible. Waiting and listening a few minutes longer, he concluded that they had gone ashore on some errand.

In their absence, Captain Kempton might be searching along the coast and think the sloop deserted. This slender hope inspired Mannice to shout with all his might. If there had been a welkin in the neighborhood, indubitably he would have made it ring. He set up a frantic clamor like a foghorn. It rolled across the water and startled an elderly solitary in ragged overalls who just then paddled a skiff around a near-by point of land. The tide was right for catching bait, and Elmer Stackpole had crawled early out of bed. The sloop puzzled him, and the uproar proceeding from her cabin was worth looking into.

Sedately he rowed out, made fast to the stern, and hauled himself aboard. On hands and knees, he squinted into a window and was able to discern the lone occupant.

"Blazin' bilge water!" cried the hermit, by way of profanity. "What are *you* a-doin' of here? I thought you was several, jedgin' by the sounds. Serves you right. If you want to get out, hand up my fifty dollars that was unlawfully took."

"Will you promise to take me to my camp?" stipulated the prisoner, in no position to haggle. "Quick, now, or they'll catch you here and——"

"Not very popular with the crew?" grinned Elmer. "Tried to hold 'em up for ten dollars a day? I'm in no hurry. I've done nothin' to be shet up in a cabin for. Poke my money through the window and swear you won't make no more collections, and I dunno but what I may bust the padlock on this hatch and turn you loose. For the general good of humanity, I ought to leave you be and scuttle the sloop."

A roll of bills was shoved through the window, and Elmer made sure the amount was correct before he bestirred himself. With an iron belaying pin, he twisted the hasp of the lock and permitted William Marmaduke to emerge. The tousled young man lowered himself into the skiff with never a word of thanks, and Elmer pulled vigorously in the direction of the camps.

"Steer in behind the rocks as soon as you ran," exhorted Mannice. "Those two fellows will chase us if they get a look at me."

"Interestin', not to say curious," was the reply. "And who might they be? High-handed, ain't they?"

"Another outfit after the treasure. They took me to be the leader of our

party, and decoyed me aboard their rotten sloop."

"Well, now, I call that quite gratifyin' news," beamed the thrifty fisherman. "It'll cost 'em ten dollars a day, same as the others, and I don't have to divide it with you any more."

"Take my tip and don't try to collect it," bitterly advised Mannice. "They will make you wish you hadn't."

"Perhaps I'd better wait and look 'em over. They sound kind o' different from the cap'n and the perfesser."

The skiff had disappeared beyond the nearest point of land to the southward when Dan Sloan and his comrade returned to their dory. As they put out for the sloop, Max said contritely:

"I felt almost sorry for the big stiff when he dropped in his tracks last night. Let's go easier with him and treat him more like a man. He is pretty near ready to tell all he knows."

"I agree with you," good-humoredly returned Dan.

In this praiseworthy mood, they leaped aboard the sloop, discovered that the cabin hatch had been slid back, stared into the empty cabin, and then looked at each other.

"Flown the coop!" said Max. "Who let him out?"

"Captain Kempton, of course. We bungled it. Honestly, I never dreamed they would be up and doing as soon as this."

"Nor I. Well, we have spilled the beans. Next orders, please. Do we march against the camp?"

"Breakfast first," decidedly replied Dan, whose expression was rueful. "This Mannice bird has certainly put it up to us."

CHAPTER IX.

Before undertaking another campaign, it was necessary to pay some attention to the battered sloop which displayed more and more unwillingness to stay afloat. Accordingly they shifted her to the sand bank which lay a little farther out to sea and let the falling tide leave her resting on the gently shelving bottom. As boys, they had built and patched, and tinkered with boats of their own, and they went to work with the handiness of sailors who knew how to make the best of the tools at hand. With strips of canvas soaked in a pail of old paint, they plugged the seams that needed it most. Then with block and tackle rigged to the masthead, they canted her over and stopped the worst of the cracks on the other side of the hull.

The flooding tide compelled them to knock off in the afternoon, and the sloop was towed to her anchorage. In Dan's opinion, after careful deliberation, it was advisable to attempt another meeting with Eudora and ask her advice. By this time, she might have persuaded her misguided parent to declare an armistice. If he would consent to an interview, these two unselfish argonauts were confident of their ability to adjust the absurd misunderstanding. They had come to help, not to hinder him.

With this pacific intention, they started ashore after an early supper, but sought a landing place at the extreme end of the island in order to avoid being intercepted. It surprised them to sight a half-decked power boat idly rocking offshore, and Leonard exclaimed:

"What do you know about that! Has she been here all the time, or did she come up from the east'ard to-day?"

"More treasure hunters. This is the original madhouse," replied Dan.

They beached the dory, and had walked a short distance when a blue thread of smoke above the rocks caused one of them to say:

"Does anybody live here, or is that a camp that we overlooked? Let's reconnoiter."

Laying a course by the wisp of smoke, they came upon the lonely dwelling of Elmer Stackpole. On the chance of information, and hoping to bargain for provisions, Dan approached the closed door, but halted and motioned to his companion. Inside could be heard two voices in earnest dialogue. A snatch or two, and Dan comprehended that it was no sin to wait and listen. Elmer's intonations were peevish, and he was interrupted by a younger man who waxed impatient.

"It's this way, Johnny," said the hermit. "You're bright and enterprisin', and I give you credit. I ought to be proud of a nephew like you. But I never did agree to give you that much money."

"That was my share last year," protested the nephew. "And this Professor Bodge was a lot harder to fool. He's a pretty sharp coot. It was a month before I got a nibble. And then I had to work it through a man in an old bookstore where Bodge used to rummage around."

"I set here drawin' them pirates' charts in the winter, an' buryin' brass buckles and rusty cutlasses in the sand every spring," complained the uncle, "and it was my scheme in the fust place."

"Didn't I write that piece about the old sailor that had Peleg Peterson's chart handed down in his family and was robbed of it in Nova Scotia? And didn't I get it printed in a newspaper and stir up a lot of talk about it?"

"That was last summer's party," corrected Uncle Elmer. "An' you was paid for that."

"But you are raking in extra money from this Captain Kempton," persisted Johnny. "He is all velvet."

"You can't claim no credit for him. He just accidentally happened," was the fretful response. "And he's liable to quit any day. There's two men come in a sloop to make a fuss and interfere with my business that's been regular established for several seasons."

"Yes, I've placed four of your charts for you, and now you squeal about a few dollars," cried the nephew. "What brought this Captain Kempton to the island? I never sawed one of 'em off on him."

"Somebody else stole your patent," grinned the old man. "Interestin', not to say curious. There's a smooth, fat rascal with the cap'n, and his name is Mannice. He told me their chart was a fake, and he knew all about it."

"Why did he give it away? Did he put up the job?"

"He was inclined to brag about it, Johnny. He bullied me into givin' him half my profits, but I got 'em back again. Naturally I wasn't liable to tell the cap'n on him."

Dan Sloan opened the door and walked in without apology. Elmer's dingy features were contorted, and the nephew turned pale. A clock ticked loudly on a shelf. There was no other sound. Then Max Leonard snickered. The tableau appealed to him as immensely ludicrous. Dan scowled ferociously, but his eyes twinkled as he said:

"Write it down and sign your names, both of you. Then we'll all pay a visit to Professor Bodge and Captain Kempton."

"Write w-what?" stammered the uncle.

"Get out of here!" declaimed the quaking nephew.

"With pen and ink, and we'll sign as witnesses," explained Dan, stepping nearer. "Make it short. You hatched one scheme, and Mannice confessed he was responsible for the other. Say, but you are a talented bunch. Peleg Peterson was a greenhorn."

"You are desprite men, and there's weapons in your clothes, no doubt of it," sighed Elmer. "An' your manners are dreadful bad, or you wouldn' ha'

snooped outside. The law can't tech us. I'm owner of this island and entitled to charge rent to landin' parties."

"Not this summer. Give up the coin you grafted from the professor and the skipper."

Sorrowfully Elmer disgorged, after which Dan dictated while the nephew plied a tremulous pen. Their surrender was unconditional. Gloomily they affixed their signatures, and Dan pocketed the document. Escorting Mr. Stackpole by the arm, he led the procession while Max grasped Johnny by the collar and propelled him onward. In this manner, they crossed the island and marched out on the tented beach.

Eudora was first to meet them, and her triumphant champion rapidly explained matters. Her father was aboard his schooner, said she, and was there any way of breaking it to him gently? It would be a severe shock. Dan cogitated, and meanwhile William Marmaduke Mannice had approached, not too near, but close enough to become aware that the fat was in the fire. He cared to hear no more than mention of a confession and something about birds of a feather. And Dan Sloan was inquiring for him. He concluded that he had best absent himself from the excitement. Without delay he faded into the interior of the island.

"I just knew you couldn't fail, Dan," was Eudora's eulogy. "Now let me help. I have been perfectly useless so far. You can tell father that you have all the evidence, but don't show him the written confession, and say nothing about *his* chart. Let him think that Professor Bodge has been hoaxed——"

"And you will inform the professor that the joke is on your dad?"

"Exactly. I'll run right over to see Mrs. Bodge. She's a trump. And then, when these two dear, deluded men get together——"

"You have it, Eudora. I do want to let them down easy."

The tidings spread to the faithful followers of Captain Kempton, and there were no signs of grief. All hands had tired of this bootless, tangled enterprise. Dan Sloan sculled out to the schooner and boldly climbed over the side. The skipper met him at the rail and signified that he was prepared to repel boarders. From the beach, the pantomime was both vigorous and eloquent, the young man explanatory, the older one expostulating and incredulous. The victory was with Dan, for he was permitted to walk aft and linger beneath the awning. Gradually the shipmaster's gusty anger subsided. He found a chair and chewed a cigar while the narrator finished.

Wonderful to witness, Captain Kempton threw back his head and slapped his knee, while to those ashore was borne his hearty guffaw. He turned to glance at the professor's camp, and again his mellow laugh carried joy to the heart of Eudora.

Simultaneously Mrs. Bodge was telling her gleeful husband: "Miss Kempton suspected it all along, but she had no proof. Oh, yes, it's absolutely true. This sailor sweetheart of hers has the signed confession in his pocket. That odious Mannice deliberately deceived her father——"

"I knew his chart was bogus," shouted Professor James Hyssop Bodge, "but you couldn't tell him anything. Stubborn as a mule. Now he will clear out and let us alone, Ellen. He ought to have taken my word for it that our information was genuine. Can you imagine me being tricked as easily as that? Ha, ha, the joke is on Kempton, poor soul! He will feel badly cut up. But I mustn't rub it in."

Presently Captain Kempton disembarked, and Dan Sloan rowed him to the beach. The skipper was still jovial, but he managed to pull a sober face as he confided:

"Bodge will be a comical sight when

you break the news. It would be indecent for me to crow over him. He was wrong and I was right, but you couldn't beat any common sense into him with a capstan bar. And so this old rip of a Stackpole and his precious nephew palmed off a homemade chart on him, and he swallowed it, hook, line, and sinker! And a college professor, at that! He had no business meddling with it."

"I know, sir," demurely replied Dan, "but don't be too hard on him. He is a landlubber. It would do no harm to sympathize with him. There's no fun in hitting a man when he's down."

"Right you are, my boy. I shall go over to see him at once." Professor Bodge was already striding from his tent, and he met the captain halfway, at the rampart of sand which separated the rival excavations. Dan and Eudora followed, and Mrs. Bodge joined them. Smilingly the two leaders shook hands, and exchanged sentiments as follows:

"It is tough luck, Professor Bodge. You stood by your guns like a man, but those rogues had misled you."

"What a pity, Captain Kempton, that Mannice was so untrustworthy and carried you off on this wild-goose chase after——"

They paused, gazed rather wildly at each other, and began again:

"There appears to be some misunderstanding, Captain Kempton."

"Your language sounds hindside foremost, Professor Bodge."

"I was referring to your unfortunate fiasco, sir."

"And I was soft-hearted enough to want to express my regrets for your disappointment."

The skipper's face was growing scarlet, and he mopped it with a handkerchief. The professor's spectacles flashed ominously, and he stood stiffly erect. This was the precise moment for the intervention of Eudora and Mrs. Bodge. They bade the bewildered disputants be silent. Dan fished out the confession and read it aloud slowly, with convincing emphasis. A signal to Max Leonard, and the drooping hermit and his pallid nephew were moved into the foreground. There ensued an interval of trying suspense while the spectators awaited an explosion on the rampart. The captain glared and the professor frowned. They were too flabbergasted for speech. Soon the meaning of the situation began to dawn on them. They were tarred with the same brush, two idiots who should have known better, and the joke was colossal.

"And so Mannice told that old scalawag that my chart was a fraud?" thundered the skipper. "Mannice made it himself, did he?"

"And the old scalawag made mine?" cried the professor. "And he buried the brass buckle? My dear man, if we permit ourselves to be sorry or angry, we shall make the greatest mistake in the world."

"There is something in that," admitted the skipper. "Every time I think of you and your chart, I shall laugh to the day of my death."

"And you won't mind, captain, if I enjoy my recollections of you?"

"I am older than you, Professor Bodge, and I should have known better."

CHAPTER X.

There was no enmity between the treasure camps. The ghost of Peleg Peterson was laid, and no more would the dreams of his bloodstained booty trouble the minds and spoil the tempers of these estimable men. They were themselves again.

Cheerily the sailors began to pull down the tents and other shelters and bundle them aboard the two schooners. Harvey Mattoon had whittled himself a crutch and tried to help pack the kitchen gear. He bore the professor no

more ill will. In his simple philosophy, all was well that ended well, and he would have a thrilling yarn to spin and a scar to show. He was the hero of the expedition, whatever Eudora might think of Dan Sloan.

With so many willing hands, a few hours sufficed to clear the beach. A calm was on the sea, and through the afternoon the trim schooners waited for a breeze. Twilight came, and the air was still warm and breathless. Dan and Eudora sauntered along the deserted beach, and she was pleading with him:

"But you mustn't take the risk of sailing back in that wretched little sloop. Haven't I been worried enough? Father has begged you to go with us in the *Challenge,* and you act so queer about it."

"Max is game to make the return voyage if I say so," he replied, after a pause. "Of course, if we abandoned the sloop, it wouldn't cost much to square it with the owner. He said as much. But I couldn't stand it to be in the same vessel with you and—and —well, you know why."

"I want you to be happy, Dan. You have earned happiness." And the girl's voice was thrilling. "If you only knew how grateful I am——"

"I was afraid of that. I must have a tremendous lot more than thanks. I sail home with you on one condition."

"Tell me, Dan, I shall be glad to hear it."

"That the treasure belongs to me; the treasure I came to find."

They were standing at the edge of the pit in the sand where Captain Kempton had dug in vain. What Eudora might have replied was postponed because the loose stuff gave way beneath her feet and she slid to the bottom, Dan plunging after her. It seemed quite the fitting place in which to claim a treasure, and he was about to say as much when Eudora caught a glimpse of a small object which the shifting sand had disclosed.

"Another brass buckle?" she exclaimed, stooping to pick it up.

"No," said Dan. "The real thing this time."

He held it to the failing light. Tarnished and incrusted, it was recognizable as a bracelet, and the pure gold gleamed dully when he scraped it with his knife. Small but massy, to fit a slender wrist, it was studded with stones, and as he rubbed them in the sand they glowed one by one like blood.

"Rubies!" gasped Eudora. "I never saw anything so gorgeous. And they are real? Oh, they must be!"

"Not much doubt of that. This bracelet was made long, long ago. And Elmer Stackpole planted no imitation jewelry, only buckles and rusty cutlasses. I heard him say so."

"Then the pirate buried it, Dan? Shall I run and call father ashore? Perhaps Peleg Peterson did come here, after all."

Unheeding his reply, she sped along the beach. Her lover sighed and began to clear away the sand with a broken shovel which had been left at the brink of the pit. The schooner awoke with sudden noise and stir, and her company filled the yawl in a twinkling, Captain Kempton standing in the stern with a lantern in his fist. Aboard the other schooner, the professor and his wife observed the excitement and followed in excited haste. Harvey Mattoon, left behind, stumped aft on his crutch and sadly exclaimed:

"They're all off again to a good start, durn 'em!"

Eudora was waiting to display the bracelet, and her parent delayed only to glance at it as he sped to the excavation. Dan Sloan raised a warning hand and bade him descend carefully. The others held back while the captain lowered himself and the lantern. The shovel had by this time revealed the

bones of a skeleton which had been scattered almost not at all. Blackened and fragile, ready to break and crumble at a touch, the pitiful relics possessed a certain dignity of repose, as though it were unkind to disturb this lonely resting place. So small and slender were the bones that Captain Kempten, said, his gray head uncovered:

"A woman, and this bracelet was on her wrist! Washed ashore from a wreck, perhaps from a ship that struck on one of these Seven Islands. Some grand lady of France in the days of the seigneurs? God knows."

It was agreed, without dissension, to wait for daylight before digging in quest of more jewels. Dan and Eudora lingered behind the others, and she told him:

"I should like to keep just one ruby for myself. Would you like to have it mounted in a ring for me? Now will you sail home with me? Faithful and true, Dan. I am sure of it."

There was no need to announce the tidings of this betrothal. Captain Kempton was aware of it as soon as they went on board. It made him young at heart. Luckier than he, his daughter had found the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow.

Eudora and her bold young seafarer possessed a treasure of greater value than all the doubloons ever buried, and they viewed the voyage as brilliantly successful; but their shipmates, less fortunate, were eager to wield their shovels anew where the bones of the poor lost lady of the bracelet had been covered by the shifting sand of centuries. Another day they toiled without result, while Professor Bodge looked on and made no attempt to interfere. When they finally abandoned the excavation, he announced, in his most impressive manner:

"You fail to realize, Captain Kempton, that in discovering that bracelet you have made yourself and your daughter and your prospective son-in-law more than comfortably well off. My researches in organic chemistry have given me some acquaintance with precious stones. These rubies, probably Burmese, are genuine, I am ready to swear to that, and they are also of the true pigeon's blood color and marvelously matched. They are worth a fortune. I doubt if the sea chest of Peleg Peterson would have contained booty as valuable."

The shipmaster looked amazed, and then, like the gentleman that he was at heart, he exclaimed with gusto:

"Share and share alike, my dear sir. It's the only proper wind-up of the cruise. As a pair of fools, there was nothing to choose between us, and I don't propose to see you sail home empty-handed. My daughter and Dan Sloan agree with me. We divide the rubies."

The professor protested, but the mariner was as stubborn as usual. Soon a cool breeze stole in from the south, the white sails climbed the masts, and the anchors were lifted to a musical chorus. On the beach, in the light of the moon, appeared the figure of a solitary man who raised his arms beseechingly and shouted to attract attention.

Captain Kempton called to him from the taffrail:

"Good-by, and fare you well, Mr. William Marmaduke Mannice. We didn't forget you. We left you behind because we remembered you."

"Marooned!" observed Dan Sloan. "If he is really anxious to quit the island, he is welcome to our sloop."

"Homeward bound!" cried Captain Kempton, as his schooner slid out to meet the open sea.

"And the Bodges have promised to come to the wedding," exclaimed his winsome daughter, which summed up the whole matter.

Why the Ulv Never Came Back

By J.J. Bell

Modern whalemen, though they now operate in a steamship and no longer leave the ship in small whaleboats to harpoon by hand, have never been able to eliminate the supreme danger of the eighty-ton whale charging the steamship. The wounded whale charges to-day as he did seventy-five years ago when Melville wrote of "Moby Dick." In our last number Mr. Bell told the story of the *Thorgrim* which was thus attacked. Here we have an intense dramatic story of another kind.

SVENDSEN reached the station determined to resign his command and take passage home to Norway in the first available steamer; and doubtless he would have done these things but for the wise firmness of Herlof.

"No," said the manager; "you are bound to the company for the season. I cannot let you go."

"You could explain to the company that I was no longer fit to kill a whale."

"That would be nonsense. But I will not argue with you, Svendsen——"

"Sigurd Lund could take my place. He is a good navigator, and I promise you that he will soon be a good gunner."

"Sigurd Lund may take your place when the time comes. That is not yet." Herlof got up and looked out of the office window. "*Thorgrim* has coaled, and is now at the pier." He turned, holding out his hand. "Things here are not bright. Bring me whales, my good Svendsen."

Svendsen took the proffered hand, and left the office without a word. Ten minutes later he was in the steering-box, his fingers on the familiar handle of the telegraph. Before nightfall he was thanking Herlof in his heart.

Within four days he brought the *Thorgrim* back, three fat fin-whales astern.

"The beginning of the second thousand!" remarked Herlof, after a brief sentence of congratulation. "I will let you go home to Norge now, if you still wish it," he added.

"I will see the season out," was the stolid reply. "There are more whales about now. We may make it a good season yet."

His next trip covered five days, but a goodly portion of that period was spent in towing his four captures—"blues" and "fins" at the rate of barely three knots an hour. He reached the station in something like his old good spirits, only to find Herlof grave. The season seemed fated to be one of trouble.

Ten days had passed without sign of the *Ulv,* and Herlof, after learning that Svendsen had no news of her, reluctantly admitted his anxiety. The company's third steamer, the *Orn,* had, within the week, called twice at the station, each time with a pair of heavy carcasses alongside, but her skipper, too, had seen nought of the *Ulv.* This, however, was less disturbing to Herlof's mind than the knowledge that since the *Ulv's* departure the weather had continued generally fine—neither windy nor foggy—while whales had been plentiful. There was, therefore, no satisfactory reason for the *Ulv's* detention somewhere in the stretch of the Arctic Ocean between the northern coast of Iceland and the rim of the Greenland ice, and the manager was driven to the conclusion that mischance had overtaken her.

On the morning of the eleventh day the *Orn* unexpectedly reappeared with another couple of blue-whales. This was capital hunting, but Herlof's satisfaction was more than damped when the skipper again reported fine weather and no trace of the *Ulv.* There was nothing for it but to dispatch the *Orn* and *Thorgrim*—the latter had been detained a day in port for the cleaning of her boiler—to search for the *Ulv,* which, the skippers agreed, had probably met with an accident to her propeller. Wherefore tow-ropes were put in readiness, in order that no precious minutes might be wasted after finding the crippled whaler. At the mouth of Isafjörd the *Orn* and *Thorgrim* separated. Failing to meet at an appointed spot, after a certain time had elapsed, they were to return to the station.

Bjarnison, skipper of the *Ulv,* was in cheerful humor. Leaving his bunk at four a. m., he had killed two fin-whales before breakfast. To be sure, he would have preferred blue-whales, but the fin-whales had appeared after a four-day search for their huger cousins, and he had taken them dutifully and not ungratefully. Moreover, the whales had died easy, having received but one harpoon apiece, and Bjarnison was always inclined to be not a little pleased with his own smart shots.

He was tapering off his morning meal with a few sardines and shavings from a square brown cheese, when Nils, the mate, clattered down to inform him that more whales were in sight, directly ahead. The brisk rumble and thump of the propeller would have told any occupant of the little cabin that the *Ulv* was already being driven at top speed; but with a couple of whales alongside she was making but five knots.

Now the fin-whaler is one of the swiftest of whales, besides being the most easily scared. So Bjarnison set about casting the two carcasses adrift, preparatory to securing a third. It was a weighty job, but each man on board knew his share and performed it smartly. Before parting from the carcasses the skipper proceeded to flag them. (At this period the whalers did not always carry flag-buoys.) An old lance, fifteen feet long, was brought him, and to its wooden shaft he bound a Norwegian ensign. Many a time had the old lance done duty as a flagstaff, but on this occasion it was to fail in its service. Grasping the shaft, the skipper and one of the crew essayed with all their might to drive the six feet of iron into the white, grooved belly that quaked alongside. The rusty metal, entering a little way, bent and snapped. Then it was that Bjarnison recollected having left his other and newer lances at the station to be sharpened. By nature a careful, methodical man, he was annoyed with himself. He had now no means of marking the whales so that they should be sighted from a distance, and although the sea was calm, and the air clear, he did not care about risking the two carcasses as they were.

At this juncture Nils, the mate, offered a suggestion. Let the pram be lowered and moored to the whales, and he would stay in it and from time to time show the flag on the remaining twelve feet of lance.

Bjarnison at first demurred, then, after a shrewd look at the weather, assented, and, the smaller of the two boats having been lowered, Nils dropped blithely into it and took up the oars. Some one tossed his oilskins and muffler after him. On the *Ulv* the bow-chains were let go, and the two carcasses, shackled tail to tail, set adrift. The *Ulv* drew astern, leaving the whales floating side by side, and Nils made the pram fast to the chain connecting them. This done, he settled himself as comfortably as he might, and lit his pipe. He was not a man who shirked his work, but he rather liked the prospect of escaping, for once in a while, his share of the hard labor that followed the killing of a whale. To the cook, who mocked him by flourishing a yard-long loaf of new-baked bread, he waved a languid, patronizing adieu. The *Ulv* turned on her heel and sped upon her business.

Nils followed the course of the whaler with interest. He had spent several seasons at the whaling, yet had never seen the gun fired save from the narrow deck behind it. He hoped the hunt would not take the *Ulv* too far away; he was eager to witness the killing as an idle spectator.

His wish was to be granted. Before the *Ulv* came within half a mile of the whales—there were three of them—they changed their course, going off at a right-angle to hers.

Sounding, they remained below for fully ten minutes. They must have again altered their course under water, for when they came up, blowing off their exhaust breath that drifted a while like silvery mist over the blue sea, they were between the steamer and the pram, moving in the direction of the latter. They swam very leisurely, taking brief, shallow submersions every other minute. Nils told himself that Bjarnison would have small difficulty in securing his third *finhval*. He swung the flag-pole aloft, and the gunner waved his hand in response, pointed to the leading whale, and extended his arms to indicate that it was a large one.

Nils stood up, the better to view the chase, which promised to be short. The rorquals continued to approach him, and soon he could sight the tops of their heads as they spouted, and afterward their long slaty-gray backs, with the curved low fins set far aft. He perceived also that the *Ulv* was stalking the whale at which the gunner had pointed.

The whales swung round to the left, letting the *Ulv* come almost within shooting distance. Nils grinned. All was as if the spectacle had been specially arranged and produced for him. The *Ulv* was broadside to his gaze; he could see the skipper grip the stock of the scarlet gun and plant his feet firmly on the sparred platform.

Only a dozen yards ahead of the steamer a puff of vapor went up with a drowsy sound. Slowly the slaty back, so like in color to the sea on a dull day, heaved above the surface and glided forward.

The gunner slewed the weapon a trifle to one side. With a spurt of ruddy flame the ponderous harpoon flew forth and downward, and the bang of the explosion split the silence. By the sharp eyes of Nils the harpoon was clearly seen to strike and bury itself in the blubber; then the whale went down in a tumult of waters, under a cloud of smoke. The forerunner—the sixty fathoms of line coiled on the tray under the muzzle of the gun—was whisked away, describing in air curious figures which the mate had never observed from shipboard. As the whale sounded, he imagined he heard a faint thump—the

bursting of the embedded bomb. All this happened within a few seconds of time.

To the clatter and clank of the winch the main length of the cable began to pour over the bow-wheel. When about one hundred fathoms had gone into the depths, the brake was applied. Gradually the angle made by the line with the surface decreased, and Nils noticed that the *Ulv* was moving slowly ahead, though her propeller was at rest. Every moment he expected the whale to appear, but half an hour passed without sign of the creature. A long submersion for a rorqual. Nils could not see quite clearly all that followed, but he saw enough.

The *finhval* shot up and blew violently. Then for a long time he struggled, rolling to and fro, lashing out with flukes and flippers, making the sea "to boil like a pot."

Zoölogists put the limit of this rorqual's length at seventy feet. Nils, the whaleman, judged this particular *finhval* to be longer than the *Ulv,* which would mean over ninety feet. Excitement, however, is a strong magnifier.

Nils had come to the conclusion that, for once, at any rate, his skipper had made a very poor shot, and would certainly require to try another—the gun was then being reloaded—when the victim suddenly ceased to fight and turned upon his side. Whereupon the *Ulv* began to steam slowly ahead, while the winch absorbed the slackening line.

Thirty fathoms, perhaps, had been recovered when, as suddenly as he had collapsed, the rorqual revived. And now he was more furious than ever. Propeller and winch were stopped, the latter unbraked to allow of the line's running free, if necessary. But instead of fleeing from the enemy, the *finhval* made toward the *Ulv,* his speed increasing till a white wave rushed from his head.

Only once before had Nils seen such a thing happen. Once a *blaahval* bull had charged so near to the whaler on which he stood that men cried out, beholding the small bluish eyes glaring—so they afterward declared—at them; but the *blaahval* had dived at the last moment—at the last moment, indeed—for the whaler with her ghastly crew had shuddered as his back rubbed her keel.

The memory of that experience, and of the more recent escape of the *Thorgrim,* flashed upon Nils, yet did not greatly disturb him. The *Ulv* was already going astern. Her skipper would dodge the attack easily enough. But Nils had not made allowance for fear—for panic. He was not close enough to realize all the danger. The rorqual was bounding through the water, half of his body now and then exposed. Blind terror, perhaps, more than rage was driving those eighty tons at fifteen miles an hour.

One can only speculate as to what happened on board the *Ulv* during those tremendous moments—— An order wrongly repeated—gasped wildly into the tube and promptly acted on by the engineer—a turn of the wheel in the wrong direction—who can tell? Or did some demon of vengeance, after all, so possess those tons of animal life, so direct them in their headlong course, that human wit and energy were of no avail?

The presage of disaster which came to Nils was this: Men moving hurriedly on the deck, the lookout gesticulating frantically from the crow's-nest, the skipper leaping upon the platform, swinging the gun to port as far as it would go, firing it, and flinging up his arms in an abandon of despair. And next Nils beheld the *finhval,* instead of diving, heave out of a welter of foam and ram the *Ulv* amidships. He screamed a foolish, futile warning, then stood with mouth agape and horrified eyes, like a man in a catalepsy. A rending noise culminating in a crash shocked

his ears. A fountain of condensed steam sprang from the whaler. A confusion of shouts followed.

The *finhval,* his head jammed fast in the engine-room, writhed fearsomely and collapsed. The *Ulv* listed heavily to port. Her crew struggled to launch the second pram, but the deck bursting up under their feet sent them hurtling against and spinning over the rail; and in the next breath the vessel heeled over helplessly, exhibiting a great bulge on her starboard plates.

Nils sank in a heap and covered his face. A dull explosion caused him to look again—it might have been a minute later.

He peered—and there was naught to be seen save a troubled patch of water with a few dark objects floating thereon. Casting loose from the dead whales, he rowed madly toward the place of disaster.

Some spars and fragments floated on the surface, also a man's fur cap, which he recognized as the skipper's, and somebody's pipe—and that was about all. Of his nine shipmates there was no sign.

Afternoon had come when he pulled back to the dead whales and refastened the pram to their shackles. He returned to the dead whales because he knew not where else to go. He was, he believed, nearly one hundred miles from Iceland, but exactly where the land was he could not be certain. Hopeless to attempt the voyage in the frail pram; he must stand by the carcasses, which would catch the eyes of whalemen long before a small solitary boat could do so. Besides, as he realized, the whales meant food. At the same time, he knew he would endure hunger until absolutely compelled to eat. For drink, a world of ice gleamed within a mile of him. The weather looked like remaining fine; yet no man can tell what an hour may bring forth along the shores of the Greenland ice, where bitter winds and sodden, blinding fogs swoop from the north with scarce a warning of their approach.

But on this summer day the air was clear and mild, and Nils knew that there would be a full moon at night. Whalers would be hunting throughout eighteen of the twenty-four hours, so that his chances of being sighted were the best possible in the circumstances. At intervals he supported the flagpole. Now and then he took a few puffs at his pipe, husbanding his small store of tobacco; luckily he possessed a couple of boxes of matches. Sometimes, too, he bowed his head and, shuddering, sobbed for the tragedy of his mates.

Flocks of gulls wheeled and screeched above the carcasses; theirs was the only sound save the lapping of the water against the boat and the sigh of the light swell on the ice-pans near him. Had his mind not been half-stunned, Nils would probably have gone wholly crazy.

Late in the day he secured a large lump of ice. In the bottom of the boat it melted rapidly, but yonder was a continent of it when he wanted more. He became hungry, but could not bring himself to cut into the mountains of food ready to his hand. About midnight, having put on his muffler and oilskins, he sank into a doze.

A few hours later he awoke, ravenous and chilled. The sun's rays dispersing the thin ice-fog promised him another fine day. He stood up and swung his stiffened arms and gazed about him. With the carcasses he had drifted during his sleep, parallel with the ice, eastward. How far he could not tell, but a small berg he had noted in an ice-bay the previous night was no longer visible.

The dead whales had begun to swell, and he approached the nearer of the two with repugnance, yet also with a certain eagerness. The water around the carcass, though ruddy, was almost clear.

Peering downward he could see ghostly wicked shapes slipping to and fro, and once something rasped the planks under his feet. But he had seen sharks feasting on dead whales before now.

In the pram was an old flensing knife —a twelve-inch blade on a four-foot shaft. With this implement he set awkwardly to work to remove a square of blubber from the monstrous flank. As the first fragment of the creamy-white substance plopped into the sea an ugly blunt snout rose at it. Nils stabbed at the shark, which sank, bleeding, perhaps to be torn to pieces by its fellows. Another shark got the blubber. After that, Nils let them have what he cut off. There was surely enough for all.

When he had exposed more than sufficient flesh for his needs, he proceeded to dig out several large hunks. These he afterward sliced into strips. Fresh whale beef, when cooked, is no worse eating than a somewhat greasily prepared steak, and Nils was used to having it for breakfast at least once a week, during the whaling season. But despite his acute hunger, the raw meat revolted him. His first attempts at making a meal of it need not be described. Yet an hour came when he would have been glad of more of it.

Aware that the carcass would shortly become unfit for food, he made a rough attempt to preserve some slices by dipping them in the sea till thoroughly soaked in the brine, afterward laying them on the thwarts in the sun. In carrying out the first part of this plan, he sacrificed many slices, and once nearly lost his life. Thenceforth he kept the flensing knife ready, and found some satisfaction in lacerating the horrid thieves. They were not large sharks, their lengths ranging from eight to twelve feet, and they were supreme cowards. Had he fallen among them, they would probably have retired to what they considered a safe distance until the last of life was out of him.

The hours passed with dreadful slowness. At least once in every hour he hoisted his flagstaff, holding it upright until his muscles ached. He made several vain attempts to support it by mechanical means. At meal times he cast to the clamoring sea-birds small scraps of blubber, which floated on the water and were too trifling for the sharks to notice. Now and then he made a trip to the ice. And so, hoping desperately, he went through two days and two nights.

Early on the third morning he was startled out of a drowse—a nightmare in which, as on the screen of a cinematograph, he beheld the tragedy of the *Ulv* repeated—by the blowing of whales. And the blowing was of that kind of whale which the whaleman recognizes without much interest—so long as he is aboard a sturdy craft.

Nils drew up his body, rubbed his eyes, and beheld the latest horror. Two black fins, each standing a yard above the surface, skimmed toward him.

"Spaekhugger!" he muttered—which in English is "blubber cutter"—the whaleman's name for the *Orca Gladiator* or killer whale, or grampus. It is a toothed whale ranging up to thirty-five feet in length, and the sea holds no creature more savage. One has been taken with thirteen porpoises and fourteen seals in its stomach.

Had those whales been hungry, the pram would have been no protection—so, at least, Nils believed. He sat there, stiffening with cold terror.

The high, sharp-pointed dorsals disappeared, and Nils, gazing downward, could descry the black bulks with their curious blotchy white markings prowling about, inspecting the dead rorquals, while the sharks scattered. He could even see the serrated jaws gape and withdraw without biting. Evidently the food was too stale. Orca must be hungry indeed to devour what he has not slain.

The twain rose to the surface; the one bumped lightly against the pram, the other flung itself half out of the water, brandishing a small shark in its jaws. Nils saw the blood spurt from the wriggling victim, and heard the scrunch on its smashed vertebræ, ere the killer plunged from sight, raising a surge that set the pram rocking.

To the lonely man's relief the tall dorsal fins reappeared at a distance, moving rapidly away.

Yet one danger had passed only to let him realize another. His head ached, a sickly sensation pervaded his being. By this time the dead whales, thanks partly to the unmitigated sunshine, had become amazingly blistered and distended. Standing up in the pram, Nils failed to see over the carcasses. From the cavity he had dug in securing his supply of meat came a purring sound, as the vile gases escaped under enormous pressure. From the bristling jaws of the same whale protruded the ton-weight tongue, livid, swollen, it seemed, to bursting point. Bubbles rose through the ruddy water from the wounds made by the harpoons and also by the lance —the lance whose breaking had ended nine lives.

Nils understood that he must cast loose from the whales without delay. The still atmosphere about him was reeking with poison. He crawled dizzily to the bow of the pram and fumblingly untied the painter that was literally binding him to death. Seizing the oars, he succeeded in putting a hundred yards between himself and the mountains of pestilence.

The clean, crisp air revived him. He sucked a scrap of ice and drew a few precious puffs from his pipe. His supply of whale beef was still fairly fresh, yet he began to ask himself if he had enough food. When next renewing his stock of ice he endeavored to kill a sea-bird by tempting it with a piece of meat and then flinging the flensing knife. He thought of striking it with the flagpole, but could not manipulate that weapon with any dexterity. A bird was tempted, but the flensing knife missed its mark, and skimming across the ice shot down a crack. So Nils lost his knife as well as his piece of meat. He cursed—and stormed at the bird.

Still, he did not utterly despair. His plan was to keep the whales in sight. They were now bound to attract the notice of any whaleman within five miles, and Nils knew that if he could live for a week he would have a good chance of being picked up by the searchers whom the station manager would surely send out. So he ate as little as possible, and hoisted his flag frequently, and occasionally sculled the pram in order to keep within a safe distance of the whales. Thus another day and night went by.

On waking he was alarmed to see the whales, drifting faster than the pram, far away. He toiled toward them, telling himself that he must in future take briefer spells of sleep. He saw many live whales that day—*blaahval* and *finhval*, also a humpback—and the sight of them cheered him with the thought that in such clear weather a lookout would espy them from afar off, for the blue-whale in particular emits a lofty spout.

While the sun was yet high he dropped into a doze, from which he came to himself, wet and shivering, in the midst of a dense moist fog. Neither the dead whales nor the ice were visible; he could not be sure of his bearings, though he did not think he had slept for more than a couple of hours, and could not therefore have drifted far. He decided to await the clearing of the fog, rather than risk all by blind searching.

He felt hungry. He would eat a portion of one of the strips of meat which he had recently redipped in the sea and spread on the thwarts, deeming that such

treatment would continue to preserve them. Yes, he would eat.

The meat was gone, every strip of it. The gulls, grown bolder, had taken it while he slumbered. For a time Nils was out of his mind. In the gray loneliness and deathly silence he yelled—and yelled—and yelled.

The fog-bank hung there for many hours. Ere it lifted Nils had sunk into a stupor. When he returned to consciousness, the sun was low, but shining gloriously, a light breeze was ruffling the sea.

He raised himself upon his knees on the thwart—he was feeling weak and sick—and gazed about him. Nothing but water—water on every hand.

Then, indeed, he despaired.

Yet the life in him still strove, cried out against the end. If only he could find the ice and the whales again! Drink and meat! He thought not of the condition of the carcasses by this time. His whole being ached and groaned for food.

The whales! If he rowed toward the sinking sun, he would arrive at the ice; if on sighting the ice he went eastward, he would reach the whales. So his reeling brain judged the matter.

Getting out the oars, he began to row toward the glory. In a little while he had to desist. He tried his pipe, but somehow it failed to comfort, and he bit a tiny piece from his remaining inch of tobacco and chewed it. He rowed again, keeping it up till his arms could do no more.

He looked around. Still nothing but the sea, and the sun setting in ineffable splendor. Then a strange superhuman energy came to him. For a long time he pulled furiously.

All at once he ceased, the oars slipping from his nerveless grasp. He twisted himself round as though for a last look for salvation, struggled in vain to rise, cried croakingly, "Isen! Isen!" ("The ice, the ice!"), and lurched sideways into the bottom of the pram.

About sixty miles from Isafjörd the man in the crow's-nest of the *Thorgrim* reported a sail. At closer range the craft turned out to be a French fishing schooner, one of the many beautiful white ships that put out from Brittany ports and others, in the early spring, to take the cod from the teeming banks in the nearer Arctic waters. Svendsen decided to speak to her, and the course of the *Thorgrim* was altered. In time the schooner was seen to be flying a distress signal, and before the steamer was within a mile of her, one of her boats was being lowered.

The boat was manned, and what looked like a long bundle was carefully handed down to the fishermen in it. The boat was rowed to meet the *Thorgrim.* As it neared her, the bundle in the stern-sheets was seen to be human.

There was a deal of talk in Norwegian and French, but the understanding came chiefly through signs. The mate of the *Ulv* was still alive—little more. He had not spoken since the fishermen found him adrift in a small open boat, within sight of the ice, two days previously. He appeared then to be in the last stages of exhaustion, due to exposure and starvation, and they had done what they could for him. They did not think he would live long. They were sorry. At the same time, they hoped for some little reward for having saved the pram, which at that moment a fisherman was pulling toward the whaler.

Nils half-opened his eyes as the Norwegians lifted him aboard, but evinced no recognition for any of the familiar faces. Sigurd and Johan conveyed him, tenderly enough, to the cabin, and laid him in one of the bunks, asking him if he wanted for anything, and putting questions, which they could not sup-

press, as to his plight. But he made neither sound nor sign. Sigurd, having gazed a while upon the weather-seamed face, as if to read therein some message, drew back suddenly, for the lids had flickered and lifted, uncovering eyes fixed in a stare of agonized terror.

"He has surely gone made, poor Nils!" the mate said to old Svendsen, who ordered the engineer to make all speed possible for the station.

Happily, Nils did not die, and in a few weeks his reason returned with his strength. It was not until then that Herlof learned why the *Ulv* had never come back.

PURSER DERVIN'S SHARK STORY

ACCORDING to the veracious purser of the passenger steamship *Tivives,* a school of sharks followed the ship out of Kingston, Jamaica, in the West Indies. There were seventy-five passengers on board, bound for New York, and many of them were frightened at the sharks. So Purser Dervin had the sailmaker make a canvas bag which was painted to resemble a pickaninny negro, and the cook furnished two bunches of green bananas which nearly filled the bag. The bag was securely tied up; then the cook smeared it outside with fresh beef, liver, and blood, and threw it overboard. The idea was that the sharks would eat the green bananas and die of indigestion. Anyhow, they did rush at the pickaninnylike bag, tore it to pieces, and apparently ate it. In a few moments one of the sharks shot out of the water like a porpoise very near the ship's side. All hands could see that a tarantula had fastened to the shark's nose, which is the most sensitive part of his anatomy. The big fish writhed around a whole minute in torture and then disappeared. The other sharks made off and were never seen again. The tarantula had hidden in one of the banana bunches. Thus ends that story.

TRUTH THAT READS LIKE FICTION

THE schooner *James M. W. Hall* out of Charleston, South Carolina, bound for Boston, carrying lumber with a crew of eight men and officers, was badly battered in a storm two hundred and fifty miles southeast of Cape May. Her seams opened. Only the deckhouses remained above water. All hands lashed themselves to the cabin. The night was pitch black and every wave washed over the ship. A two-gallon can of gasoline rolled free on deck to the captain's feet. He seized it, poured a quart into a battered dish pan. With the only dry match that remained among the crew he lighted the gasoline. It flared up with a burst, and burned a few minutes. It was enough. The lookout on the ship *West Canon* which happened to be near saw the flash. A boat put off in the darkness and rescued the crew of the schooner. The schooner was abandoned.

CHARTING UNDERSEA VOLCANOES

THE International Geodetic and Geophysical Union is now bent upon locating all the volcanoes under the oceans, of which there are many, so the scientists say. The hydrographic office of each country has been asked to search ships' logs past and future for all information about submarine volcanic activity. Ship captains of the whole world will be asked to coöperate. The scientists say there are, probably, more volcanoes under the oceans than rise upon the land. It is supposed that there is a volcanic zone under the Atlantic from the West Indies to the Azores. Many of the Pacific islands are wholly of volcanic origin, the Hawaiian islands among the largest.

The Sureness of MacKenzie

By Frederick R. Bechdolt. Author of "The Fight of the Lone Pass," "Under Sealed Orders," etc.

An epic of the hill wind and the fog. A story of thrills; and, when you think it over, and read this story, you'll agree with Bechdolt that there are few jobs more crowded with thrills than that of the pilot who essays to bring a big liner into port in a fog so thick that it obscures the decks.

THE hill wind and the fog raced down from Tamalpais' crest to the inner portal of the Golden Gate. While the great sirens shook the living rock on either side with their hoarse warnings, these two lingered briefly in the steep-walled place. It was like the last conference of stealthy thugs at the scene of their projected crime. For tomorrow they were to bring the thing to pass.

Even now the *Empress* was facing straight toward the spot. Far out of sea she came, unswerving as though, disdainful of the plotting elements and imbued with absolute, abiding faith in man, she knew that her pilot was at this moment being summoned forth to the place where he would meet her.

The ringing of the telephone bell in the hallway was the first indication MacKenzie got of the impending task. He rose deliberately from his morris chair and strode out to answer. He was a wide-shouldered man whose weather-stained face was out of harmony with his well-tailored business suit. There was assertion in the very manner of his setting down his feet; his bushy, gray brows seemed to grow heavier as he neared the instrument. When he had taken down the receiver, he roared the salutation in his quarter-deck voice, and his "Hello!" made the windows rattle in the sitting room, where his wife was leaning forward, hearkening.

"All right. . . . Four o'clock. . . . Good-by." He shouted each answer like an order.

His wife dropped the two dolls over which she had been smiling before the interruption, and a shadow came into her eyes. "You're going to be away over the twins' birthday." Her voice made it like an accusation.

"I've got to go out inside of an hour." He turned his back on those dolls which he had been fondly fingering five minutes ago, and he took down from its hook behind the door a file of the *Guide*. He scanned the first column's closely printed list of homing vessels. "Two men out there ahead of me," he said thoughtfully. "Let's see."

When he had replaced the papers—"It's all right, Annie; I'll come home on the *Empress* to-morrow afternoon." He made the announcement as positively as though the Asiatic liner were a street car; and then, with his last half hour at home before him, he went on mapping out the details of to-morrow evening's festivities which they had planned in honor of their two grandchildren. He spoke with a confidence, as if there were five-o'clock whistles to call him home from his work on the high seas. But his wife made no move to pick up the two presents, which she herself had dressed in bright raiment; she sat still, gazing with patient eyes upon the leaping flames in the grate. Thirty years of married experience had planted in her soul abiding distrust concerning ocean home-comings.

"After dinner," he was saying placidly, "we'll all come back to the sitting room; and we'll have them here"—he pointed to the center table—"so they'll see them as quick as they come through the door." He heard her sigh.

"Annie, I tell you I'll be back on the *Empress* in good time." He made the statement as if its very utterance established it—a fact beyond all doubt or contradiction. He waved his large right hand in a gesture whose abruptness caused the tattooed dragon on his forearm to thrust its red-and-blue head out from under his spotless linen cuff.

"Now that's settled, lass. And be sure to remember the candles for the birthday cakes. Two cakes; same size; and the candles set in exactly the same." He sighed comfortably in the depths of the leather-cushioned chair, and he talked on. There was fondness in his face now; it had come there when he called her "lass."

A half hour later he elbowed his way through the hurrying throngs of homebound commuters in front of the ferry building, and climbed the stairs. In the office of the Bar Pilots' Association, he found two fellow members just back from outside the Heads, immaculately overcoated, their shoes agleam with polish, bulky men, gray-haired. They talked with MacKenzie of tide and wind and pitfalls of the deep as workman talks to workman at the changing of the shifts. He nodded and answered tersely as he went on tying up the evening papers into a round bundle to take with him to the pilot boat.

He glanced at the blackboard beside the secretary's desk. Under the head of "Remarks" he read:

Thick Outside.
Sou'west Swell.
Breaking Bar.

These tidings, which would have forced a coastwise skipper to relieve his tense nerves by profanity, he accepted without comment. The fog and breakers brought him his bread and butter, after all. He saw the names of the pilots out there ahead of him. "Lea and Wills," he chuckled. "They're both of them always worrying for fear they won't get ships back home."

"How about you?" the secretary demanded.

"There'll be ships enough, all right, to bring us all back before to-morrow evening," he said, and departed.

He boarded the Bar Pilots' Association tender at Meiggs Wharf, and stood on the low deck as the swift little craft steamed out through the inner portal of the Golden Gate with a seven-knot ebb pushing on her stern.

And now, just after the tug had passed Fort Point, the hill wind and the fog leaped down the Marin County slopes again, hand in hand—like two murderers coming to take a look at their intended victim as he goes by the appointed spot. The Lime Point siren bellowed after MacKenzie in hoarse warning, and he glanced behind him as the pair fled up the mountain. "Came on thick there for a minute," he re-

marked to the man at the wheel, and turned his eyes ahead.

Where Point Bonita thrusts its fangs into the Pacific, the helmsman turned the little craft squarely to the right, for the bar was breaking to that southwest swell, and, jockeying the swirling currents, brought her safely into the entrance of North Channel. Between the breakers of the shoal and the surf at the foot of the cliffs, she went until she rocked on the bosom of the open sea; then, as she neared the lightship, MacKenzie saw the pilot boat careening out to meet him like a swooping gull.

The rising sea was but a herald of a remote gale; there was scant breeze; the gray mists marked a perfect circle on the tossing ocean. In the center of this a speck of white under the apex of a drab dome, the pilot boat lay. Her spray-laved deck glinted dully, deserted now by all save her helmsman. Through the thick curtain of the mists he heard the lightship's lonely roaring, the muffled moan of breakers on the bar, the constant whispering of a myriad hoary billows yearning toward the lowering heavens. Among these sounds he hearkened for another, and peered into the murk, watching, listening for the first far sign of some homing ship.

Down in the cabin, MacKenzie and his two companions were killing with the gossip of the seven seas the time which separated them from home. They were talking of the long, blind trails which reach from the uttermost parts of the world, converging on this troubled patch of water, and of the ships that traveled by these pathways to the Golden Gate.

The engines had stopped; the schooner was under sail; and in the pauses of their conversation the sounds of the ship and the sea came into the cabin—the rattle of a shifting block from overhead, the intermittent gurgle of the water alongside, and at intervals out of the surrounding depths the faint, clinking toll of the lightship's submarine bell.

MacKenzie lay on one of the red, upholstered lockers which extended the length of the cabin under the tiers of bunks on either side; he had changed his neat shore raiment for rough sea clothes. The other two, in similar attire, were seated at the wide table in the middle of the room. Lea, black-browed, swarthy as some old-time pirate, was hammering the table with his fist to emphasize his assertions. Old Wills wagged his white beard against the flaming background of a scarlet flannel undershirt, announcing every conclusion with slow placidity.

"There's that Standard tanker," he was saying; "from Honolulu, and——"

"The *Empress,*" Lea interrupted loudly. "And they're all that's coming in to-morrow. Sorry for you, Dan."

"I'll get the *Empress.*" MacKenzie made the announcement as positively as though it were an order.

Wills turned with the deliberation which his extensive girth demanded until he faced MacKenzie, and his snowy whiskers swept to and fro against the sanguinary background, as he shook his head. "Don't you be so blame sure, now," he said slowly.

As one who sums up judgment, MacKenzie spoke, and with a certainty, as though he were at this moment gazing beyond the curtain of the fog over the earth's curve: "That overdue Frenchman is heading for the Farallons now. 'Twas him the *Hazel Dollar* sighted yesterday and reported with his topmasts gone. But unless there's more air stirrin' out there than there is here, he won't be in till after daybreak."

"That bark the *Dollar* sighted was bound for Puget Sound." Lea thumped the table. "The Frenchman's lost."

Wills joined him, and their voices mingled for some moments; the names

of ships and far ports flew thick and fast; the cabin resounded with strange words by which local tempests are called down the west coast. MacKenzie remained silent until they had concluded. Then——

"I'm right," he reiterated.

Lea swore at him with the deep fervency which time-tried shipmates can use in their profanity when they apply it to one another. Old Wills turned laboriously to face him once more.

"Dan"—his voice was heavy with solemnity—"you're always this way. You can't even pass the time o' day with a man without you got to be so dead sure about the thing. It ain't right, I tell you."

"Now listen, Dan," Lea cut in. "You got to change your mind once in a while."

MacKenzie shook his head. "I know when I'm right," he said aggressively.

"Supposing you was wrong?" Wills demanded.

"I ain't wrong," MacKenzie announced, in the same sure tone. "I know when I'm right, I tell you. I'd be no pilot if I didn't know that."

Lea swore again, and the fervency of despair was in his voice now. "Come, Jim," he told Wills, and picked up the cards which were lying in front of him on the table, "I'll play you a game of pinochle."

MacKenzie watched them from the locker for a good half hour; then went on deck, for the third man out has the task of cruising. He stood in the narrow cockpit, talking with the helmsman about the rising sea and the chances of the fog clearing away. But before he left for the cabin—"Keep her pretty well out toward the lightship," he said quietly. "That Standard tanker's due to-night, and that French bark at almost any time."

In the dark hour before the dawn, the helmsman sighted the huge oil carrier—a blurred pin point of light emerging through the night mists, miles away—and he kindled the torch to signal her. As he waved the flaring beacon to and fro, its buzzing awakened the three sleepers in the cabin, and they saw the crimson glare spilling down the companionway.

"Good ship for you, cap'n!" The sailor's hoarse announcement was followed by the tramp of his feet on the deck as he hurried forward to awaken his companions.

MacKenzie came up to take the wheel, and while he signaled for the engines he could hear old Wills stamping about the cabin to assemble his store clothes. Shortly before the launching of the yawl, Wills appeared, all evidences of that piratical undershirt extinguished beneath starched linen and black broadcloth. He hurried to the main rigging as the boat left the skids, and he hung there by the manropes, awaiting a safe moment when he could lower his two hundred and sixty-odd pounds into the pitching craft without bringing disaster.

"Good luck!" MacKenzie called from the cockpit. "Tell them if there's nothing better sailing they'd better send some one out here on the tender, for I'll be in on the *Empress*."

Wills disappeared; and some moments later his voice floated upward from the darkened waters: "You always got to be so blame sure, Dan!"

MacKenzie's face remained impassive as that final rebuke reached him; and hours later, when he had hastened up into the wan dawn, responding to the helmsman's summons, his features wore no sign of triumph as he handed the glasses to Lea, pointing into the southwest. Through the fog the lenses picked up a gleaming, white bulk, like the specter of a remote tower which has been razed near its summit; and as that ghostly form stole on, looming larger through the damp mists, the binoculars

discovered the black speck that crawled on before it.

"Tops'ls gone," MacKenzie announced indifferently. "And there's the tug. Your Frenchman, Jack."

"I guess you're right." Lea shook his head as he hurried below to change his clothes.

"O' course I'm right," MacKenzie told him placidly; "I knew that all along."

Noon passed. The fog, which had been lifting for several hours, crawled up the great, tawny ridges where Tamalpais rises from the sea until it found upon the mountain's flanks the ancient rendezvous where it had often met the hill wind. Here it bided the approaching hour when they would meet again, to descend hand in hand to the inner portal of the Golden Gate and bring to pass the thing for which they had been preparing.

When the *Empress* thrust her steep, black prow over the earth's bulge, the circle had widened about the pilot boat until its drab circumference inclosed the headlands to the northeast and racing crests far beyond the silent, red-hulled lightship. The bar's entire shape was projected upon the waters in a vivid horseshoe-shaped smear of white, to which the towering billows raced, whispering. As they reached it, blanching in the instant, they leaped, roaring, amid a myriad snarling predecessors. From the lurching deck MacKenzie sniffed the keen, primeval tang of seaweed uptorn from the depths; and he gazed seaward at the liner's smoke, a filament of brown, infinitesimal on the somber heavens.

"Raise the jack!" he ordered.

A sailor pulled the star-flecked banner to the masthead; and over the horizon, across the wild reaches of the ocean, the homing steamship and the little schooner spoke their greetings, flag for flag.

When they had drawn within a quarter of a mile of each other, the yawl slid from the skids into the hissing waters; the sailors sprang like cats between the thwarts; MacKenzie chose the next propitious instant, and followed them. They coasted from the summits of the gray-green billows into swirling troughs, shut off from all the world by rushing, foam-patched hills; they gained the lee of the biding liner. Her black side arose above them like the wall of a high building.

From the summit of that wall the slender Jacob's ladder dangled, now touching the edge of a rising wave, now receding skyward as the steamship rolled, showing her red belly.

There came a moment when the *Empress* settled toward the yawl, and the little boat rose as if to meet her. The sailors grunted at the oars; the yawl rushed broadside toward the lowering bulk. MacKenzie leaned forward in the stern sheets.

The moment crystallized into a fleeting instant. The yawl was rising, the ship still descending; the end of the Jacob's ladder hung within a few feet. Immediately that entire movement changed, and the ladder was swept away from the retreating boat.

But in the passing of that instant, as one who casts behind him all else upon the seizing of swift-racing opportunity, MacKenzie rose and leaped. Out of the boat against the reeling steel wall he sprang; he gripped the ladder's sides with both strong hands and found the step which lay unseen beneath him. Already the oarsmen were pulling off to safety; through the black plates he heard the clanging of the gong down in the engine room. He climbed up and gained the deck.

Awaiting him, the skipper stood upon the bridge, tall in his spotless uniform of navy blue, grizzled, austere on this far height with all his ship beneath him. The days and nights of lonely mastery,

when every movement of that enormous structure, every revolution throughout its complicated mechanism, and every act among those hundreds on board were his to answer for; those days and nights were over now. In these two remaining hours, when he faced the climax of that struggle against the elements into which every voyage resolves itself, the law had given him a companion. As he had looked upon the land whose imminence is the final ordeal for every deep-water captain, he had seen approaching him the only man who had a right to share his responsibility without taking his orders. And now, as MacKenzie gained the bridge and these two exchanged greetings, each called the other by his title, captain.

MacKenzie looked into the northeast, appraising the hostile elements—the raging breakers on the bar, the swirling currents hidden in North Channel, the headlands ravenous for wreckage, the gray fog that clung to the slopes above them. Striving to read from their aspect the signs of any conspiracy against this ship, whose safety was his trust now, he studied the fog longer than all the others; he watched for any movement which might betray the connivance of the treacherous hill wind. But the fog remained motionless on the heights.

He spoke; the great liner turned under his feet. From the red-hulled lightship she departed northward and a little to the east, and she left the distant harbor entrance to the right of her foaming wake. For seven miles she traveled, skirting the outside of the roaring bar, until she had passed the curve where the horseshoe hooks inward parallel to the land. Here she reached an unmarked spot on the tumbling waters which MacKenzie knew as well as a landsman knows his own doorstep. Again he spoke; the huge bulk swerved as obediently as a living creature, found the new course, and plunged down North Channel with the Potato Patch roaring on her right, and on her left the surf under the ringing cliffs. Between these bounds, which narrowed as the ship went on, he guided her, while the great, green seas hammered her forward deck and hidden currents strove desperately against her keel, now fighting to drive her on the rocks and now to drag her upon the shoal. Four miles, and then she shook the last hampering deluge from her bows as she emerged between Bonita's teeth and the last bar buoy.

At the outer entrance of the Golden Gate she lingered for a moment, as one who hesitates before plunging into a final peril.

From the lofty bridge MacKenzie peered up the funnel-shaped lane whose narrow end opens between steep cliffs into the harbor. He looked into the bay and searched the hillsides above the Marin County precipices for any sign of downward movement in the fog. This was the last chance to stop until she passed through the neck of the funnel—between Fort Point and Lime Point. The gray fog was still motionless up there on the slopes. He uttered an order; the *Empress* started on.

She passed Mile Rock far over to her right. More than two miles ahead of her, at the edge of the point which has been named for it, the grim old black fort, with its rows of loopholes, stood out clearly. Across the narrow channel from it, the Lime Point Lighthouse gleamed white upon its rocky headland.

Under MacKenzie's feet the decks were astir with men and women. Some were rushing to and fro in a fervor of final packing; others stood at the rail, gazing eagerly at the first evidences of the city; all were radiant with the expectancy of their home-coming. Back and forth among them stewards hurried on a multitude of errands; Chinese deck

boys slipped unostentatiously in and out through the crowd; the noise of many tongues arose on all sides. Up here, remote from all that bustle, in the lonely place of responsibility, MacKenzie stood motionless; the captain paced back and forth close by, but spoke no word to him.

Then the fog seemed to fall from the hillsides upon the ship, it came so suddenly.

A thick, damp grayness cut off the bridge from everything; it obscured the decks; the bows were only a faint blur. The land vanished. The *Empress* was traveling on a little circle of dark waters over whose surface hoary shreds of mist were trailing; a circle whose circumference moved as the ship moved, whose area remained unchanged, without the slightest sound of anything beyond.

Out of that gray mystery great voices came, deep-toned, reverberating as in horror of the tidings which they proclaimed. The sirens were bellowing their brazen warnings to the ship, and the living rock trembled as they called their stern commands to keep away or die.

The ship went on; she must pass through the narrows before she could stop again. She was no longer steaming proudly in; she crept as one who has been stricken blind and feels her way; out of mid-channel toward the Marin County shore—MacKenzie was able to bring her that far while the fog was descending—and now she crawled along under the lofty hills. The passengers had left her decks; there were no signs of life save for the lookout hidden in the murk that cloaked the bows, and the two men on the bridge. The captain's face had grown tense, and as he paced back and forth he glanced often at MacKenzie. But MacKenzie stood motionless, and there was no sign of feeling on his face.

He was looking down upon that little circle of dark waters over which the hoary filaments of mist were drifting. He was reading its secrets—the movement of the tide, the direction of the swirling currents, the strength with which they were pushing upon the liner's submerged keel.

He was listening to the sounds in the gray fog—the whistle of the *Empress,* appealing hoarsely for guidance; the echoes with which the steep Marin County hills answered that appeal; the crashing blare of the Fort Point diaphone over to the right. These things and a strange sixth sense of locality which had come through long experience gave MacKenzie a picture.

In his mind's eye he saw beyond the limits of that little circle on the dark waters. He saw the ship and her surroundings as he would on a clear day.

That mental vision portrayed the liner, now entering the neck of the funnel-shaped lane, approaching close to the inner portal of the Golden Gate. Close beside her it showed the Marin County hills, rising straight from the water; before her bows, barring the way with its rock walls, Lime Point; across the narrow channel from this—ahead and to his right—Fort Point.

That was the picture. The echoes came down from the hills; the Lime Point siren roared straight ahead of him; and over there to the right the Fort Point diaphone was bellowing like a hundred fear-maddened bulls. The ship crept on.

In his mind's eye MacKenzie saw the steep, black prow approaching Lime Point—until, within a minute, he must say the word which would compel the *Empress* to turn to the right in order to avoid the rocky promotory as she passed through the narrows.

Then a strange and terrible change came.

The echoes from the steep hills dwindled and died away. The roaring of the Lime Point siren grew fainter, more

remote, as if the ship were being shoved off to the right. The crashing diapason from Fort Point was growing with appalling suddenness.

At this same moment the color of the waters which swirled against the steel flanks of the *Empress* deepened to a turgid brown. The ebb tide was rushing seaward.

The captain halted abruptly. His tall form was erect no longer; he leaned forward, and his face was pallid as he peered into the fog toward the spot from which that diaphone's blare emerged.

In the instant, MacKenzie became rigid. He stood like a grim statue. His shaggy brows seemed to hide the eyes beneath them. Under his heavy, gray mustache his lips pressed tightly together. And he asked himself a question:

Had he erred?

If he had—if in the painting of that mental picture he had been mistaken—by a quarter of a mile in distance, by two minutes in time—this seven-knot ebb tide would be carrying the liner far over to her right. She would be steaming toward Fort Point. It had occurred once. Another ship, laden, like this one, with hundreds of men and women, had been swung off her course in a fog by the ebb tide, lusty with freshet waters, and driven on those rocks. The bones of that ship lay somewhere on the bottom mingled with the skeletons of her passengers.

Two minutes! And that narrow interval of time depended to a hair upon the superiority of the *Empress'* throbbing propellers over the opposition of the waters. What man could measure the results of that struggle down there under the surface? Or tell to exactness what might the currents were putting forth to-day?

The hillsides gave no echo now. The Lime Point siren died away entirely. The Fort Point diaphone crashed louder. The minute at whose expiration MacKenzie had intended to speak the word by which the liner would turn reached its final second. He put that question by. He had made his calculation in the beginning.

Now he spoke. The ship turned.

Her bow swung toward Fort Point; she steamed straight into that blaring warning as if she were defying it.

Her captain sprang toward MacKenzie; his right hand was upraised in a gesture of terrible protest; he was sweating; great beads of water stood out on his forehead. "Man!" he shouted hoarsely. "The current! Can't you see?" He pointed frantically into the din of the diaphone as though it were a visible thing. "Can't you hear? You're piling her up on Fort Point!"

MacKenzie stood rigid. His head was thrust forward as if he were straining to listen for some other sound than that reverberating thunder which was overwhelming the entire ship; as if in this moment he were hoping to catch some shred of noise from the Lime Point siren in the place where he had pictured it. But there was no answer from that quarter.

The *Empress* kept on turning. Over her bows now, nearer, louder, terrible in volume and intensity, Fort Point's warning came. The captain leaped in front of MacKenzie. His hand flew out toward the marine telegraph.

"Stop her!" His voice was heavy with horror.

MacKenzie seized the captain's arm, and his fingers were like iron as he pulled it back from the handle of the telegraph. There was a sharp struggle; the captain tore away from him and whirled toward the man at the wheel. His lips parted; but even as he uttered the first word of that order to alter her course, MacKenzie drowned that order with his own deep-voiced command:

"Keep her headed as she is now!"

Then, as the ship moved on into the grayness, while the blare from Fort Point welled straight above her lofty prow, the captain groaned and clutched the rail instinctively, as though to save himself against the impact of the collision with those rocks.

In that final instant the fog, like a faint-hearted conspirator who gives up and flees before his companions, began to retreat up the slope toward the distant mountain. But the hill wind remained stubborn. So, as MacKenzie touched the captain on the shoulder, pointing over there straight to their left, they gazed upon the ragged rocks from which her pilot had preserved the ship, and they saw the pallid jets of steam emanating from the siren behind the white lighthouse; but as yet they could hear nothing of the warning which the siren bellowed.

On her beam now; and now it receded to her quarter; and now the *Empress* had passed the place into the channel. The harbor showed clear before her bows; the sunlight was flecking the waters. MacKenzie moved his hand upon the lever of the telegraph, and the great liner ceased that creeping to resume her proud pace toward the wharves.

"It was that wind in the hills," MacKenzie told the secretary in the office of the Bar Pilots' Association, while he was leaving the order for fees which the captain had signed. "Come on thick for a few minutes, John; and just as I got her under Lime Point that wind played a dirty trick on me. Lime Point siren kept carrying off toward the mountain somewheres, and Fort Point came on so loud you couldn't hear another thing. For a minute they had me pretty near to guessing. I'd of been in trouble—if I hadn't been sure o' my bearings."

Which was all the comment that he made, for he was in a hurry to get home for that birthday festival.

At home, he rested as a good workman should rest. He shook off that sea harshness of his; his voice was gentle as he played with his grandchildren. He dispensed with that quarter-deck authoritativeness; he became the slave of the whole shrieking brood and did their smallest bidding. As if it were wearisome now, he forsook that calmness which he had worn while he was dealing with the hostile elements; he fairly trembled with nervousness when he stole into the sitting room to place the two dolls on the center table, so fearful was he lest one of the twins would catch him at it.

But there was a thing which he could not shake off, a trait which had fastened itself too firmly during his hours of facing the unexpected. One of his daughters mentioned it to her mother at the close of the evening, after the children had been put to bed, and while the rest of them were talking in front of the fire. MacKenzie was arguing with his two sons-in-law.

"Don't you go quoting government statistics at me," he was saying implacably; "I don't care what they say; I'm right!"

His daughter's voice was full of amused tolerance as she spoke to her mother: "He is *so* sure!"

And if the elements were—as men of old believed them—gifted with the power of speech, there is no doubt that on their next meeting at the inner portal of the Golden Gate the hill wind and the fog would have echoed that sentiment.

The Adventure of Captain Junard

by Mayn Clew Garnett

Captain Junard, bound north out of the Caribbean sea in his passenger steamship, was carrying valuable papers to Washington bearing upon a Central American revolution in which the ship owners were interested. A rival line wanted those papers. What happened makes this exciting recital.

CAPTAIN JUNARD awoke suddenly from a sound sleep. He listened intently for a few moments. The steady vibrations of the ship's engines told of the unchecked motion, the unhindered rush of the ship through the sea. Yet something had awakened him, something had given him a start from a dreamless sleep, the sleep of a tired man. He knew that something was wrong, felt it, and wondered at it, while his heart began to sound the alarm by its increasing pulsations. He wondered if he were sick, had eaten something that might produce nightmare; but he felt very well, and knew he never started at trifles. His hand reached for the revolver at the head of his bunk. He always kept it there for emergencies. It was a heavy forty-five, with a long, blue barrel—a strong weapon, though old in design, that had stood him handily in several affairs aboard the steamer. The light in his room was dim, but there was enough of it to show him that his room was empty. His hand reached the spot where the weapon usually hung, but failed to reach it. He groped softly for several moments. There was nothing upon the bulkhead; the gun was gone.

This fact made a peculiar impression upon him. He felt now that his instinct was correct, that he was indeed in danger. His mind cleared quickly from the stupor of sound sleep, and he remembered. He was carrying papers of peculiar importance in his strong box, or safe—papers relating to a deal in shipping connected with a revolution in a Central American state. A rival line had tried to stop the affair, which grew into political importance when secret agents of the United States tried to find out how deeply it might affect the Panama Canal. The concession had not been granted. The Canal Zone was not yet in existence, and the United States was sure to get it if this deal went through. The president had watched the affair with hungry eyes. Now the papers

were in his—Junard's—possession, aboard his ship, bound for the state department in Washington.

Junard started up when he found his hand missing the butt of that pistol. It had been a pleasant fancy to him when he remembered its solid grip and deadly accuracy, a dependable friend in the hours of darkness and distress. Now it was gone, and could not have gone without some one having taken it. If they took it, they took it to keep him from using it. The idea of its loss awakened him more than anything else, and sent his heart beating fast as with sudden quickness and energy he sprang from his bed. There was nothing in his room, nothing at all. The lamp burned low. The electrics had been switched off, as they gave too much light for him to sleep in. Junard stood wondering, studying, and gazing at his safe, which lay bolted to the deck in a corner of his room.

The captain's room was just abaft the pilot house, as is usual in ships of that class. A stairway, or companion, of five steps led to the pilot house, but these were cut flush with his room and into the floor of the house above, so that he could shut the door. The door was shut now as he looked, but the sound of the steering gear told him that the man at the wheel, within a dozen feet of him, was steering and attending, apparently, to his business. The room ran clear across the superstructure, opening with a door upon either side. To starboard was his bathroom, to port was a closet, which adjoined the room of the chief officer, being separated from it by the bulkhead. Both these rooms led aft and opened into his room by doors in the bulkhead. This made his room a complete section of the superstructure about twelve feet deep and running clear through. There was nothing in it that could hide any one. A table, a couch with leather cushions, several chairs, and a large desk completed the furniture. His bed was a large double bunk let in to port and hung with curtains. It somewhat resembled an old four-poster bed.

Junard walked quickly to the safe. It was locked. He smiled at himself. The absurdity of the thing almost made him laugh. And yet he was as nervous as a ship's cat when watching a strange dog. He opened the door leading to the pilot house. The man in there was standing in regulation pose, with his hands upon the spokes of the steam steering gear. The sudden rattle and clank told Junard the fellow was awake and alert. The dim light from the binnacle made his outline plainly discernible, and Junard recognized him as Swan, a quartermaster of long service and excellent ability.

"How's she heading, Swan?" whispered the captain.

"No'the, two east, sir," said the man, with a slight start. The words had come to him from the gloom behind him, and he had not heard the door open.

"That's right; they haven't reported the cape yet?"

"No, sir; but that's Cape Maysi, sir, I think," said Swan, pointing to a light that had just begun to show right over the port bow. Eight bells struck off upon the clock in the house as he spoke, and the cry came from forward. The chief mate, who was on watch, came to the pilot-house window, reached in, and took out the night glasses. He adjusted them and gazed at Cape Maysi. Captain Junard watched him narrowly, and noted that he took the bearings and made the remark in his order book. Mr. Jameson was a good officer and a first-class navigator, and Junard did not wish to appear on deck until he was called. It looked as if he did not trust the officer sufficiently. He would wait until the light was reported officially.

When Junard turned to reënter his

room, he heard a slight noise. There was a rustle, a whirl, and the door of the room to port clicked to. It had been shut when he jumped from his bunk. He gazed in the direction of the safe, and saw that it was now standing wide open, the door swinging slowly with the motion of the ship. He sprang to the switch and turned on the light, full power.

In front of him was the safe, with the door open. In front of the safe lay a huge knife, and alongside of the knife lay his revolver, fully loaded and cocked. Whoever had it was ready to use it upon a moment's notice. The intruder had fled at the sound of Junard's steps upon the pilot-house companion.

Junard was a very heavy-set man. He stood but five feet two inches, but was at least three feet across the shoulders, an immense man for his height, his chest being as broad and hairy as a gorilla's. His powerful legs were set wide apart to steady himself to the ship's motion, and for a brief instant he stood there in the full light, clothed in his pajamas. Then, with a roar like that of a bull, he plunged headlong for the lattice door of his room, and, bursting it with a crash, reached the deck in full stride. He just caught sight of what appeared to be a skirt, switching around the corner of the deck house, and he leaped savagely for it. He reached the corner, swung around it—and saw no one. Down the alleyway he ran, swung about, and came out to port upon the deck. There was not a soul to be seen, and he hesitated an instant which way to run. Then he ran aft with prodigious speed, and, within a couple of seconds, reached the cabin companionway. The light burned at the head of the broad stairs, but not a soul was in sight. He dashed inside silently, being barefooted, and, peering over the baluster, he saw the steward on watch peacefully snoring away in a chair near the water cooler at the foot of the stairway.

"Sam!" he called sharply.

The man awoke with a start.

"Aye, aye, sir!" he said, looking about him, recognizing the captain's voice, but not seeing him at once.

"Has any one come down this way within the last few minutes?" asked Junard.

"No, sir, not a soul, sir."

"Sure?"

"Sure, sir. I've only been dozing but a minute. I'd have seen 'em, sir."

Junard slipped away quietly, leaving the understeward wondering what he wanted. With amazing swiftness, the master rushed back to his room. He reached it, and went inside the broken door. The light was still burning, but the safe was now closed. He tried the combination lock, and found it had been locked. The gun and knife had also disappeared. The room was in perfect order, the light burning full power, and there was not a thing to show that there had been an entry made. The bursted door was the only sign of any irregularity. He stood gazing at the safe for a few minutes. The thing was almost uncanny. He began to wonder if he had not had a nightmare, dreamed the whole thing. He turned the combination of the safe, and opened the door again. The contents of the safe were apparently intact. He reached for the inner drawer, where the important papers had been kept. They were gone.

It was not nightmare, after all. The thing was real. The papers had been taken from the safe, and they were worth perhaps a million to the finder, if not much more; that is, if they could be gotten out of the ship and into the hands of those who were antagonistic to the deal. He pondered a few minutes more, and then decided to go on deck and stand the next watch upon the bridge, remaining there, with the excuse that the cape was drawing abreast

and he would take his departure from it. He decided not to say anything to either officer. The thing had best be kept secret, for the very existence of the papers might imperil his company, if that existence were known to certain parties. He hastily dressed and went on the bridge.

Mr. Dunn, the second officer, was now on watch, and it was about a quarter of an hour past midnight. The cape was drawing up, and was fast approaching the port beam. The ship was running about sixteen knots through a smooth sea, with a stiff northeast trade blowing almost dead ahead.

Junard came to where the second officer stood. Mr. Dunn turned and spoke to him, remarking upon the blackness of the night and the clearness of the Cape Maysi light.

Captain Junard said nothing, but watched the second officer narrowly, and tried to fathom his demeanor, looking for some sign that might show a knowledge of what had happened aboard within the past few minutes. Dunn had been upon the bridge when that safe was shut, when the revolver had been taken away. Yet Dunn had been in the employ of the company for ten years, and was a reliable man, a sailor who had always done his duty without murmur. He had a fine record.

The light drew abeam, and the ship ran close to the low, rocky point where it juts out into the sea. The high mountains a few miles back showed dimly in the gloom, making a huge shadow in the background. As the light is upon the north side of the low promontory and shows across to the southward, the land was very near as the ship steamed past it and laid her head for the passage.

Junard gazed hard at the shore. He was thinking. Would any one try to get into communication with Cuba here at the cape? There was a question. If a small boat lay near, with lights out, she might get close to the ship without being observed, for it was quite dark, and the loom of the land made it darker than usual. It was nearly six hours' run to the next light, in the Bahamas, across the channel, and the Inagua Bank was too far to the eastward to invite shelter for a small boat. It would be either at the cape, or near Castle Rock, or Fortune Island, he believed, that an attempt might be made to get into communication with the ship. This he must stop. No one must get in communication with the land before daylight. Then he would search every passenger thoroughly, go through all rooms, and take a chance at the result. At Castle Rock he would be on watch, if nothing occurred here.

He gazed steadily into the blackness ahead. The stiff trade wind blew the tops of the seas white. They broke in whitecaps, which showed now and then through the gloom of the night. He strained his eyes, but nothing showed ahead. The glass showed a dull, dark sea; there was nothing in the line of vision within three miles—that is, nothing as large as a whaleboat. He was sure of this. There might be something under the dark loom of the land, but the glass failed to show anything.

"You take a four-point bearing upon the light, Mr. Dunn, and get the distance accurate," said Junard. "The mate took his bearing before he left the deck, but you can take another—we are about abreast now—she's doing exactly sixteen."

Knowing that this would take the second officer until the light bore four points abaft the beam, Junard left the bridge and went aft without notice. He slipped down to the main deck, and went along the gangway until he reached the taffrail. The whirl of the wheel shook the ship mightily here, the long, steel arm of the tiller under the

gratings shook and vibrated with the pulsations. The chains, drawn taut, clanked and rattled in the guides and sounded above the low murmur of the shaking fabric. Junard gazed over the stern and watched the thrust of the screw as it tore the sea white and whirled a giant stream astern that showed sickly white with the phosphorescent glow.

When he turned again, he was aware of some one watching him. A head had appeared and vanished from behind the end of the cabin structure. The captain sprang for it with a bound. He turned the corner in time to see a skirt disappearing into the alleyway leading into the saloon. He was upon it with a catlike rush. He reached the saloon door just as it closed in his face.

Without hesitating an instant, he plunged against it, and it gave way to his great weight and power. He burst with a crash into the saloon.

The understeward who was on watch aft saw an apparition of a man in uniform coming through the door like a bull. He had opened his eyes in time to recognize the captain, who ran right across the cabin and out upon the deck beyond.

Junard was swift. He made a reach for the figure as it flitted into a room which opened upon the deck nearly amidships. His iron grip closed upon the skirt, which stretched out in the wind behind the fleeing figure. Then something struck him full in the face, took his breath, and blinded him. He clung to the cloth, choking, coughing, and blinded; made a grab with his free hand to clutch the person—but his grip closed upon empty air.

When he got the ammonia out of his eyes, which were almost blinded by the scorching fluid, he hurried to his room and bathed his head copiously in cold water until he regained his sight.

"Well, it's a woman, all right," he commented. "We'll have her, all right, in the morning; she won't get a show to-night to get away with anything. I guess I've got her measure."

In a few minutes he sent for the purser.

That individual came to the captain's room with fear and trembling. He had been playing draw poker, and breaking the rules of the ship, regardless of discipline, and expected, of course, to get a rating.

"Give me the passenger list," said Junard.

It was produced. They ran over it, looking for the location of all the women under thirty or thereabouts in the ship. Junard said nothing of his adventure, and the purser was amazed at his appearance.

"Had a bad night, captain?" he asked.

"Yes, rather. There's a case of cholera aboard—among the women—I don't know which one, but we'll have a chance to find out to-morrow. Don't speak of it to any one, mind you; don't let it out under any conditions—you understand?"

"Sure not," said the purser, paling a little under the news. "How did you come to find it out, sir?"

"Never mind that now. Just keep an eye on all the women in this ship, and don't let any of them get to throwing things overboard, or trying to do anything foolish. Watch them, and tell me of anything that might happen."

The purser, amazed, went back to his game of poker with certain passengers; but before doing so, he instructed several of his force to watch both gangways for the rest of the night. He did not know what the "old man" expected, but supposed that cholera patients attempted to throw things overboard, or tried suicide. The thought of the dread disease aboard made him forgetful of the game, and he lost heavily before morning.

II.

Junard, still smarting from the ammonia thrown in his face, came again upon the bridge. He had saved his eyes by a fraction, for the fluid had struck him right in the nose and mouth, and only the spray of it had gotten into his face higher up. It had been squirted by a fluid "gun" of the kind formerly used by bicyclists for repelling angry dogs. Part of the skirt had remained in his grip, but the person had slipped away in an instant and disappeared. It angered him to think a woman could do such a thing. And yet, if it was a woman watching him, there was sure to be more than a woman connected with it. No woman, he reasoned, could have tried his safe. No woman would have taken his revolver and carried it, along with a deadly knife. There must have been a well-organized party to the affair, and they had watched him, after taking the papers, to see just what he would do. Of course, he knew they would not toss such a valuable document overboard in the nighttime without a boat being close at hand to pick it up. The ocean is a hard place to find anything at night. He knew now that they were aware of his watchfulness and would not attempt to get rid of the papers except under the most favorable conditions. To throw them overboard attached to anything small enough not to attract attention would be to invite sure loss. He reasoned this out as he stood out the rest of Mr. Dunn's watch, and at eight bells—four o'clock in the morning—the mate came again on the bridge without anything happening to excite him.

"I've been on deck for a short time, Mr. Jameson," said Junard; "but I'm going to turn in for a little while. Call me when we get well up to Castle Rock—we'll raise it before morning, before daylight with the weather clear like this."

"Aye, aye, sir; I will, sir—he's doing fine now," said Jameson, as he signed the order book for his course during his watch.

At two bells—five o'clock—the mate called the captain by going to his port door and knocking. He was amazed at the sight of a young woman who came forth from the room and whisked herself quickly down the deck and out of sight. Such a thing as a woman in the master's room at that hour was enough to excite Mr. Jameson. He had not been on the ship long, and the captain was new to him. Masters, naturally, had love affairs as well as sailors, but they were generally careful about being caught. Here Junard had asked him to call him when they sighted Castle Rock, and, as he knew they must do this by five, at least, the mate was puzzled to see a woman leaving the captain's room when he knocked. Why hadn't she left sooner? It was a joke he would be bound to retail to the rest sooner or later, and he smiled at the thought. He tried to get a glimpse of her face, but failed. Then he waited a decent length of time, and knocked again, louder, announcing the light ahead on the starboard bow.

Junard came on deck instantly. He had been dressed and dozing.

The gray light of the morning, which was now beginning to show things a little, enabled Junard to note the smile upon the face of his chief mate.

"Anything funny doing?" he asked.

"No, sir; but I seen her—I couldn't help it."

"Seen who?"

"I beg your pardon, sir; but she was just going out when I came to call you when I raised the light—your orders, sir, you know. I wouldn't——"

"Out with it! Whom did you see?" snapped the captain sharply, and his tone told plainly that he was in no mood for a joke. The mate sobered at once.

"There was a lady leaving your room

as I came to knock—that's all, sir," he said sullenly. The captain had a poor appreciation of humor, he thought.

"What kind of looking woman was she?"

"Medium-sized, very well built—I might say stocky, sir—dressed in a dark cloth dress; she didn't have on a hat." This last was with almost a sneer. It brought Junard around with a jerk.

"I don't wish to seem foolish, Mr. Jameson, but you appear to presume too much. I might insinuate gently that you are a damn fool—but I won't, not until you tell me what is amusing you, and what you saw. I will say there was no woman in my room. If there was, I'd not be troubled to confess it."

"That's all I seen, sir," said Jameson sourly.

"Which way did she go?"

"She went aft," said the mate, wondering at the captain trying to hide the obvious. It irked him to think his master a fool. "She went aft, and that's all I seen."

"Mr. Jameson, there's a few things you don't know," said Junard. "When we get abreast of Castle Rock, I want you to go aft and watch both sides of the ship carefully, you understand? I want you to see that not a thing is thrown overboard—not a single thing—and if there is anything showing in the wake, come to me at once—or, better still, ring off the engines and mark it to pick up. This is very important. I can't tell you right now just how important it is, but I will say your berth depends upon it. Do not let anything leave the ship without notice—not a thing."

"Aye, aye, sir," said Jameson; and he went aft amazed at the outcome of his deductions. He wondered what was up. Some affair of the captain's, he was sure. But the severity of the master's tone, the earnestness of the captain's manner disturbed him greatly. There was something peculiar about it that made him, forced him, to give his attention to it. And there was the threat of his own berth, his position, being in forfeit. He did not like that kind of talk from a captain. It savored of undue severity. He took his station aft of the superstructure with some misgivings. In the gray light of dawn, he watched both gangways, first one side and then the other, keeping well back of the house.

Castle Rock light drew well upon the bow. It was now within a mile, and Junard noticed a small fishing boat riding in the fairway just ahead of the ship. As the water was very deep here, he knew she was not anchored, but must be waiting and under way; yet no sail showed upon her. Perhaps a powerful motor lay within her. He watched her carefully, and walked from side to side of the bridge, waiting for some sign from those aboard. The wake was now showing white in the gray of morning, and a small object could soon be distinguished in the smooth sea to leeward of the lighthouse, where the heavy swell of the Atlantic was cut off.

Jameson, who stood at the taffrail, saw a figure of a man peer from the window of a stateroom nearly amidships. The head was quickly withdrawn. The mate watched, and then walked quickly across the stern and watched the wake, wondering what might be taking place. The form of a woman flitted down the gangway from forward, showing dimly in the gloom. She came from the opposite side of the ship from where he had seen the head peer forth. Hiding behind the house, he watched her come quickly aft. She was carrying something in her hand that looked like a life buoy. Instinctively the mate made ready to catch her. He saw that life belt, and to his imagination it spelled something like

a person going overboard. The form of a man came quickly behind her, and Jameson recognized one of the understewards, who had been watching for trouble at the purser's orders.

The woman ran at the sound of footsteps behind her. She came with amazing swiftness to the taffrail, near where Jameson stood. He gathered himself, and sprang forth, clasping her in his arms just as she hurled the life belt over the side into the sea.

The girl screamed shrilly, struggled frantically in the embrace of the officer. Jameson wondered what he was about—began to think he had captured a lunatic—when the rush of feet above him caused him to loosen his grip. He turned in time to see Captain Junard take a header from the rail of the deck above and plunge headlong into the sea where it boiled and swirled from the thrust of the screw.

Jameson was paralyzed for an instant. He distinctly saw his commander go overboard. It gave him a shock. He let go the girl and stood motionless for a second. Then, as the head of Junard arose in the white waste astern and struck out for an object, the life belt the girl had thrown over, he gathered his wits again, and dashed for the quarter bell pull, or telegraph, to the engine room.

Full speed astern he threw it, and the astonished engineer on watch nearly fainted under the sudden warning. Thinking that a collision was at hand, he shut down and reversed under full power, opening the throttle wide, and giving her every ounce of steam in her boilers as she took the strain. The sudden take-up, the tremendous vibrations, and the slowing speed awoke many passengers. Not a sound of action had gone forth save the screams of the girl, and these were now silent, as she had quickly flitted out of sight when the mate released her. Jameson rushed to the bridge and called his watch as he ran. Then he set the siren cord down hard, and the unearthly roar awoke the quiet tropical morning. Men rushed about. The watch hurried aft.

"Stop her!" yelled Jameson to the quartermaster. "Stop her—don't go astern!"

"Stop her, sir!" came the answering cry from the wheel. Jameson rushed to the rail again, and cut loose a life buoy from its lashings. He ran aft with it, intending to throw it out to his captain. Junard, however, was but a speck, far astern, his head showing like a black dot in the white water of the wake. The mate noticed for the first time that the small fishing boat ahead was now standing down toward the ship under rapid headway, the exhaust from her motor sounding loud and sharp over the sea.

"Get the quarter boat down—quick!" came his order.

Then he hesitated a moment. The small fishing boat was nearing them with rapidity. She headed straight for Junard, and would reach him long before any rowboat from the ship could get there.

"Hold on! Avast the boat there!" he ordered. "That motor boat will pick him up, all right." Then the thought that he was not quite right in not lowering down a boat for his commander, that it might look queer, waiting for a stranger to do his evident duty, came over him, and he gave the order to lower away. The small boat dropped into the sea. The steamer was now motionless, lying in the calm sea behind the rock, with her engines stopped. Men crowded the rail aft to watch.

"What's the matter? What made him jump overboard?" came the question from all sides. "It's the captain! What's up?"

Jameson could not quite tell. He was vaguely aware that his commander sprang over for some object. That he took a desperate chance, with the

ship going ahead, was certain. Had he not been seen, the vessel would have been miles away before missing him, for there had been no warning from the bridge. The mate slid down the falls, wondering what he was doing.

"Cast off—give way, port; back, starboard!" came his order. He stood up, to see better, and gazed at the fishing boat, that now approached the speck he knew to be the head of Captain Junard.

"Give way together!" he said, glad to get away from the ship, with the inquisitive crowd gathering rapidly and increasing in both anxiety and numbers.

He watched the motor boat come quickly to where Junard swam. The captain was not a good swimmer. Few seamen can swim well. Jameson saw the boat approach, men lean out from her side, and grab something, apparently trying to lift the captain aboard. Then there was a tremendous floundering and threshing about in the sea, distant shouts for help from the captain, and the mate grasped the tiller yoke with a certain grip.

"Give way, bullies! Give way—all that's in you now!" he urged.

Something was taking place that he did not quite understand, but he had heard that call for help.

Junard saw the fishing boat coming toward him before it reached him. He waited, swimming slowly and reserving his strength, feeling that the occupants were hostile and were waiting for the papers that had been tossed overboard. It was about where he expected something to happen. The lighthouse and the shelter of the island made it a most convenient spot to pull off the finish of the affair. The light-draft fishing boat, with her motor, could easily evade capture from anything the ship could send out after her. The steamer herself could not enter the shoal water, and must allow the smaller boat to get away across the shallow parts of the Great Panama Bank to some distant rendezvous, where the papers could be put aboard a proper ship to take them to the conspirators. He, the commander, had no right to leave the ship in the manner he had done; but necessity called for drastic action, and he had plunged over the side as soon as he had seen the girl fling an object overboard.

Three men in the fishing boat were watching him as she drew up. His own boat was a long distance off, but he hoped the mate would hurry.

A man came forward in the motor boat, and leaned out from her side. He watched him narrowly. The man made a grab for Junard as the boat reached him, and the captain, with a sudden jerk, dragged him overboard. Then he yelled for help.

The man's two companions in the boat sprang to his aid. Junard found himself engaged in a desperate struggle with three men, and shoved himself away from the side of the craft.

He held fast to the package, a metal cylinder, tightly wrapped in canvas, and at the same time struggled out of reach of the men above him. The man he had pulled overboard regained his strength, and, grasping the life belt with one hand, grabbed at the package with the other. The package tied to the life belt could not be gotten out of his reach, and Junard was struggling with one hand and fighting and grasping alternately at the life belt with the other.

"Give it up, you scoundrel!" hissed the fellow. "What do you know about this package? Give it to me—do you hear?"

"I hear well enough," snarled Junard, struggling farther out of the reach of those in the motor boat. "But I'm the captain of that ship there—and the papers are in my care. Let go, or I'll do you harm!"

The man glared at him savagely. Then he turned to the men above him in the boat, now a dozen feet away.

"Shoot, Jim—shoot quick—kill the fool if he won't let go!" he said.

The man addressed was a tall, dark fellow with a sinister look. That he was Columbian Junard knew from his accent and appearance. The other, who had stopped the engine, and who seemed to be the engineer, looked askance. He evidently did not like the shooting part. This man was also a Columbian, but his features were those of a man who works outdoors at a simple trade. The other two looked like desperate men, and Junard felt that they would stop at nothing to get the papers from him. The man who was called Jim hesitated, and then, seeing the small boat approaching from the steamer, reached behind his back and brought forth a long, blue revolver. Junard waited until the barrel came within a line with his eye; then he ducked, and swung the life belt around, coming up with it in front of him, and raising it partly before his face. The pistol cracked sharply, and the bullet tore through the cork. Junard let go the package, and seized the man in the water with both hands, whirling him about and holding him squarely in front of himself.

"Start that engine!" called the man, struggling vainly to get away.

The man who had stopped it whirled the wheel over again, and the rumble of the motor began. The two waited, without throwing in the clutch.

Junard grasped the man firmly, and forced him down under the sea, going under with him, and holding his breath to the limit of his great lungs.

When he came up again the man was choking, gasping for air. Junard only waited long enough to fill his own lungs with a breath, and then ducked again, the crack of the revolver ringing in his ears as he went, pulling his antagonist down with him.

The next time he came up the fellow could not talk, but choked and gasped for air. Junard held him with a giant's grip, his long, powerful arms encircling him like those of a gorilla. The fellow let go the life belt and the package. Junard took in more air, and dropped down again, while a bullet tore through his hair, cutting his scalp.

This time when he came up the fellow was limp. Junard held him before him, and the man with the pistol was afraid to fire, as the captain's eyes just showed above the man's neck. The captain struggled farther and farther away from the boat, getting fully twenty feet distant. The man at the engine threw in the clutch, and the boat shot ahead, swung sharply around, and headed for the floating men.

Junard saw the mate standing up in the stern of the ship's boat, and knew he was doing all he could to reach him. The shots had made him aware of the desperate situation, and the men were bending their backs with a will to the oars. Jameson yelled harshly, the men in the motor craft saw that to remain longer would mean capture. They swung off and headed for the steamer, leaving their companion in Junard's grip. The mate came tearing up, and, leaning over, grasped his commander and hauled him aboard the boat.

Junard came over the side, and immediately reached for a boat hook. He stabbed at the cork jacket, and hauled it alongside, dragging it aboard before the boat lost her headway. The body of the exhausted man sank before either he or Jameson could get another hold of him.

"To the ship—quick!" gasped the captain.

"What's the matter? What's up?" questioned the mate.

"Never mind—swing her, quick——"

The boat turned around and headed back, the captain urging the men to their utmost. The fishing boat, with

her motor going full speed, left them far behind. They were unable to get near the craft.

Junard, watching them, saw the boat come close under the ship's stern. A form of a woman leaped from the rail of the lower deck. The splash threw spray almost into the boat as she went past, and they saw the tall Columbian reach over and drag the girl aboard. The boat shot around the steamer's stern and disappeared for a few moments; and when Junard saw her again she was a quarter of a mile distant, and making rapid headway for the shoal water of the island. He started after her, when the shots from the revolver began to strike about the craft, and Junard ordered his men to stop rowing. He knew he could not capture her, unarmed as he was, and he had his precious papers safe in his mighty hands. To follow was only to invite trouble.

The fishing boat ran quickly out of range, and Junard watched her for a few minutes. Then he headed his boat back to the ship.

The rail was crowded as he came alongside, the purser watching him, and half the passengers were on deck to see what was taking place.

"What was it? What's the matter?" asked a score at once.

"Man overboard—that's all," said Jameson.

"H'ist her up," said Junard, and he clambered up the swinging ladder thrown over to him, taking the life belt and the package under his arm.

Mr. Dunn was on deck, and Junard gave him his orders.

"Full speed ahead—on her course, north two west," he said, and went into his room. The door closed behind him. Then he switched off the lights, for it was now broad daylight, and then he opened the package. The papers were all there and intact, the water not reaching them at all. The safe was opened, and they were placed within. Then Junard stripped and turned in for a few hours of dreamless, quiet sleep.

He had saved the papers of his company, documents that were valued at more than a million dollars—and not a soul aboard knew what had really happened. Even Jameson was never quite sure.

The purser asked no questions about cholera, the ship headed along upon her course toward New York, and the warm day took its routine without further incident. Junard appeared very happy, and told many interesting stories at the dinner table that day. He answered no questions concerning the affair of the night.

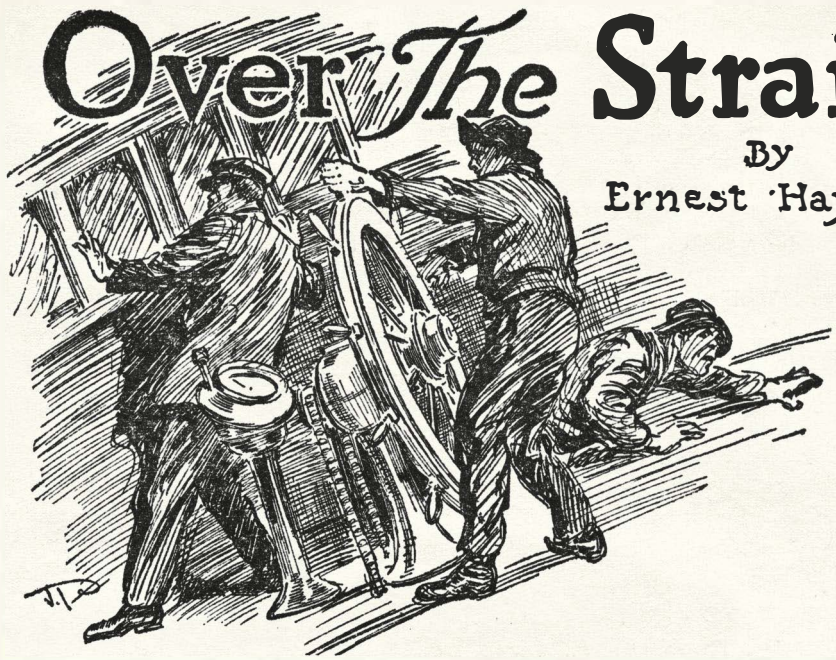
He brought in his papers, delivered them in person, and a great political change took place without any one but a few select souls ever knowing how near the verge of revolution a prominent South American republic had been. Junard was offered a medal for risking his life, trying to save that of a man overboard—but he refused it. The shots from the fishing boat were explained as signals for help. That was all.

ICE IN THE BLACK SEA

ALTHOUGH Odessa on the Black Sea is on the south shore of Russia and more than a thousand miles south of Petrograd, it is in the same latitude as St. John, New Brunswick—approximately 45 degrees north. During the winter months last year it was impossible for the Russian relief organization in America to get shiploads of food to the famine stricken of Russia because the Black Sea harbors were frozen. The mouths of the Danube, Dnieper, Dniester rivers and the ports of Odessa and Kertch are generally frozen over from December to the beginning of March.

Over The Straits

By Ernest Haycox



The stanch little cannery tender must get her load of valuable red salmon across before the fish spoiled, yet one of the worst storms that had ever swept that coast was raging up the straits. But business is business, even when lives are at stake, and that cargo of salmon represented a small fortune. A story with the tang of salt spray, and quiet, unself-conscious heroism of strong men.

THE *Star* left the city float in Ketchikan at six o'clock in the evening, headed down Revillagigedo channel, bound for the Prince of Wales Island, thirty-four miles across the straits.

A bad-weather flag had been run up on the post office flag pole just before the eighty-horse-power, seventy-foot purse-seine boat had cast off her lines. There was, so the weather man said, a fifty-mile blow on the outside and the boats were all hurrying for port.

The city marshal, standing on the dock and watching the crew of seven discuss the matter, had given us some practical if blunt advice. It was no time for a consumptive-engined, barnacle-encrusted cannery tender, smelling to high heaven of fish odors, to be out in this kind of weather. Not even though the smell was strong enough to float a battleship. These were his words.

But it was imperative that the *Star* get across. In her hold were fifteen thousand Sockeyes, choicest of Alaskan red salmon, which had been lifted from the company traps two days ago. Those salmon had to be in the cannery in another ten hours or they would sour, and with Sockeyes at forty cents apiece, and not many to be had at any price, it was easy to see that there was a small fortune in the bottom of the boat.

Nineteen hundred and twenty was a poor fish season and the *Star* had ranged up and down the coast hundreds of miles, buying up everything offered.

"What do you think, fellows?" asked Bob, our skipper.

"Let's go. Them fish has got to get out of that hold quick." Ed Fraser emphasized his statement by taking a huge crescent-shaped segment out of a plug of Climax medium.

"Rather rough," suggested Milt, the son of an Alaskan mining magnate who was out for his fall school money.

"Hell, I'd just as soon drown as be

on the same boat with sour fish," spoke up Al, the engineer.

Charlie, a short and pudgy bald-headed German grinned doubtfully and squinted toward a leaden sky. Charlie scarcely ever said anything. It took too long to talk.

"What do you say, Hal?"

I ran my fingers through a luxurious three-month beard—fully an inch or an inch and a half long—and tried to look judicial. Most of all I wanted a good long sleep, after having been battered around the wheelhouse through a week's steady running in rough water. Then I wanted to have a night off in Ketchikan and limber up the rusty springs of joviality; we hadn't been near a town for a month. Added to these reasons was the gale outside.

"Um," I said, trying to convey an impartial answer.

"How's the engine running, Al?" Bob queried.

"It's all right, if the carburetor'll only keep mixin' like it has been th' past few days."

"Got plenty of oil and gas?"

"Yep. Both tanks full."

"All right; let's go, gang. What say?"

"Go she is."

"Ed, you better lash down everything above deck—Charlie, giv'm a hand—Hal, take first trick at the wheel—— Ahoy, on the dock, let go our lines will you?" and shortly, with a farewell screech we were out in the channel.

A short distance down we passed a subchaser on our port side, coming in. As I took a spoke in the wheel I wished very fervently that I was on that boat, bound back to the dock. I clawed around with my free hand and drew up the tops of my boots, and reached over for my oil coat which hung on a hook. This sounds strange, I know; but there is a curious sensation of dampness that pervades one when running in a heavy sea, and be the pilot house ever so comfortable and warm, the sight of wave after wave piling up and smashing over the bow always makes one mechanically reach for boots and slicker. I was beginning to see things, though we were still in calm water, comparatively.

The run down the protected channel was quickly made. We passed a score of cannery tenders, all bound for town. Most of the men on them waved at us wildly and pointed the other way. I gave them all a debonair toot of the whistle, a bit of hypocrisy that soothed my feelings considerably.

The trap door connecting the pilot house with the galley opened and Bob entered, wiping his mouth on the back of his jacket.

"All right, Hal, I'll take 'er, while you get a bite to eat."

"You better start collecting all the spare rope you can find, Dad," I said to the cook as I squeezed into the diminutive galley. "Enough to lash yourself down with, too."

Dad was a spry young adventurer of some seventy-two years. He had fought nearly all the Indian tribes in the Northwest, it seems, under General Miles, when a young buck of eighteen, and somehow, now at the other end of the cycle, the lure had returned to him and he had taken to the water. This was his first sea job.

"Gwine ter be rough, I reckon, heh? Well, let 'er come—*yerroo-oop!*" He let out a wild war whoop. Suddenly he made a grab for the coffeepot which rocked wildly on the stove. We were weaving in and out of the protecting islands between the straits and the channel.

"Yeroop, yourself," I said, hastily gulping down my coffee and making for the door. "You'll be using worse language than that in a mighty short space of time."

"Heh! Git out of my kitchen!"

It was growing dark when I retook the wheel. Overhead the sky was a

mottled gray-black. The wind was beginning to sing through our mast and rigging. On either side were the blurred outlines of the islands we were hugging. In another few minutes they would be behind us, and we would be out in the straits bucking a wind that hit us on our port quarter.

The waves were running higher now, and the boat began to pitch and roll. Ahead I could faintly make out the jagged, angry outlines of the sea. The crew had scattered. Al was down by his precious engines and Charlie had gone with him. Milt and Ed were sitting on the bench behind me. In the gloom I could make out the glow of their cigarettes, reflected in the window-panes. Bob, beside me, was peering intently through the fogged glass.

Crash! Our bow shot up suddenly as if some giant hand down in the depths had punched it. For an instant we hung there, then the sea dropped away and we lunged down into a deep gray gulley and rolled dizzily on our side; a thick, twisting wall of water crashed down on our foredeck with a jarring, smashing impact and dashed up against the front of the pilot house.

I braced myself on a cleat, hung to the wheel, and twisted it sharply to get back into the wind. Bob slipped and seized the handrail. Behind me I heard the thud of two soft bodies hitting the floor, and from the galley came the crash and clatter of pans and dishes, mixed with the shrill treble curses of Dad.

We were out in the straits.

"What's your course now, Hal?" asked Bob, face glued straight ahead.

I switched on the binnacle light and peered into our Standard Navy compass. It was a large thing, too large for our boat; for, like a rat terrier, we pitched and plunged, rocked and rolled, with short, choppy motions, while our instrument was fitted for a larger ship that rolled and swung with a slow wallow. I watched the card recover from a long, deliberate swing and estimated its arc.

"About north, a quarter east," I answered. "But she's swinging too slow to be accurate."

"Ease her off to starboard a little more. We're headin' way below Morey Light now."

The wind, hurling itself through Dixon's Entrance, fifteen miles below, came sweeping, tearing up the straits. We were right in the teeth of it. The singing in our mast changed to a low, ominous moan, mounted higher, broke into a screech, then still higher, higher, into an insistent, piercing shriek.

"Bob!"

"Huh?"

"Did we tighten up that front stay last time we was in?"

The front stay is one of the four wires supporting the mast. It runs from the top of the pole down to the bowsprit, where it is clamped. Often the clamps work loose, allowing the wire to swing slackly, rendering it easier for the pole to break under stress.

There was a moment's silence. "Nope, we didn't."

"An' them clamps was loose, too."

"Yep," came the succinct answer. Bob hadn't moved an inch from the window in the last quarter of an hour.

"If it breaks loose——"

Another dizzy roll, sending us far to the side, interrupted the sentence. The shriek of the wind crept up a note. I could just make out, directly in front of us, the twisting, contorting water. Now it would pile up to a sharp peak and the jagged edges would be whipped off by the wind, driving against the front of the pilot house with the sharp rattle of machine-gun bullets. Now we would meet a huge wave head on and the boat would stagger back while the spray went flying high in the air. Now we went plunging into a trough with the sickening drop of an express elevator, while

the foredeck completely disappeared from sight, buried under the seething, boiling eddies of water. Then we would labor to the surface in time to meet another onslaught.

We were struck from the side and went reeling, careening over with our bottom half out of water and the runway on our under side completely submerged. I clutched the wheel tightly to keep from going smashing against the wall, while time and again Bob hung suspended, head and shoulders over me, for a long breathless instant, his body standing out in shadowy silhouette against the side windows. Then we righted ourselves, shipping a load of water that went sweeping, sliding over the deck and came spurting into the wheelhouse, under the doorsill. Now and then we would stand on our stern, bow completely out of water, like an angry bear on its haunches, and the next instant we would be slammed violently against the front of the house, stern boosted up, nose deeply buried, while I twirled the wheel vainly and prayed for a speedy recovery.

"Must be wilder'n all-get-up outside the islands," remarked Ed, as we went hurtling down into a giant hollow.

"Must be," returned Bob, eyes glued to the pane. "Good blow here in the straits." We came out of the trough with a leap—high into the air we went.

"Wish I had a good hot cup of coffee," I said after a century or so.

"Huh! There ain't nothin' stickin' to that stove 'ceptin' th' polish. Chew of t'bacco help?"

I could hear nothing from the kitchen; evidently there wasn't anything left to fall from the shelves.

We were struck sharply on the port side—another heavy impact from the front—and over we went. Over, over—I clutched the wheel tensely and tried to take a spoke. The water came spurting through the cracks of the door. It seemed as if Bob's whole body was suspended over me, motionless. Some fragmentary recollection of a hanging sword came to me. An eternity we hung there, then slowly, slowly came back.

Ed stirred. "Bad one." It sounded more like a whistle than an articulation of words.

I heard the trapdoor open and some one struggle through, then a long, lurid, wind-swept string of oaths. "An' ef I ever gits off'n this here lame-halted critter I'm going to reetire fer th' rest of my life in th' mountings."

"Yeroop," said I in a very mediocre imitation of a war whoop. I'm not very good on war whoops.

Unk! Bang! I heard all three men go crashing down against the wall. We were thrown high into the air, stern down.

"Say," spoke up Ed, suddenly. "If our seine table should be jarred off'n its rollers it'd go overboard in about ten seconds." Our fifteen-hundred-foot seine rested on a revolving table on the stern, with nothing to hold it down but its own weight.

Barnes shifted his gaze for the first time. "Ed, if we lose that net we'll go to hell in a handbasket. That's all's helping us to ride this blow."

"Can't pitch much worse. We're rollin' our tail off now."

"That table should have been lashed."

"What're you goin' t' lash it to? Hain't nothin' there."

"We might have passed a line around it and back to the towbitts. That would have held it some."

"Well, mebbe."

"Only trouble is in getting back there," continued Bob. "That deck ain't out of water ten seconds at a stretch."

"Where's that half inch rope we had?" Ed asked suddenly.

"In the chest you're setting on."

I heard him fumble about.

"What're you going to do?" asked Bob.

"Tie it around me—you'n Milt hang

to th' other end and pay it out as I go. I'll try to get back there by hangin' to the guard rail. Pull her in when I holler."

"Won't hear you—too much noise."

"Well, keep your eyes peeled."

"Can't see."

"Well, dang it, use your judgment!"

We lurched over on our side and he had to wait a minute or so before daring to open the door.

"Any relations you want me to notify?" I asked, spinning a useless wheel.

"Go to——" the rest of it was lost in a hurricane of wind, noise, and salt water that tore in as he opened the door. It literally blew him backward. He caught himself, tried again, got outside, then we lost him in the angry blackness. Bob and Milt paid out the rope slowly, both hanging to the handrail and braced against the door to hold it partly open.

Again we shot up into the air, hung, and slid drunkenly back into a black abyss. The two men pulled frantically at the rope, dragging Ed back by main force, jerking him inside, and slamming the door just as a huge mountain came crowding, spilling over our side.

"No use, can't be done," panted Ed. I could hear the water cascade from his clothes.

It was absolutely dark now. We were in a vast empire of blackness, filled with millions of weird, screaming voices.

Suddenly I heard, in the rhythmical throb of the engines below me, a catch, a cylinder missed fire, coughed, and caught the rhythm once again. In that moment my heart lost a beat, and I know I must have cried out some unintelligible thing to the gloom.

To be buffeted about in a vast inky inferno of tumult, not knowing where one is, not knowing what reef is ahead of one, not knowing what the next wave will do, not knowing when some part of the rigging will break, is a trying situation. Yet the powerful, sturdy engines are driving on and on, fighting the waves blow for blow, keeping the boat in the face of the wind, pushing forward toward a calm harbor, foot by foot. And from that dogged persistence men take courage. But when they stop, the only weapon against the elements gone, something sinks and dies out in a man's heart.

There is always a lurking fear in the mind of those who go out to sea in gas boats that they may develop engine trouble, in bad weather. Gas engines are not the most dependable means of locomotion.

The gloom was beginning to stifle me. My nerves were on edge. I checked a panicky impulse to swing the wheel hard over to where I thought land ought to be. I was beginning to doubt the compass. Back of me I heard the clock sound eight bells, twelve o'clock, midnight. We had been out six hours on a trip that ordinarily took two, and hadn't yet picked up the far-away glimmer of the beacon that marked out the entrance into calmer, quieter waters.

Bob was peering into the sweeping, whistling, shrieking blackness.

"Course now, Hal?"

"North, a quarter east, about."

He moved impatiently. "Ought to have picked up Morey Light long ago."

"Don't suppose the dang thing's still on the bum, do you?" queried Ed, groping his way forward and wiping clear a place on the foggy pane.

Morey Rock Light had been out of order for a month or more and we had constantly notified the superintendent of the Light Service at Ketchikan about it.

"Shouldn't be. We sure are out of luck if it is. Blow's taken us 'way off our course; must be somewhere near Kiegan's Chuck. If we can't pick up that Light we'll have to beat up and down here all night—and take our chances."

Both men pressed their faces against the windowpanes.

I swung the wheel to port after coming out of a trough and tried to force all my energy into one intense gaze that would bore a hole through the blackness. But my eyes were tired and the lids burned in an irritating fashion. My arms were bruised and sore. With each successive pitch and roll of the boat my weary leg muscles responded less readily. I was tired, so darned tired! With a supreme effort I nursed the spokes over and dug my feet into the deck cleats as we made another sickening, dizzy sideward roll. Then through half consciousness I heard a voice close to me.

"Hell, Hal, I plumb fergot. You been wrassling that wheel for six hours." Ed grasped the spokes. "Lemme have it. You better see if you can't grab off a couple of winks."

I came out of a doze, pried stiff, cramped fingers loose from the wooden spokes and lurched, stumbled backward, feeling for the bench. I steered around it, crouched down on the wet floor, braced my back against the bench and my feet against the wall. A long roll swung the boat over again until I was lying almost on my back, feet high in the air. Suddenly I didn't care a hang if the boat floated or sank. Too tired. But before I went to sleep a satisfying thought came to me. Outside the cabin nature had let loose all the violent elements in her box of tricks, all against this little boat pitching and tossing drunkenly on a sea of monstrous ridges and abysmal valleys, zigzagging crazily through a night as black as the pit, rolling and heeling to a wind that ripped up oceans; while inside the pilot house, an insignificant cell of quietness in all this riot of fury and noise, seven pigmies stared through flimsy glass windows and defied all the combined efforts of the elements of turmoil. The last words I heard were:

"Now where in *hell* is that Light?"

It was a boat with an exceedingly clean deck that came chugging into Cannery Inlet about eight in the morning, a boat with a crew one third awake. We scraped four pilings and crashed through a rowboat float before docking at the fish conveyor. We heard exclamations of wonder as we threw out our lines. About us we could see traces of last night's storm on the beach, even in this haven.

"Gosh, man! You didn't come across in *that* storm?"

Bob lit his pipe and turned a sleep-laden face to the inquirer, the cannery owner. Then he climbed into his bunk, clothes, boots, pipe and all.

"*Unhuh.* Li'l bit rough." And he dropped off to sleep in the man's face.

Back in the galley I could hear the old cook making breakfast to the tune of an exceedingly ribald old song:

"Oh, were yez ever in an Irishman's shanty,
Where money was scarce and whisky waz planty——"

The owner turned to the rest of the group. "But wasn't it rough?"

"Oh, it blowed some," said Ed, making for his bunk in the fo'c's'lehead.

"Rather rough," added Milt, which was his second statement since leaving Ketchikan the night before.

Charlie, fat, bald, and German smiled wisely and made for the kitchen, from which came the odor of fried ham.

"Um," said I, trying to straddle the fence. I would like to have enlarged on that trip. I felt it deserved grander treatment. It needed an epic strophe and sonorous epithets. But how could a blasé old sea dog of twenty-one do so without losing caste? I followed Charlie into the galley for breakfast.

Non-Able-Bodied Seaman

By Frank William Sullivan

When you were a boy, did you dream of tropic seas and gorgeous sea craft and treasure islands? And, if you who reads this story are a woman, did you when a girl dream of southerns seas and know the ecstasy of your dream romance? "Terry Coghlan" was a New York boy with the eternal boy dream of the sea. He stowed away on a coasting schooner. What came of it the author tells with exquisite sincerity.

YES, sir," asserted Captain Andy Topper to the admiring first mate, "there ain't a handsomer, cleaner skiff in the U. S. eastern coastwise trade than this here *Three Ports* o' mine. An' there ain't a smarter crew in any ship of her size, bar none."

The skipper of the three-masted schooner tilted his chair back against the cabin wall, and squinted along the white decks, up the towering white sails, and over the newly painted white rail. Everywhere he saw cleanliness and neatness. The *Three Ports,* under full sail, was plowing southward in blue weather ten miles off Cape May, and the watch was already scraping the immaculate cabin for a fresh coat of paint.

"They do say, sir," replied Burley, the mate, respectfully, "that half o' your profuts goes into the stummicks of your crew."

"Well," replied Topper modestly, "I ain't never had a dissatisfied sailor, though some of 'em kicks theirselves around the mainmast because of gettin' sick from overeatin'."

"My health ain't suffered none yet," asserted the mate, "but," he hastened to finish apologetically, noting the captain's sharp look, "I've been with you only a day."

"Well," retorted Topper significantly, "the only hogs I ever had for mates was hogs for work, and I reckon—— Hello! What's goin' on up forward there?"

There was a sound of sharp voices, mingled with profanity, keyed in high shrill tones. Both men turned, and saw a burly sailor leading aft a small, struggling figure, from which the unholy language seemed to come.

"Beg pardon, sir," said the sailor, "but we found a stowaway."

Andy Topper was on his feet in a moment, his face crimson with rage. Never had the honor of his model ship been smirched by the presence of a non-producer.

"Stowaway!" he gasped. "Stowaway! And was he doin' that cussin'?"

"Yes, sir," replied the sailor, in stern disapproval, "he were."

"Hey! you big stiff, leave me go,"

whined the captive, giving a twist out of the hands of his captor. He was a boy perhaps thirteen years of age, in whose pale face and sunken eyes appeared the ravages of some dread disease. Panting but defiant, he faced the captain.

"Say, cap," he gasped, "you ain't goin' to be sore, are you, 'cause I slipped one over on you? I'll do what I kin to earn me three nosebags a day."

"What d'ye mean by stowin' away on my ship? And don't you call me 'cap,' or I'll trice you up and give you a couple of dozen crisscross with a rope's end," growled Topper, watching for the flicker of fear in the eyes of the other.

"Will you, honest?" cried the boy ecstatically. "Gee! Then all them things I've read about is true."

"How d'ye get on my ship?" repeated Topper sternly.

"Clumb over the rail when you was in dock the night before you sailed. Yer see, it was this way: Dey had me in Bellavue, an' t'ought I was goin' to croak wit' heart disease or somethin'. I got sick of layin' there waitin' to cash in, so I begs 'em to let me go home an' see my father. Hell of a lot I cared about seein' him, the old bottle kisser! Well, I could walk an' get around, so after I pecked away long enough, and promised to come back the next day, they lemme go."

"Did you go home?" asked Topper sternly.

"Home? Your gran'mother's wishbone! I dusted for the docks on the East Side, an' seen yer boat, all white an' clean, a-layin' there. So I waited fer the dark, an' clumb aboard. That's all there is to it."

"Well, I can't cure ye of heart's disease, that's certain," cried the captain testily, "an' if I take ye back I stand to lose a heap o' money. You young smart Aleck, see what you done to me?"

"Oh, captain, don't take me back," pleaded the boy earnestly. "Don't give me nothin' but bread an' water if you don't want, but don't take me back. I'll do what I kin; honest to God I will. All me life I've wanted to go to sea. I've hung around the docks, wishin' an' wishin'; but I knew I could never go because of me insides. An' I t'ought I might as well see a little of w'at I've read about—— Oh, don't yer see, cap; I got to die, anyway, and I wanted to do it decent, in a storm or somethin'.

"Nix on that hospital thing! I've seen whiskers wagged over me three times a day till I can't look a mattress in the face, and that nurse o' mine had a religious bellyache, an' told me I was a mile nearer hell every time I cussed her out. Don't yer see, cap?"

The deepening wrinkles at the corners of Andy Topper's eyes gave evidence that he saw, and when Burley emitted a noise between a cough and a sneeze, and walked to the rail, red with suppressed laughter, the captain permitted his thin lips the luxury of a smile.

"What's your name?" he asked.

"Terry Coghlan."

"Are you hungry?"

"Oh, no," returned the boy contemptuously. "I been sick from overeatin' ever since I come aboard."

At the sounds of strangulation from Burley at this shot, Topper grew very red and dignified, and confined his regard to the boy before him.

"Come into the cabin," he said at last, "and we'll sign articles. And you," he ordered the sailor, who had stood by stolidly, "tell the cook to make some gruel and tea lively and bring 'em as quick as he can."

"So you'll take me on?" sighed the boy happily. "An' we'll sign articles like real——" He did not finish the sentence, but slipped gently to the deck, with a smile on his lips.

An hour later, revived, and once more very much alive, Terry lay in the captain's bunk, observing with his devouring glance the surroundings of the

skipper, who sat before his table with a pen gripped in his clumsy fingers.

"Can you write, Terence?" asked Topper.

"Sure; took de prize fer hen tracks in de eight' grade, I did."

"How old are you?"

"Sixteen, but I forget when. Don't look cross-eyed—I ain't lyin'. You treated me w'ite, an I'm goin' to treat you w'ite." Captain Topper's exertions engaged him for several minutes.

"There," he said at last, taking up the paper before him, "can you sign that?"

"Watch me; but I got to read it first, this bein' business."

"Huh," he grunted, a moment later, as he read down the page; "'secretary to said party of the first part,' eh? Dat means I write yer letters?"

"Yes, and make a copy of the manifest—that is, the freight list. You see, I ain't much of a hand for writin', though I can do it, and I'd sooner you'd 'tend to the job for me. Is the wages all right?"

"Five dollars for the trip all right? Ask me! If I ever again hit Second Avenue with dat bunch o' money, dey'll have to call out the resoives."

Captain Andy Topper gravely reached into his pocket, drew forth a dollar bill, and tendered it.

"Here's your advance money," he said.

The *Three Ports,* once more the model ship of her captain's heart, winged her way steadily southward over deep-blue, sun-washed seas, with scarcely a cloud above, and a steady, cool wind behind that kept her snowy sails distended. The Virginia Capes, smoky blue with distance they left on the starboard quarter late one afternoon, and the next morning sighted the squat, red lightship of the Diamond Shoals. There was scarcely a swell off Hatteras. Thence to tropic seas they would see no more land.

Terry Coghlan slept forward with the men. This he had insisted upon, as befitting his station, and, although Andy Topper had speculated as to the advisability of the proceeding, the men had quieted his doubts by taking the boy good-humoredly as one of them.

The first day after his discovery he had reported for work in the cabin, and Topper had provided him with materials for copying the manifest, whose items covered some four yards of paper. Terry evinced great interest in the work, and an industry that was tempered only by recurrent attacks of his old trouble. But, as the days passed, he appeared to eat better, and encouraged by the fresh sea air, to repulse the enemy by which he had been doomed.

One morning he had been working for some time in silence, when his eye met an item on the list that caused him to sit bolt upright, and give vent to a whistle of amazement.

"Say, this ain't so bad, after all," he announced. Captain Topper interrupted the sacred performance of winding the chronometer long enough to inquire what he meant.

"This item says you got one hundred thousand dollars in gold in a box. I didn't suppose ships ever carried gold any more. I read a piece in a book once dat had a pitcher of a ship into it called a Spanish gallon, w'ich was supposed to be full o' gold bars and di'monds an' treasure."

"Well," Topper scratched his head in perplexity, and paused. "Well, we ain't got any treasure that I know of." The boy's eager face fell. "That there gold is goin' to a God-forsaken mine in Mexico, to pay the greasers that work it. Our first stop is at Santa Teresa, to let it off. Then we go on to Vera Cruz. If they was a railroad there, or a steamship more'n once a year, we wouldn't be carryin' the stuff." Then, still holding the chronometer key in the air, he saw the look of bitter disappointment on the boy's face.

"What's the matter, sonny?"

"Say, Captain Topper," asked the lad slowly, "ain't there nuthin' to this sea game, after all? Here you got enough money to 'lect a President; it's out on the open sea; they's pirates likely to smear the horizon any minute, the men carry knives to guard it when hell pops, or die gladly if the ol' flag flies until the end. You're the skipper, and you'll sink with yer ship or take the other feller's. His eyes had brightened, and his cheeks glowed while his imagination ran riot with the wonders of things nautical that he had read. Then suddenly the fire died.

"Listen to me chatter," he suddenly broke out. "I guess them things is all done fer. Leastways, I ain't seen any of 'em. This schooner reminds me more of a' old woman in a starched dress crossin' a muddy street than a ship with treasure onto it. An' the men carry knives to whittle with an' cut tobacco. The flag don't fly except in port. Why, you don't even call good, red gold treasure! The hull work is gone to pot, an' I might as well be learnin' figgers in night school on Broadway as settin' here expectin' somethin' to happen. W'at's the matter wit' de sea, anyway, huh?"

Captain Andy Topper had finished winding the chronometer during this passionate harangue, and now he hung the key in its accustomed place beside the instrument. Then he began to roll sliced plug between his hands, and meditate. And, for the moment, back into his mind, convoyed by the lad's swift imagination, skimmed the argosy of dreams, the armada of imaginings that had once been his. Full they were, and fair, with silken sails, and glorious colored streamers. They came on sweet, warm airs, and went——

The bubble burst, and, looking up, he saw the little, spotless cabin of the *Three Ports* in all its plainness; life was once more unpoetic and commerical.

"How do you like the men forward?" he asked Terry, with an effort at interest.

"Most of 'em are fine!" cried the lad enthusiastically. "Dat big stiff Mike can sure play de mout' organ, and w'en Joe Moroso gets his jew's-harp goin' along with it, w'y man, it knocks dem concerts on de Coney Island boats into a' ambulance call for first aid. Say, but de one I like best is dat Tony, de wop. If I had never saw a pirate in all my life, an' I met Tony in broad daylight, I'd hand over my junk so quick he'd wonder if it was Christmas. Yes, sir! He's just like a pitcher of one, an' honest, captain," he lowered his voice impressively and glanced around, "I bet if he ever got started he'd never stop."

"My boy," said the captain, with a trifle of added dignity, "he can't get started. I have never yet had a dissatisfied sailor on my vessel—an' that's a record that is talked about from coast to coast. Some finds their glory in one thing, and some in another; I find mine in keepin' a ship that's a model, and is knowed as such. If you're tired writin', come on deck for a spell."

After the first week of improvement, the natural resultant reaction set in, and Terry Coghlan's heart attacks returned more often than at any time since he had left the hospital. The manifest was nearly finished now, but it was the desire of his heart to lay a completed copy, done with neatness in his full, round hand, beside the original on the captain's table, and turning to that worthy, ask carelessly:

"What next, sir?"

Aside from this, his soul was wrung by the horrible disappointment and disillusion of the sea. If something of the old romance might come back for just a day, he would die happy. He did not talk of these ambitions of the imagination, for fear of the crew's friendly but merciless badgering. Only Andy Topper received, now and then, a crumb

from this feast of the mind, and he came to know at last how the boy, rough and coarse as he was, faced death cheerfully and without animosity. His was a life totally disassociated from the crying ills of the body.

But the days passed, and nothing happened. The *Three Ports* plodded on past North Carolina, South Carolina, and the corner of Georgia that touches the water. After that came the long peninsula of Florida about which the schooner must go before she could set a straight course for Santa Teresa. And now, as the hottest days came when the sea and sky were burnished brass, Terry saw many wonderful things.

Swift flying fish glittered across the bows, looking like fragile monoplanes on their filmy, outstretched fins; jovial porpoises, with merry little eyes, gamboled about the ship, and disappeared only when the sharp dorsal fin of a shark appeared, ripping through the water. And at night, leaning over the rail near the bowsprit, he watched the flaky phosphorescence curl under the vessel's foot with a winking like many submerged electric lights.

But live, imagine, and build as his mind would, the warm, lazy days were productive of nothing but one another, and at last Terry was driven to a desperate expedient.

One night, with all the quiet and secrecy of a conspirator, he touched Tony, the piratical sailor, on the arm, and, beckoning darkly, led him out of earshot. Then dramatically, as befitted the circumstances, he confided the secret of the box of gold. The Italian, with many foreign and picturesque phrases, doubted the yarn; but Terry, delighted that his self-created drama was going so well, offered indisputable proofs. Then, with his mind full of romantic deeds to be done, he turned in.

In the meantime Burley, the mate, was seized with an attack of indigestion from overeating, and came in for a share of Andy Topper's sea-ripened carcasm. Peace was made at last, but the mate felt that he must in some way make up what he had lost in the captain's esteem. This night the two were smoking together on the roof of the cabin, under the brilliance of the stars.

"That there boy ain't got long to be with us, I figger," said Topper, after a pause. "It's about all he can do to drag 'imself around these days."

"You set a heap by that boy, don't you, captain?"

"Yes. He can't speak a Christian lingo, and he swears somethin' turrible, but I love 'im like a son," was the reply.

"What ails 'im lately aside from his reg'lar diseases?"

"It's mostly in his mind. He talks of treasure ships, an' mutinies an' walkin' the plank, and tricin' up by the thumbs, and wonders why none of them things never happens any more. He'd be glad to die day after next, if somethin' like that would happen to-morrer. He told me so."

Burley thought for a minute, and then slapped his leg mightily.

"Look-a-here, captain," he cried. "Why not do it for 'im? Why not fix up a play-actin' mutiny, with pistols and knives and all the trimmin's?"

"Indigestion comin' back, Mr. Burley?" inquired Topper coldly.

The mate suppressed the retort that was on his lips, and substituted a soft answer.

"We could do it easy, captain, and the kid would die happier than he ever lived. We could fix the crew up for'ard —they'd be glad to do it for *him*—an' we could pull the whole works off first class."

"Yes, an' make my schooner a reg'lar pigpen."

"Beg pardon, sir, but it would make it a paradise—for the boy."

There was a long period of silence, during which the mate let rumination take its course. Finally Topper knocked

his pipe out against the leg of his chair, and cleared his throat.

"If it'll make the lad happy, I want to do it," he said; "and I want to compliment you on your brains, Mr. Burley."

Two days later, rather dizzy of head because of the black and red specks that danced before his eyes, Terry Coghlan drew toward the close of the manifest. In fact, he was on the last page, and devoted an unusual amount of care to its neatness. It was a lovely blue day outside, but the cabin in which he worked was a veritable oven, and through the open windows scarcely a breath of wind came, although the schooner was putting her four knots under foot every hour.

At last the chronometer, waiting for the satisfying hand of Andy Topper, heard a deep sigh. The boy finished the last item, and regarded his work critically. Then he stood up, and, leaning over the table, completed the job with this inscription, the like of which he had somewhere read:

"Andrew Topper, Captain. Per T. C."

And on the instant there came to his ears the sound of loud voices, voices raised in argument and strident command. He turned halfway toward the hatch, vastly surprised, for nothing but the calmest orders were ever launched aboard the *Three Ports,* except in a storm. The voices continued, and grew louder.

"Well, cuss me, if somebody ain't took his eyes off his hymn book!" ejaculated the lad, crossing the little cabin as fast as his waning strength would permit, and starting to mount the companionway. It required all his power to achieve the deck, but, as he leaned back, panting, against the superstructure, a strange sight met his eyes.

By the foremast a number of the crew were gathered in a grumbling group, talking together, and motioning toward Topper and Burley, who were engaged in a heated argument with Tony, the pirate; this latter seemed to be the spokesman for the malcontents, and stood at the foot of the quarter-deck companionway.

"No!" thundered Topper, "you go back and tell the men that I'll never agree to their demands. I'm the skipper of this ship, and what I say goes. Not another word now. Git!" And Tony, spluttering violently, and waving his hairy hands, returned to the group by the foremast.

For an instant Terry's wreck of a heart stopped beating. Into his mind sprang again all the past visions of romance, and he clasped his little rough hands with all a boy's anticipation of a fight. He drew deep breaths of real life. Burley, looking down from the quarter-deck, which in this case was the cabin roof, saw the lad, and hurried down to help him. In a moment Terry stood beside the captain and his two officers. The bos'n lurked in the background.

"W'at's de matter here, huh?" demanded the boy breathlessly. Topper, whose face was set in its sternest expression, answered briefly and curtly:

"Trouble with the crew. Demand more money and less work, insolent dogs." He strode back and forth angrily.

"Y'aint goin' to give it to 'em, are ye?" demanded Terry truculently.

"No! Of course I'm not. I'm master on this ship, and those fellows will learn it pretty quick. But what are you doing here, young fellow? Are you faithful to your officers, or are you spying for the men? Answer me!"

"I stick by me officers every time," declared the boy clearly, "an' I stick to the finish. You can count on me, captain."

"Very well. Mr. Burley, arm him!"

The mate, from behind a keg, produced a revolver and a long knife. These he handed to Terry, who immedi-

ately examined the gun to see that it was loaded. The knife he thrust through his belt, and the revolver into his small hip pocket.

By this time Tony was returning, and with him were two of the sailors. The evil-looking trio faced the officers above them.

"De men deya notta worka," said Tony. "Wanta more money, less hour."

"Tell them to go to work, or I shall put them in irons!" thundered Topper.

"Irons!" yelled Tony, in a frenzy of rage, and, with a quick movement, drew a belaying pin from his hip pocket. With a cry, he heaved it directly at the captain, who dodged skillfully and drew his gun. The sailors forward ran aft, with bare knives between their teeth, and marlinespikes in their hands.

"Back! Under cover!" cried Topper, and fired. The five defenders on the cabin roof retreated slowly, revolver in hand, until they could back down the after companion, and have the loom of the superstructure for protection. The captain walked among them.

"Boys," he said, in a low tone, "this is mutiny, and I depend upon you to defend the ship."

"With our lives, sir," cried Terry trying cautiously for a sight.

The attackers had drawn off for a brief consultation, but now they advanced again, and the air was full of flying missiles. Twice they attempted to storm the approach to the cabin, but were twice driven off with a well-directed volley.

"Hell! down to Coney I could ring the bell every time, an' here I can't smear a hayrick at two yards," snarled the boy, who had just fired point blank at one of the men, without any apparent effect.

The fury of the assault increased, and for a while the defenders despaired of their lives—at least Terry did. Every time his gun was emptied Burley handed him another, already loaded, so that the havoc he was working might be uninterrupted. At last a sailor rolled over before him, the first fruits of his gun, and his breast thrilled with blood lust and triumph.

The gigantic hero of his own gigantic dreams, he fought this battle against overwhelming odds.

Burley approached Topper.

"Call for a charge. That's the signal to end things, you know." The captain nodded. A minute later his voice rang out. "Boys, we must drive them forward and below. Get ready!" Then, shortly afterward:

"Charge!"

The five then swarmed up the ladder for the advantage of height, and, with a cheer, commenced to drive back the sailors. A number lay stretched upon the deck, and among them Tony. The retreat had gone as far as the foremast, and the officers were firing steadily, when suddenly from the dead and dying there came a low whistle, and the men sprang to their feet. The Italian, crouching, his evil face the picture of greed, whipped from his pocket a belaying pin, and hurled it furiously. It caught the second officer alongside the head, and he fell with his mouth open for the cry that never escaped him. For an instant Burley and Topper looked mystified and troubled. Then a knife whistled close to their heads, and they heard a voice:

"The gold; give us the gold! No fooling now!"

In a flash they realized their position.

"Under cover again!" The command snapped out like the crack of a whip, and Terry Coghlan, gazing blankly at the unconscious mate, knew by the tone that something terrible had happened. With the others he sought the defenses.

And now things wore a different aspect. Burley handed the boy a revolver.

"There's real bullets in this," he said grimly. "Shoot to kill!"

The first excitement of the fight passed away from Terry's picture-filled mind, and in its place came a cold fury and determination. Subconsciously, he realized that the shadow of death was very close. The words of the mate brought him up with a shock, and in an instant he had grasped the whole situation.

The first had been all play acting, arranged for his benefit. Just for him the captain and men he loved had done this thing. What, then, had inspired this treachery?

Suddenly into his mind there flashed the remembrance of his dark whisperings to Tony, when he had confided the secret of the box of gold. The color left his face. His tortured brain flashed the knowledge of this thing that he had wrought.

"Oh, God!" he whimpered. "I done it all—I done it all."

Then the pinched, white face grew whiter, and in the sunken eyes a fierce fire burned. The dreams that he had cherished burst like bubbles, and in the white glare of the breathless day he faced the horrible reality.

"Give me your gun, and load another," growled Burley. "My arm's broke."

The battle was going against them. From beyond their defense a revolver spoke, and the bos'n cursed brutally as the blood streamed down from his grazed cheek. A knife flashed in the sun, and the captain snarled, and drew it from his shoulder.

"I guess we're done for," he grunted. "But we ain't dead yet," and, stepping out from his shelter, he swept the deck with a merciless fire. The pungent, white powder smoke hung about them in the still air, and the boy, seeing this, made ready for a desperate measure. From the pile of cartridges on the deck beside him he loaded both his gun and that of the mate. Thrusting one into each pocket of his trousers, he ran up the ladder to the top of the cabin, and threw himself face downward, shielded by the smoke. Before him he could see dimly the crouching figures of the attackers, and here and there the huddled figure of a man that had fallen.

The fire behind the defenses slackened, and the attackers, at a yell from Tony, sprang forward to finish the work they had begun.

Then the boy stretched out both arms, and from his hands streams of fire leaped in the murk. His aim was cool and deadly, and each time his revolvers spoke there came a scream of pain, and a man went down. The sailors, taken by surprise, hesitated and wavered. The fearful punishment continued. Tony tore at his breast, and rolled writhing against the mainmast, and the others, without a leader, broke and fled.

With a shrill scream of triumph, Terry leaped to his feet.

"Charge! Charge!" he shrieked, and ran forward across the cabin, and down the companionway. The others were at his heels, baying like bloodhounds. Mercilessly they drove until the remnant of the crew, frantic with terror, tumbled into the fo'c'stle, and heard the door locked after them.

Against the starboard wall of the cabin of the *Three Ports* is a beautifully engraved copper plate, polished to luminous perfection. Captain Andy Topper and Burley, the chief mate, are there. If they are intimate with you, they will tell you a long and thrilling story about a boy who did a man's part. You will listen to them, if only to watch the emotion in their faces, and at the end, they will permit you to read the plate.

"In memory of Terence Coghlan, who died of heart disease on this schooner, July 25, 19—, after saving it from the hands of mutineers. Erected by the Tamualipas Mining Co."

WHEN I was on me leave ashore
I lived in pretty Feldom,
And loved a gal named Daisy Moore,
And left her very seldom.
But when me optics lit upon
That maid o' my selection,
There came a bloke named "English John"
To rival me affection.

He had a most peculiar way
Of tellin' of his passion,
And used to give his love away
In this here foolish fashion:

"Ho D'isy Moore, ho D'isy Moore,
There isn't no mistakin',
The fairest of our bloomin' race,
Whene'er I see yer bloomin' face
Me bloomin' 'eart is breakin'."

Whene'er I called upon that maid
Friend John was always handy;
Whene'er I bought her lemonade
He bought her gum and candy.
A-buyin' flowers and things for her
Most sent me to the workh'us.
I took her to the the-ay-ter,
John took her to the circus.

And when I'd go to tell her
  Me swift-increasin' passion,
Then up would speak that Cockney burr
  In this here foolish fashion:

"Ho D'isy Moore, ho D'isy Moore,
  Just see 'ow swell I've hacted!
Ho fairest of the bloomin' flowers
That bloom within the bloomin' bowers,
  I'm bloomin' near distracted!"

Well, pretty soon me patience got
  A little bit exhausted,
For Daisy smiled on John a lot
  And I was gettin' frosted.
She liked his British ways so much
  It really looked alarmin';
She loved his courtyus bows and such,
  And thought his manners charmin'.

So one dark night at John I jumped,
  As mad as any tanner,
And his poetic fancy bumped
  In this straightforward manner:

"O English John, O English John,
  Ye'd better git a mile off—
If ye don't stop that bloomin' lot
Of bloomin' gush and bloomin' rot
  I'll bust yer bloomin' tile off!"

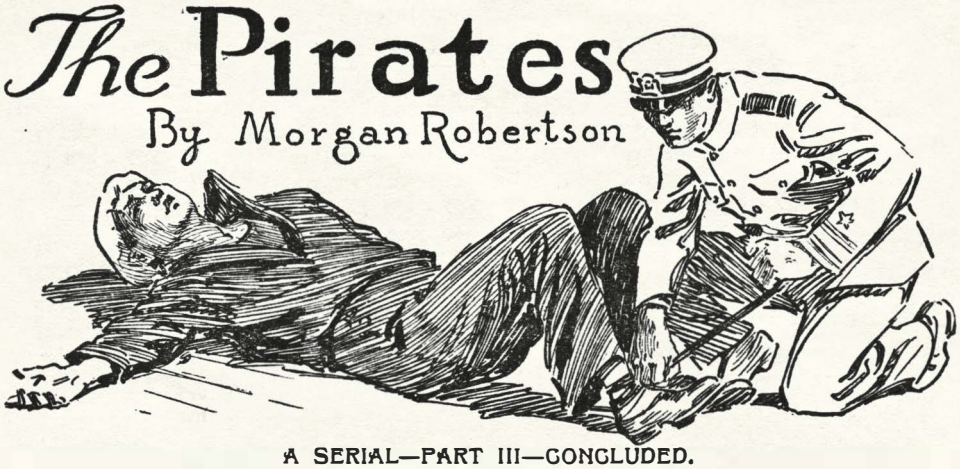
So English John at once withdrew
  From his enamoratter;
And me and Daisy closer grew,
  Our hearts quite pitter-patter.
And when I ast 'er to be mine
  She answered "Yes" so sweetly
That I called in the town divine
  Who married us completely.

And when the weddin' ring was on
  Her hand so soft and gentle,
There came a note from English John
  As if quite accidental:

"Ho D'isy Moore, ho D'isy Moore,
  I'm feelin' bloomin' sappy—
Six bloomin' nights I 'aven't slept,
Six bloomin' nights I've bloomin' wept—
  I 'opes ye're bloomin' 'appy!"

The Pirates

By Morgan Robertson



A SERIAL—PART III—CONCLUDED.

CHAPTER XVI.

FLORRIE had proved herself a good cook, and they ate dinner together, then Denman went on deck. The boat was still rolling on the calm sea; but the long, steady, low-moving hills of blue were now mingled with a cross swell from the northwest which indicated a push from beyond the horizon not connected with the trade wind. And, in the west a low bank of cloud rose up from, and merged its lower edge with, the horizon; while higher shone a "mackerel" sky, and "mare's tail" clouds—sure index of coming wind. But there was nothing on the horizon in the way of sail or smoke; and, anticipating another long night watch, he began preparations for it.

Three red lights at the mast head were needed as a signal that the boat—a steamer—was not under command. These he found in the lamp room. He filled, trimmed, and rigged them to the signal halyards on the bridge, ready for hoisting at nightfall. Then, for a day signal of distress, he hoisted an ensign—union down—at the small yard aloft.

Next in his mind came the wish to know his position, and he examined the log book. Forsythe had made an attempt to start a record; and out of his crude efforts Denman had picked the figures which he had noted down as the latitude and longitude at noon of the day before. He corrected this with the boat's course throughout the afternoon until the time of shutting off the oil feed, and added the influence of a current, which his more expert knowledge told him of. Thirty-one, north, and fifty-five, forty, west was the approximate position, and he jotted it down.

This done, he thought of the possibility of lighting the boat through the night, and sought the engine room. He was but a theoretical engineer, having devoted most of his studies to the duties of a line officer; but he mastered in a short time the management of the small gas engine that worked the dynamo, and soon had it going. Electric bulbs in the engine room sprang into life; and, after watching the engine for a short time, he decided that it required only occasional inspection, and sought the deck.

The cross sea was increasing, and the bank to the northwest was larger and blacker, while the mare's tails and mackerel scales had given way to cirrus clouds that raced across the sky. Damp gusts of wind blew, cold and heavy, against his cheek; and he knew that a storm was coming that would try out

the low-built craft to the last of its powers. But before it came he would polish up his forgotten knowledge of wireless telegraphy, and searched the wireless room for books.

He found everything but what he wanted most—the code book, by which he could furbish up on dots and dashes. Angry at his bad memory, he studied the apparatus, found it in working order, and left the task to go on deck.

An increased rolling of the boat threatened the open deadlights. Trusting that the men in the forecastle would close theirs, he attended to all the others, then sought Florrie in the galley, where she had just finished the washing of the dishes. Her face was not pale, but there was a wild look in her eyes, and she was somewhat unsteady on her feet.

"Oh, Billie, I'm sick—seasick," she said weakly. "I'm a poor sailor."

"Go to bed, little girl," he said gently. "We're going to have some bad weather, but we're all right. So stay in bed."

He supported her aft through the wardroom to her stateroom door in the after cabin. "I'll get supper, Florrie, and, if you can eat, I'll bring you some. Lie down now, and don't get up until I call you, or until you feel better."

He again sought the deck. The wind now came steadily, while the whole sky above and the sea about were assuming the gray hue of a gale. He closed all hatches and companions, taking a peep down into the engine room before closing it up. The dynamo was buzzing finely.

A few splashes of rain fell on him, and he clothed himself in oilskins and rubber boots to watch out the gale, choosing to remain aft—where his footsteps over her might reassure the seasick girl below—instead of the bridge, where he would have placed himself under normal conditions.

The afternoon wore on, each hour marked by a heavier pressure of the wind and an increasing height to the seas, which, at first just lapping at the rail, now lifted up and washed across the deck. The boat rolled somewhat, but not to add to his discomfort or that of those below; and there were no loose articles on deck to be washed overboard.

So Denman paced the deck, occasionally peeping down the engine-room hatch at the dynamo, and again trying the drift by the old-fashioned chip-and-reel log at the stern. When tired, he would sit down in the deck chair, which he had wedged between the after torpedo and the taffrail, then resume his pacing.

As darkness closed down, he sought Florrie's door, and asked her if she would eat something. She was too ill, she said; and, knowing that no words could comfort her, left her, and in the galley ate his own supper—tinned meat, bread, and coffee.

Again the deck, the intermittent pacing, and resting in the chair. The gale became a hurricane in the occasional squalls; and at these times the seas were beaten to a level of creamy froth luminous with a phosphorescent glow, while the boat's rolling motion would give way to a stiff inclination to starboard of fully ten degrees. Then the squalls would pass, the seas rise the higher for their momentary suppression, and the boat resume her wallowing, rolling both rails under, and practically under water, except for the high forecastle deck, the funnels, and the companions.

Denman did not worry. With the wind southwest, the storm center was surely to the north and eastward of him; and he knew that, according to the laws of storms in the North Atlantic, it would move away from him and out to sea.

And so it continued until about midnight, when he heard the rasping of the companion hood, then saw Florrie's

face peering out. He sprang to the companion.

"Billie! Oh, Billie!" she said plaintively. "Let me come up here with you?"

"But you'll feel better lying down, dear," he said. "Better go back."

"It's so close and hot down there. Please let me come up."

"Why, yes, Florrie, if you like; but wait until I fit you out. Come down a moment."

They descended, and he found rubber boots, a sou'wester, and a long oilskin coat, which she donned in her room. Then he brought up another chair, lashed it—with more neckties—to his own, and seated her in it.

"Don't be frightened," he said, as a sea climbed on board and washed aft, nearly flooding their rubber boots and eliciting a little scream from the girl. "We're safe, and the wind will blow out in a few hours."

He seated himself beside her. As they faced to leeward, the long brims of the sou'westers sheltered their faces from the blast of rain and spume, permitting conversation; but they did not converse for a time, Denman only reaching up inside the long sleeve of her big coat to where her small hand nestled, soft and warm, in its shelter. He squeezed it gently, but there was no answering pressure, and he contented himself with holding it.

He was a good sailor, but a poor lover, and—a reeling, water-washed deck in a gale of wind is an embarrassing obstacle to love-making. Yet he squeezed again, after ten minutes of silence had gone by and several seas had bombarded their feet. Still no response in kind, and he spoke.

"Florrie," he said, as gently as he could when he was compelled to shout, "do you remember the letter you sent me the other day?"

"The other day?" she answered. "Why, it seems years since then."

"Last week, Florrie. It made me feel like—like thirty cents."

"Why, Billie?"

"Oh, the unwritten roast between the lines, little girl. I knew what you thought of me. I knew that I'd never made good."

"How—what do you mean?"

"About the fight—years ago. I was to come back and lick him, you know, and didn't—that's all."

"Are you still thinking of that, Billie? Why, you've won. You are an officer, while he is a sailor."

"Yes, but he licked me at school, and I know you expected me to come back."

"And you did not come back. You never let me hear from you. You might have been dead for years before I could know it."

"Is that it, Florrie?" he exclaimed, in amazement. "Was it me you thought of? I suppose you had grown to despise me."

She did not answer this; but when he again pressed her hand she responded. Then, over the sounds of the storm, he heard a little sob; and, reaching over, drew her face close to his, and kissed her.

"I'm sorry, Florrie, but I didn't know. I've loved you all these years, but I did not know it until a few days ago. And I'll never forget it, Florrie, and I promise you—and myself, too—that I'll still make good, as I promised before."

Poor lover though he was, he had won. She did not answer, but her own small hand reached for his.

And so they passed the night, until, just as a lighter gray shone in the east, he noticed that one of the red lamps at the signal yard had gone out. As the lights were still necessary, he went forward to lower them; but, just as he was about to mount the bridge stairs, a crashing blow from two heavy fists sent him headlong and senseless to the deck.

When he came to, he was bound hand and foot as he had bound the men—with neckerchiefs—and lay close to the forward funnel, with the whole thirteen, Jenkins and all, looking down at him. But Jenkins was not speaking. Forsythe, searching Denman's pockets, was doing all that the occasion required.

CHAPTER XVII.

When Sampson had entered the forecastle after his rescue by Denman, he found a few of his mates in their bunks, the rest sitting around in disconsolate postures, some holding their aching heads, others looking indifferently at him with bleary eyes. The apartment, long and triangular in shape, was dimly lighted by four deadlights, two each side, and for a moment Sampson could not distinguish one from another.

"Where's my bag?" he demanded generally. "I want dry clothes."

He groped his way to the bunk he had occupied, found his clothes bag, and drew out a complete change of garments.

"Who's got a knife?" was his next request; and, as no one answered, he repeated the demand in a louder voice.

"What d'you want of a knife?" asked Forsythe, with a slight snarl.

"To cut your throat, you hang-dog scoundrel," said Sampson irately. "Forsythe, you speak kindly and gently to me while we're together, or I'll break some o' your small bones. Who's got a knife?"

"Here's one, Sampson," said Hawkes, offering one of the square-bladed jack-knives used in the navy.

"All right, Hawkes. Now, will you stand up and rip these wet duds off me? I can't get 'em off with the darbies in the way."

Hawkes stood up and obeyed him. Soon the dripping garments fell away, and Sampson rubbed himself dry with a towel, while Hawkes sleepily turned in.

"What kept you, and what happened?" asked Kelly. "Did he douse you with a bucket o' water?"

Sampson did not answer at once—not until he had slashed the side seams of a whole new suit, and crawled into it. Then, as he began fastening it on with buttons and strings, he said coldly:

"Worse than that. He's made me his friend."

"His friend?" queried two or three.

"His friend," repeated Sampson. "Not exactly while he has me locked up," he added; "but if I ever get out again—that's all. And his friend in some ways while I'm here. D'you hear that, Forsythe?"

Forsythe did not answer, and Sampson went on: "And not only his friend, but the woman's, too. Hear that, Forsythe?"

Forsythe refused to answer.

"That's right, and proper," went on Sampson, as he fastened the last button. "Hide your head and saw wood, you snake-eyed imitation of a man."

"What's up, Sampson?" wearily asked Casey from a bunk. "What doused you, and what you got on Forsythe now?"

"I'll tell you in good time," responded Sampson. "I'll tell you now about Denman. I threw all the booze overboard at his orders. Then *I* tumbled over; and, as I can't swim, would ha' been there yet if he hadn't jumped after me. Then we couldn't get up the side, and the woman come with a tablecloth, that held me up until I was towed to the anchor ladder. That's all. I just want to hear one o' you ginks say a word about that woman that she wouldn't like to hear. That's for you all—and for *you,* Forsythe, a little more in good time."

"Bully for the woman!" growled old Kelly. "Wonder if we treated her right."

"We treated her as well as we knew how," said Sampson; "that is, all but one of us. But I've promised Denman,

and the woman, through him, that they'll have a better show if we get charge again."

"Aw, forget it!" grunted Forsythe from his bunk. "She's no good. She's been stuck on that baby since she was a kid."

Sampson went toward him, seized him by the shirt collar, and pulled him bodily from the bunk. Then, smothering his protesting voice by a grip on his throat, slatted him from side to side as a farmer uses a flail, and threw him headlong against the after bulkhead and halfway into an empty bunk. Sampson had uttered no word, and Forsythe only muttered as he crawled back to his own bunk. But he found courage to say:

"What do you pick on me for? If you hadn't all got drunk, you wouldn't be here."

"You mean," said Sampson quietly, "that if you hadn't remained sober enough to find your way into the after cabin and frighten the woman, we wouldn't ha' been here; for that's what roused Denman."

A few oaths and growls followed this, and men sat up in their bunks, while those that were out of their bunks stood up. Sampson sat down.

"Is that so, Sampson?" "Got that right, old man?" "Sure of it?" they asked, and then over the hubbub of profane indignation rose Forsythe's voice.

"Who gave you that?" he yelled. "Denman?"

"Yes—Denman," answered Sampson.

"He lied. I did nothing of the——"

"You lie yourself, you dog. You're showing on your chin the marks of Denman's fist."

"You did that just now," answered Forsythe, fingering a small, bleeding bruise.

"I didn't hit you. I choked you. Denman knocked you out."

"Well," answered Forsythe, forgetting the first accusation in the light of this last, "it was a lucky blow in the dark. He couldn't do it in the daylight."

"Self-convicted," said Sampson quietly.

Then, for a matter of ten minutes, the air in the close compartment might have smelled sulphurous to one strange to forecastle discourse. Forsythe, his back toward them, listened quietly while they called him all the names, printable and unprintable, which angry and disgusted men may think of.

But when it had ended—when the last voice had silenced and the last man gone to the water faucet for a drink before turning in, Forsythe said:

"I'll even things up with you fellows if I get on deck again."

Only a few grunts answered him, and soon all were asleep.

They wakened, one by one, in the afternoon, to find the electric bulbs glowing, and the boat rolling heavily, while splashes of rain came in through the weather deadlights. These they closed; and, better humored after their sleep, and hungry as well, they attacked the barrel of bread and the water faucet.

"He's started the dynamo," remarked Riley, one of the engineers. "Why, don't he start the engine and keep her head to the sea?"

"Because he knows too much," came a hoarse whisper, and they turned to Jenkins, who was sitting up, regarding them disapprovingly.

"Because he knows too much," he repeated, in the same hoarse whisper. "This is a so-called seagoing destroyer; but no one but a fool would buck one into a hard sea; and that's what's coming, with a big blow, too. Remember the English boat that broke her back in the North Sea?"

"Hello Jenkins—you alive?" answered one, and the others asked of his health.

"I'm pretty near all right," he said to them. "I've been able to move and speak a little for twenty-four hours, but

I saved my energy. I wasn't sure of myself, though, or I'd ha' nabbed Denman when he came in here for the pistols."

"Has he got them?" queried a few, and they examined the empty bunk.

"He sure has," they continued. "Got 'em all. Oh, we're in for it."

"Not necessarily," said Jenkins. "I've listened to all this powwow, and I gather that you got drunk to the last man, and he gathered you in."

"That's about it, Jenkins," assented Sampson. "We all got gloriously drunk."

"And before you got drunk you made this pin-headed, educated rat"—he jerked his thumb toward Forsythe—"your commander."

"Well—we needed a navigator, and you were out of commission, Jenkins."

"I'm in commission now, though, and when we get on deck, we'll still have a navigator, and it won't be Denman, either."

"D'you mean," began Forsythe, "that you'll take charge again and make——"

"Yes," said Jenkins, "make you navigate. Make you navigate under orders and under fear of punishment. You're the worst-hammered man in this crowd; but hammering doesn't improve you. You'll be keelhauled, or triced up by the thumbs, or spread-eagled over a boiler—but you'll nevigate. Now, shut up."

There was silence for a while, then one said: "You spoke about getting on deck again, Jenkins. Got any plan?"

"Want to go on deck now and stand watch in this storm?" Jenkins retorted.

"No; not unless necessary."

"Then get into your bunk and wait for this to blow over. If there is any real need of us, Denman will call us out."

This was good sailorly logic, and they climbed back into their bunks, to smoke, to read, or to talk themselves to sleep again. As the wind and sea arose they closed the other two deadlights, and when darkness closed down they turned out the dazzling bulbs, and slept through the night as only sailors can.

Just before daylight Jenkins lifted his big bulk out of the bunk, and, taking a key from his pocket, unlocked the forecastle door. He stepped into the passage, and found the hatch loose on the coamings, then came back and quietly wakened them all.

"I found this key on the deck near the door first day aboard," he volunteered; "but put it in my pocket instead of the door."

They softly crept out into the passage and lifted the hatch; but it was the irrepressible and most certainly courageous Forsythe who was first to climb up. He reached the deck just in time to dodge into the darkness behind the bridge ladder at the sight of Denman coming forward to attend to the lamps; and it was he who sent both fists into the side of Denman's face with force enough to knock him senseless. Then came the others.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"That'll do, Forsythe," said Sampson, interrupting the flow of billingsgate. "We'll omit prayers and flowers at this funeral. Stand up."

Forsythe arose, waving two bunches of keys and Denman's revolver.

"Got him foul," he yelled excitedly. "All the keys and his gun."

"All right. Just hand that gun to me—what! You won't?"

Forsythe had backed away at the command; but Sampson sprang upon him and easily disarmed him.

"Now, my lad," he said sternly, "just find the key of these darbies and unlock us."

Forsythe, muttering, "Got one good smash at him, anyhow," found the key of the handcuffs, and, first unlocking his own, went the rounds. Then he found the key of the leg irons, and soon all

were free, and the manacles tossed down the hatch to be gathered up later. Then big Jenkins reached his hand out to Forsythe—but not in token of amnesty.

"The keys," he said, in his hoarse whisper.

"Aren't they safe enough with me?" queried Forsythe hotly.

Jenkins still maintained the outstretched hand, and Forsythe looked irresolutely around. He saw no signs of sympathy. They were all closing in on him, and he meekly handed the two bunches to Jenkins, who pocketed them.

Meanwhile, Sampson had lifted Denman to his feet; and, as the boat still rolled heavily, he assisted him to the bridge stairs, where he could get a grip on the railing with his fettered hands. Daylight had come, and Denman could see Florrie, still seated in the deck chair, looking forward with frightened eyes.

"Jenkins, step here a moment," said Sampson; "and you other fellows—keep back."

Jenkins drew near.

"Did you hear, in the fo'castle," Sampson went on, "what I said about Mr. Denman saving my life, and that I promised him parole and the possession of his gun in case we got charge again?"

Jenkins nodded, but said: "He broke his parole before."

"So would you under the same provocation. Forsythe called him a milk-fed thief. Wouldn't you have struck out?"

Jenkins nodded again, and Sampson continued:

"All right. My proposition is to place Mr. Denman under parole once more, to give him and the lady the run of the deck abaft the galley hatch, and to leave them both the possession of their guns for self-defense, in case"—he looked humorously around at the others—"these inebriates get drunk again."

"But the other guns. He has them somewhere. We want power of self-defense, too."

"Mr. Denman," said Sampson, turning to the prisoner, "you've heard the conditions. Will you tell us where the arms are, and will you keep aft of the galley hatch, you and the lady?"

"I will," answered Denman, "on condition that you all, and particularly your navigator, keep forward of the galley hatch."

"We'll do that, sir; except, of course, in case of working or fighting ship. Now, tell us where the guns are, and we'll release you."

"Haven't we something to say about this?" inquired Forsythe, while a few others grumbled their disapproval of the plan.

"No; you have not," answered Jenkins, his hoarse whisper becoming a voice. "Not a one of you. Sampson and I will be responsible for this."

"All right, then," responded Forsythe. "But I carry my gun all the time. I'm not going to be shot down without a white man's chance."

"You'll carry a gun, my son," said Sampson, "when we give it to you—and then it won't be to shoot Mr. Denman. It's on your account, remember, that we're giving him a gun. Now, Mr. Denman, where are the pistols and toothpicks?"

"The pistols are in my room, the cutlasses in the room opposite. You have the keys."

"Aft all hands," ordered Jenkins, fumbling in his pockets for the keys, "and get the weapons."

Away they trooped, and crowded down the wardroom companion, Sampson lifting his cap politely to the girl in the chair. In a short time they reappeared, each man loaded down with pistols and cutlasses. They placed them in the forecastle, and when they had come up, Sampson released Denman's bonds.

"Now, sir," he said, "you are free.

We'll keep our promises, and we expect you to keep yours. Here is your gun, Mr. Denman."

"Thank you, Sampson," said Denman, pocketing the revolver and shaking his aching hands to circulate the blood. "Of course, we are to keep our promises."

"Even though you see things done that will raise your hair, sir."

"What do you mean by that?" asked Denman, with sudden interest.

"Can't tell you anything, sir, except what you may know, or will know. This boat is *not* bound for the African coast. That's all, sir."

"Go below the watch," broke in Jenkins' husky voice. "To stations, the rest."

CHAPTER XIX.

"What happened, Billie?" asked Florrie as Denman joined her.

"Not much, Florrie," he replied, as cheerfully as was possible in his mood. "Only a physical and practical demonstration that I am the two ends and the bight of a fool."

"You are not a fool, Billie; but what happened? How did they get out?"

"By picking the lock of the door, I suppose; or, perhaps, they had a key inside. That's where the fool comes in. I should have nailed the door on them."

"And what do they mean to do?"

"Don't know. They have some new project in mind. But we're better off than before, girl. We're at liberty to carry arms, and to go and come, provided we stay this side of the galley hatch. They are to let us alone and stay forward of the hatch. By the way," he added. "In view of the rather indeterminate outlook, let's carry our hardware outside."

He removed his belt from his waist and buckled it outside his oilskin coat. Then, when he had transferred the pistol from his pocket to the holster, he assisted the girl.

"There," he said, as he stood back and looked at her admiringly, "with all due regard for your good looks, Florrie, you resemble a cross between a cowboy and a second mate."

"No more so than you," she retorted; "but I've lost my place as cook, I think." She pointed at the galley chimney, from which smoke was arising. Denman looked, and also became interested in an excited convention forward.

Though Jenkins had sent the watch below and the rest to stations, only the two cooks had obeyed. The others, with the boat still rolling in the heavy sea, had surrounded Jenkins, and seemed to be arguing with him. The big man, saving his voice, answered only by signs as yet; but the voices of the others soon became audible to the two aft.

"I tell you it's all worked out, Jenkins—all figured out while you were dopy in your bunk."

Jenkins shook his head.

Then followed an excited burst of reason and flow of words from which Denman could only gather a few disjointed phrases: "Dead easy, Jenkins—Run close and land—Casey's brother—Can hoof it to—Might get a job, which'd be better—Got a private code made up—Don't need money—Can beat his way in—My brother has a wireless—Take the dinghy; we don't need it—I'll take the chance if you have a life buoy handy—Chance of a lifetime—Who wants beach combing in Africa—You see, he'll watch the financial news—I'll stow away in her—I tell you, Jenkins, there'll be no killing. I've made my mind up to that, and will see to it."

The last speech was from Sampson; and, on hearing it, Jenkins waved them all away. Then he used his voice.

"Get to stations," he said. "I'll think it out. Forsythe, take the bridge and dope out where we are."

They scattered, and Forsythe mounted to the bridge, while Jenkins,

still a sick man, descended to the forecastle.

"What does it all mean, Billie?" asked the girl.

"Haven't the slightest idea," answered Denman, as he seated himself beside her. "They've been hinting at big things; and Sampson said that they might raise my hair. However, we'll know soon. The wind is going down. This was the outer fringe of a cyclone."

"Why don't they go ahead?"

"Too much sea. These boats are made for speed, not strength. You can break their backs by steaming into a head sea."

Daniels, the cook, came on deck and aft to the limits of the hatch, indicating by his face and manner that he wished to speak to Denman.

Denman arose and approached him.

"Will you and the lady eat breakfast together, sir?" he asked.

"I believe so," answered Denman. Then, turning to Florrie: "How will it be? May I eat breakfast with you this morning?"

She nodded.

"Then, sir," said Daniels, "I'll have to serve it in the after cabin."

"Why not the wardroom? Why not keep out of Miss Fleming's apartment?"

"Because, Mr. Denman, our work is laid out. Billings attends to the wardroom, and swears he won't serve this lady, or get within reach of her."

"Serve it in the after cabin, then," said Denman, turning away to hide the coming smile, and Daniels departed.

Not caring to agitate the girl with an account of Billings' drunken overtures and his own vicarious repulse of them, he did not explain to her Billings' trouble of mind; but he found trouble of his own in explaining his frequent bursts of laughter while they ate their breakfast in the cabin. And Florrie found trouble in accepting his explanations, for they were irrelevant, incompetent, and inane.

After breakfast they went on deck without oilskins, for wind and sea were going down. There was a dry deck; and above, a sky which, still gray with the background of storm cloud, yet showed an occasional glimmer of blue, while to the east the sun shone clear and unobstructed; but on the whole clean-cut horizon there was not a sign of sail or smoke.

Eight bells having struck, the watches were changed; but except possibly a man in the engine room getting up steam—for smoke was pouring out of the four funnels—no one was at stations. The watch on deck was scattered about forward; and Forsythe had given way to Jenkins, who, with his eye fixed to a long telescope, was scanning the horizon from the bridge.

Denman, for over forty-eight hours without sleep, would have turned in had not curiosity kept him awake. So he waited until nine o'clock, when Forsythe, with Munson's help, took morning sights, and later until ten, when Forsythe handed Jenkins a slip of paper on which presumably he had jotted the boat's approximate position. Immediately Jenkins rang the engine bells, and the boat forged ahead.

Denman watched her swing to a starboard wheel; and, when the rolling gave way to a pitching motion as she met the head sea, he glanced at the after binnacle compass.

"Northwest by north, half north," he said. "Whatever their plan is, Jenkins has been won over. Florrie, better turn in. I'm going to. Lock your door and keep that gun handy."

But they were not menaced—not even roused for dinner; for Daniels had gone below, and Billings, on watch for the morning, could not wake Denman, and would not approach Miss Florrie's door. So it was late in the afternoon when they again appeared on deck.

The weather had cleared, the sea was smoothing, and the boat surging along under the cruising turbines; while Hawkes had the wheel, and Forsythe, still in officer's uniform, paced back and forth.

Evidently Jenkins, in the light of his physical and mental limitations, had seen the need of an assistant. Old Kelly, the gunner's mate, was fussing around a twelve-pounder; the rest were out of sight.

Denman concluded that some kind of sea discipline had been established while he slept, and that Kelly had been put in charge of the gunnery department and been relieved from standing watch; otherwise, by the former arrangement, Kelly would have been below while Forsythe and Hawkes were on deck.

The horizon was dotted with specks, some showing smoke, others, under the glass, showing canvas. Denman examined each by the captain's binoculars, but saw no signs of a government craft —all were peaceably going their way.

"Why is it," asked Florrie, as she took the glass from Denman, "that we see so many vessels now, when we lay for days without seeing any?"

"We were in a pocket, I suppose," answered Denman. "Lane routes, trade routes, for high and low-powered craft, as well as for sailing craft, are so well established these days that, if you get between them, you can wait for weeks without seeing anything."

"Do you think there is any chance of our being rescued soon?"

"I don't know, Florrie; though we can't go much nearer the coast without being recognized. In fact, I haven't thought much about it lately—the truth is, I'm getting interested in these fellows. This is the most daring and desperate game I ever saw played, and how they'll come out is a puzzle. Hello! Eight bells."

The bell was struck on the bridge, and the watches changed, except that Jenkins, after a short talk with Forsythe, did not relieve him, but came aft to the engine-room hatch, where he held another short talk with Sampson and Riley, who, instead of going below, had waited.

Only a few words came to Denman's ears, and these in the hoarse accents of Jenkins as he left them. "Six days at cruising speed, you say, and two at full steam? All right."

Jenkins continued aft, but halted and called the retreating Sampson, who joined him; then the two approached the galley hatch and hailed Denman.

"Captain Jenkins can't talk very well, sir," said Sampson, with a conciliatory grin; "but he wants me to ask you what you did to him. He says he bears no grudge."

"Can't tell you," answered Denman promptly. "It is a trick of Japanese jujutsu, not taught in the schools, and known only to experts. I learned it in Japan when my life was in danger."

Jenkins nodded, as though satisfied with the explanation, and Sampson resumed:

"Another thing we came aft for, Mr. Denman, is to notify you that we must search the skipper's room and the wardroom for whatever money there is on board. There may be none, but we want the last cent."

"What on earth," exclaimed Denman, "do you want with money?" Then, as their faces clouded, he added: "Oh, go ahead. Don't turn my room upside down. You'll find my pile in a suit of citizens' clothes hanging up. About four and a half."

"Four and a half is a whole lot, sir," remarked Sampson as they descended the wardroom hatch.

"Got any money down below, Florrie?" inquired Denman, joining the girl.

She shook her head. "No. I lost everything but what I wear."

The tears that started to her eyes apprised Denman that hers was more than

a money loss; but there is no comfort of mere words for such loss, and he went on quickly:

"They are going through the cabin for money. They'll get all I've got. Did you see any cash in the captain's desk?"

"Why, yes, Billie," she said hesitatingly. "I wanted a place to put my combs when I wore the bandage, and I saw some money in the upper desk. It was a roll."

"He's lost it, then. Always was a careless man. Did you count it?"

"No. I had no right to."

But the question in Denman's mind was answered by Sampson when he and Jenkins emerged from the hatch. "Five hundred," he said. "Fine! He won't need a quarter of it, Jenkins."

"Five hundred!" repeated Denman to the girl. "Jail breaking, stealing government property, mutiny—against me—piracy, and burglary. Heaven help them when they are caught!"

"But will they be?"

"Can't help but be caught. I know nothing of their plans; but I do know that they are running right into a hornet's nest. If a single one of those craft on the horizon recognizes this boat and can wireless the nearest station, we'll be surrounded to-morrow."

But, as it happened, they were not recognized, though they took desperate chances in charging through a coasting fleet in daylight. And at nightfall Jenkins gave the order for full speed.

CHAPTER XX.

For an hour Denman remained with Florrie to witness the unusual spectacle of a forty-knot destroyer in a hurry.

The wind was practically gone, though a heavy ground swell still met the boat from the northwest; and as there was no moon, nor starlight, and as all lights were out but the white masthead and red and green side lights, invisible from aft, but dimly lighting the sea ahead, the sight presented was unusual and awe-inspiring.

They seemed to be looking at an ever-receding wall of solid blackness, beneath which rose and spread from the high bow, to starboard and port, two huge, moving snowdrifts, lessening in size as the bow lifted over the crest of a sea it had climbed, and increasing to a liquid avalanche of foam that sent spangles up into the bright illumination of the masthead light when the prow buried itself in the base of the next sea.

Astern was a white, self-luminous wake that narrowed to a point in the distance before it had lost its phosphorescent glow.

Florrie was interested only in the glorious picture as a whole. Denman, equally impressed, was interested in the somewhat rare spectacle of a craft meeting at forty knots a sea running at twenty; for not a drop of water hit the deck where they stood.

They went below at last; but Denman, having slept nearly all day, was long in getting to sleep. A curious, futile, and inconsequential thought bothered him—the thought that the cheerful Billings had ceased his singing in the galley.

The monotonous humming of the turbines brought sleep at last; but he awakened at daylight from a dream in which Billings, dressed in a Mother Hubbard and a poke bonnet, was trying to force a piece of salt-water soap into his mouth, and had almost succeeded when he awoke. But it was the stopping of the turbines that really had awakened him; and he dressed hurriedly and went on deck.

There was nothing amiss. No one was in sight but Jenkins, who leaned lazily against the bridge rail. In the dim light that shone, nothing could be seen on the horizon or within it.

So, a little ashamed of his uncalled-for curiosity, he hurried down and

turned in, "all standing," to wait for breakfast and an explanation.

But no explanation was given him, either by events or the attitude of the men. Those on deck avoided the after end of the boat—all except old Kelly, whose duties brought him finally to the after guns and tubes; but, while civilly lifting his cap to Miss Florrie, he was grouchy and taciturn in his manner until his work was done, then he halted at the galley hatch on his way forward to lean over and pronounce anathema on the heads of the cooks because of the quality of the food.

While waiting for breakfast, Denman had listened to an angry and wordy argument between the two cooks, in which Daniels had voiced his opinion of Billings for waking him from his watch below to serve the prisoners.

When the watches were changed at eight bells that morning, he had heard Hawkes and Davis, the two seamen of the deck department, protesting violently to Jenkins at the promotion of Forsythe and Kelly, which left them to do all the steering.

Jenkins had not answered orally, but his gestures overruled the protest. Even Casey and Munson argued almost to quarreling over various "tricks of their trade," which Denman, as he listened, could only surmise were to form a part of the private code they had spoken of when haranguing Jenkins.

There was a nervous unrest pervading them all which, while leaving Florrie and Denman intact, even reached the engine room.

At noon Sampson and Dwyer were relieved, and the former turned back to shout down the hatch:

"I told you to do it, and that goes. We've overhauled and cleaned it. You two assemble and oil it up this afternoon, or you'll hear from me at eight bells."

The voice of Riley—who was nearly as large a man as Sampson—answered hotly but inarticulately, and Denman could only ascribe the row to a difference of opinion concerning the condition of some part of the engines.

Sampson, though possibly a lesser engineer than the others of his department, yet dominated them as Jenkins dominated them all—by pure force of personality. He had made himself chief engineer, and his orders were obeyed, as evidenced by the tranquil silence that emanated from the engine room when Sampson returned at four in the afternoon.

All day the boat lay with quiet engines and a bare head of steam, rolling slightly in a swell that now came from the east, while the sun shone brightly overhead from east to west, and only a few specks appeared on the horizon, to remain for a time, and vanish.

Meanwhile Florrie worried Denman with questions that he could not answer.

"Forsythe took sights in the morning," he explained at length, "and a meridian observation at noon. He has undoubtedly found another 'pocket,' as I call these triangular spaces between the routes; but I do not know where we are, except that, computing our yesterday and last night's run, we are within from sixty to a hundred miles of New York."

He was further mystified when, on going into his room for a cigar after supper, he found his suit of "citizen's clothes" missing from its hook.

"Not the same thief," he grumbled. "Sampson and Jenkins are too big for it."

He did not mention his loss to Florrie, not wishing to arouse further feminine speculation; and when, at a later hour in this higher latitude, darkness had come, and full speed was rung to the engine room, he induced her to retire.

"I don't know what's up," he said; "but—get all the sleep you can. I'll call you if anything happens."

He did not go to sleep himself, but smoked and waited while the humming

turbines gathered in the miles—one hour, two hours, nearly three—until a quarter to eleven o'clock, when speed was reduced.

Remembering his embarrassment of the morning, Denman did not seek the deck, but looked through his deadlight. Nothing but darkness met his eye; it was a black night with rain.

He entered the lighted wardroom and looked at the telltale above; it told him that the boat was heading due north. Then he entered an opposite room—all were unlocked now—from which, slantingly through the deadlight, he saw lights. He threw open the thick, round window, and saw more clearly. Lights, shore lights, ahead and to port.

He saw no land; but from the perspective of the lights he judged that they ran east and west. Then he heard the call of the lead: "A quarter seventeen;" and a little later: "Be the deep sixteen," delivered in singsong by Hawkes.

"The coast of Long Island," muttered Denman. "Well, for picked-up, schoolbook navigation, it is certainly a feat—to run over six hundred miles and stop over soundings."

The boat went on at reduced speed until Hawkes had called out: "By the mark ten," when the engines stopped, and there was a rush of footsteps on deck, that centered over the open deadlight, above which was slung to the davits the boat called by them the dinghy, but which was only a very small gasoline launch.

"In with you, Casey," said Jenkins, in his low, hoarse voice, "and turn her over. See about the bottom plug, too. Clear away those guys fore and aft, you fellows."

In a few moments came the buzzing of the small engine; then it stopped, and Casey said: "Engine's all right, and—so is the plug. Shove out and lower away."

"Got everything right, Casey? Got your money? Got the code?"

"Got everything," was the impatient answer.

"Well, remember—you're to head the boat out from the beach, pull the bottom plug, and let her sink in deep water. Make sure your wheel's amidships."

"Shove out and lower away," retorted Casey. "D'you think I never learned to run a naphtha launch?"

Denman heard the creaking sound of the davits turning in their beds, then the slackening away of the falls, their unhooking by Casey, and the chugging of the engine as the launch drew away.

"Good luck, Casey!" called Jenkins.

"All right!" answered Casey from the distance. "Have your life buoys handy."

Denman had ducked out of sight as the launch was lowered, and he did not see Casey; but, on opening a locker in his room for a fresh box of cigars, he noticed that his laundry had been tampered with. Six shirts and twice as many collars were gone. On looking further, he missed a new derby hat that he had prized more than usual, also his suit case.

"Casey and I are about the same size," he muttered. "But what the deuce does it all mean?"

He went to sleep with the turbines humming full speed in his ears; but he wakened when they were reduced to cruising speed. Looking at his watch in the light from the wardroom, he found that it was half past two; and, on stepping out for a look at the telltale, he found the boat heading due south.

"Back in the pocket," he said. as he returned to his room.

But the engines did not stop, as he partly expected; they remained at half speed, and the boat still headed south when he wakened at breakfast time.

CHAPTER XXI.

After breakfast, King, one of the machinists, and a pleasant-faced young man, came aft with an ensign, a hammer, chisel, and paint pot.

"This is work, sir," he said, as he passed, tipping his cap politely to Miss Florrie. "Should have been done before."

He went to the taffrail, and, leaning over with the hammer and chisel, removed the raised letters that spelled the boat's name. Then he covered the hiatus with paint, and hoisted the ensign to the flagstaff.

"Now, sir," he remarked, as he gathered up his tools and paint pot, "she's a government craft again."

"I see," commented Denman; and then to Florrie as King went forward: "They're getting foxy. We're steaming into the crowd again, and they want to forestall inspection and suspicion. I wonder if our being allowed on deck is part of the plan? A lady and an officer aft look legitimate."

At noon every man was dressed to the regulations, in clean blue, with neckerchief and knife lanyard, while Jenkins and Forsythe appeared in full undress uniform, with tasteful linen and neckwear.

That this was part of the plan was proven when, after a display of bunting in the International Signal Code from the yard up forward, they ranged alongside of an outbound tank steamer that had kindly slowed down for them.

All hands but one cook and one engineer had mustered on deck, showing a fair semblance of a full-powered watch; and the one cook—Billings—displayed himself above the hatch for one brief moment, clad in a spotless white jacket.

Then, just before the two bridges came together, Jenkins hurried down the steps and aft to Denman to speak a few words, then hasten forward. It was sufficiently theatrical to impress the skipper of the tanker, but what Jenkins really said to Denman was: "You are to remember your parole, sir, and not hail that steamer."

To which Denman had nodded assent.

"Steamer ahoy!" shouted Forsythe, through a small megaphone. "You are laden with oil, as you said by signal. We would like to replenish our supply, which is almost exhausted."

"Yes, sir," answered the skipper; "but to whom shall I send the bill?"

"To the superintendent of the Charlestown Navy Yard. It will very likely be paid to your owners before you get back. We want as much as a hundred tons. I have made out a receipt for that amount. Throw us a heaving line to take our hose, and I will send it up on the bight."

"Very well, sir. Anything else I can do for you, sir?"

"Yes; we want about two hundred gallons of water. Been out a long time."

"Certainly, sir—very glad to accommodate you. Been after that runaway torpedo boat?"

"Yes; any news of her on shore? Our wireless is out of order."

"Well, the opinion is that she was lost in the big blow a few days ago. She was reported well to the nor'ard; and it was a St. Lawrence Valley storm. Did you get any of it?"

"Very little," answered Forsythe. "We were well to the s'uth'ard."

"A slight stumble in good diction there, Mr. Forsythe," muttered the listening Denman. "Otherwise, very well carried out."

But the deluded tank skipper made no strictures on Forsythe's diction; and, while the pleasant conversation was going on, the two lines of hose were passed, and the receipt for oil and water sent up to the steamer.

In a short time the tanks were filled, the hose hauled back, and the starting bells rung in both engine rooms.

The destroyer was first to gather way; and, as her stern drew abreast of the tanker's bridge, the skipper lifted his cap to Florrie and Denman, and called out: "Good afternoon, captain.

I'm glad that I was able to accommodate you."

To which Denman, with all hands looking expectantly at him, only replied with a bow—as became a dignified commander with two well-trained officers on his bridge to attend to the work.

The boat circled around, headed northwest, and went on at full speed until, not only the tanker, but every other craft in view, had sunk beneath the horizon. Then the engines were stopped, and the signal yard sent down.

"Back in the pocket again," said Denman to Florrie. "What on earth can they be driving at?"

"And why," she answered, with another query, "did they go to all that trouble to be so polite and nice, when, as you say, they are fully committed to piracy, and robbed the other vessels by force?"

"This seems to show," he said, "the master hand of Jenkins, who is a natural-born gentleman, as against the work of Forsythe, who is a natural-born brute."

"Yet he is a high-school graduate."

"And Jenkins is a passed seaman apprentice."

"What is that?"

"One who enters the navy at about fifteen or sixteen to serve until he is twenty-one, then to leave the navy or reënlist—since the Spanish War they are talking of abolishing this apprentice system. They seldom reënlist, for they are trained, tutored, and disciplined into good workmen, to whom shore life offers better opportunities. Those who do reënlist have raised the standard of the navy sailor to the highest in the world; but those that don't are a sad loss to the navy. Jenkins reënlisted. So did Forsythe."

"But do you think the training and tutoring that Jenkins received equal to an education like Forsythe's—or yours?"

"They learn more facts," answered Denman. "The training makes a man of a bad boy, and a gentleman of a good one. What a ghastly pity that, because of conservatism and politics, all this splendid material for officers should go to waste, and the appointments to Annapolis be given to good high-school scholars, who might be cowardly sissies at heart, or blackguards like Forsythe!"

"But that is how you received your appointment, Billie Denman," said the girl warmly; "and you are neither a sissy nor a blackguard."

"I hope not," he answered grimly. "Yet, if I had first served my time as seaman apprentice before being appointed to Annapolis, I might be up on that bridge now, instead of standing supinely by while one seaman apprentice does the navigating and another the bossing."

"There is that man again. I'm afraid of him, Billie. All the others, except Forsythe, have been civil to me; but he looks at me—so—so hatefully."

Billings, minus his clean white jacket, had come up the hatch and gone forward. He came back soon, showing a sullen, scowling face, as though his cheerful disposition had entirely left him.

As he reached the galley hatch, he cast upon the girl a look of such intense hatred and malevolence that Denman, white with anger, sprang to the hatch, and halted him.

"If ever again," he said explosively, "I catch you glaring at this lady in that manner, parole or no parole, I'll throw you overboard."

Billings' face straightened; he saluted, and, without a word, went down the hatch, while Denman returned to the girl.

"He is an enlisted man," he said bitterly, "not a passed seaman apprentice; so I downed him easily with a few words."

And then came the thought, which he did not express to Florrie, that his

fancied limitations, which prevented him from being on the bridge, also prevented him from enlightening the morbid Billings as to the real source of the "terrible punch" he had received; for, while he could justify his silence to Florrie, he could only, with regard to Billings, feel a masculine dread of ridicule at dressing in feminine clothing.

CHAPTER XXII.

At supper that evening they were served with prunes, bread without butter, and weak tea, with neither milk nor sugar.

"Orders from for'a'd, sir," said Daniels, noticing Denman's involuntary look of surprise. "All hands are to be on short allowance for a while—until something comes our way again."

"But why," asked Denman, "do you men include us in your plans and economies? Why did you not rid yourself of us last night, when you sent one of your number ashore?"

Daniels was a tall, somber-faced man—a typical ship's cook, and he answered slowly: "I cannot tell you, sir. Except that both you and the lady might talk about this boat."

"Oh, well," said Denman, "I was speaking for this lady, who doesn't belong with us. My place is right here."

"Yes, sir," agreed Daniels; "but I am at liberty to say, sir, to you and the lady, that you'd best look out for Billings. He seems to be goin' batty. I heard him talking to himself, threatening harm to this lady. I don't know what he's got against her myself——"

"Tell him," said Denman sharply, "that if he enters this apartment, or steps one foot abaft the galley hatch on deck. the parole is broken, and I'll put a bullet through his head. You might tell that to Jenkins, too."

Daniels got through the wardroom door before answering: "I'll not do that, sir. Jenkins might confine him, and leave all the work to me. But I think Billings needs a licking."

Whether Daniels applied this treatment for the insane to Billings, or whether Billings, with an equal right to adjudge Daniels insane, had applied the same treatment to him, could not be determined without violation of the parole; but when they had finished supper and reached the deck, sounds of conflict came up from the galley hatch, unheard and uninterrupted by those forward. It was a series of thumps, oaths, growlings, and the rattling of pots and pans on the galley floor. Then there was silence.

"You see," said Denman to Florrie, with mock seriousness, "the baleful influence of a woman aboard ship! It never fails."

"I can't help it," she said, with a pout and a blush—her blushes were discernible now, for the last vestige of the scalding had gone—"but I mean to wear a veil from this on. I had one in my pocket."

"I think that would be wise," answered Denman gravely. "These men are——"

"You see, Billie," she interrupted. "I've got a new complexion—brand new; peaches and cream for the first time in my life, and I'm going to take care of it."

"That's right," he said, with a laugh. "But I'll wager you won't patent the process. Live steam is rather severe as a beautifier!"

But she kept her word. After the meager breakfast next morning—which Daniels served with no explanation of the row—she appeared on deck with her face hidden, and from then on wore the veil.

There was a new activity among the men—a partial relief from the all-pervading nervousness and irritability. Gun and torpedo practice—which brought to drill every man on board except Munson, buried in his wireless

room, and one engineer on duty—was inaugurated and continued through the day.

Their natty blue uniforms discarded, they toiled and perspired at the task; and when, toward the end of the afternoon, old Kelly decided that they could be depended upon to fire a gun or eject a torpedo, Jenkins decreed that they should get on deck and lash to the rail in their chocks four extra torpedoes.

As there was one in each tube, this made eight of the deadliest weapons of warfare ready at hand; and when the task was done they quit for the day, the deck force going to the bridge for a look around the empty horizon, the cooks to the galley, and the machinists to the engine room.

Denman, who with doubt and misgiving had watched the day's preparations, led Florrie down the companion.

"They're getting ready for a mix of some kind; and there must be some place to put you away from gun fire. How's this?"

He opened a small hatch covered by the loose after edge of the cabin carpet, and disclosed a compartment below which might have been designed for stores, but which contained nothing, as a lighted electric bulb showed him. Coming up, he threw a couple of blankets down, and said:

"There's a cyclone cellar for you, Florrie, below the water line. If we're fired upon jump down, and don't come until called, or until water comes in."

Then he went to his room for the extra store of cartridges he had secreted, but found them gone. Angrily returning to Florrie, he asked for her supply; and she, too, searched, and found nothing. But both their weapons were fully loaded.

"Well," he said philosophically, as they returned to the deck, "they only guaranteed us the privilege of carrying arms. I suppose they feel justified from their standpoint."

But on deck they found something to take their minds temporarily off the loss. Sampson, red in the face, was vociferating down the engine-room hatch.

"Come up here," he said loudly and defiantly. "Come up here and prove it, if you think you're a better man than I am. Come up and square yourself, you flannel-mouthed mick."

The "flannel-mouthed mick," in the person of Riley, white of face rather than red, but with eyes blazing and mouth set in an ugly grin, climbed up.

It was a short fight—the blows delivered by Sampson, the parrying done by Riley—and ended with a crashing swing on Riley's jaw that sent him to the deck, not to rise for a few moments.

"Had enough?" asked Sampson triumphantly. "Had enough, you imitation of an ash cat? Oh, I guess you have. Think it out."

He turned and met Jenkins, who had run aft from the bridge.

"Now, Sampson, this'll be enough of this."

"What have *you* got to say about it?" inquired Sampson irately.

"Plenty to say," answered Jenkins calmly.

"Not much you haven't. You keep away from the engine room and the engine-room affairs. I can 'tend to my department. You 'tend to yours."

"I can attend to yours as well when the time comes. There's work ahead for——"

"Well, attend to me now. You've sweated me all day like a stoker at your work; now go on and finish it up. I'll take a fall out o' you, Jenkins, right here."

"No, you won't! Wait until the work's done, and I'll accommodate you."

Jenkins went forward; and Sampson, after a few moments of scarcely audible grumbling, followed to the forecastle. Then Riley got up, looked after him, and shook his fist.

"I'll git even wi' you for this," he

declared, with lurid profanity. "I'll have yer life for this, Sampson."

Then he went down the hatch, while Forsythe on the bridge, who had watched the whole affair with an evil grin, turned away from Jenkins when the latter joined him. Perhaps he enjoyed the sight of some one beside himself being knocked down.

"It looks rather bad, Florrie," said Denman dubiously; "all this quarreling among themselves. Whatever job they have on hand they must hold together, or we'll get the worst of it. I don't like to see Jenkins and Sampson at it, though the two cooks are only a joke."

But there was no more open quarreling for the present. As the days wore on, a little gun and torpedo drill was carried out; while, with steam up, the boat made occasional darts to the north or south to avoid too close contact with passing craft, and gradually—by fits and starts—crept more to the westward. And Jenkins recovered complete control of his voice and movements, while Munson, the wireless man, grew haggard and thin.

At last, at nine o'clock one evening, just before Denman went down, Munson ran up with a sheet of paper, shouting to the bridge:

"Caught on—with the United—night shift."

Then, having delivered the sheet to Jenkins, he went back, and the rasping sound of his sending instrument kept up through the night.

But when Denman sought the deck after breakfast, it had stopped; and he saw Munson, still haggard of face, talking to Jenkins at the hatch.

"Got his wave length now," Denman heard him say. "Took all night, but that and the code'll fool 'em all."

From then on Munson stood watch at his instrument only from six in the evening until midnight, got more sleep thereby, and soon the tired, haggard look left his face, and it resumed its normal expression of intelligence and cheerfulness.

CHAPTER XXIII.

After supper about a week later, Denman and Florrie sat in the deck chairs, watching the twilight give way to the gloom of the evening, and speculating in a desultory manner on the end of this never-ending voyage, when Munson again darted on deck, and ran up the bridge stairs with a sheet of paper, barely discernible in the gathering darkness, and handed it to Jenkins, who peered over it in the glow from the binnacle.

Then Jenkins blew on a boatswain's whistle—the shrill, trilling, and penetrating call that rouses all hands in the morning and at other times in emergencies.

All hands responded. Both cooks rushed up from the galley, the engineers on watch shut off all burners and appeared, and men tumbled up from the forecastle, all joining Jenkins and Munson on the bridge.

Denman strained his ears, but could hear nothing, though he saw each man bending over the paper in turn.

Then they quickly went back to their places below or on deck; and, as the bells were given to the engine room, the rasping of the wireless could be heard.

As the two cooks came aft, Denman heard them discussing excitedly but inaudibly the matter in hand; and, his curiosity getting the better of his pride, he waited only long enough to see the boat steadied at east-northeast, then went down and forward to the door leading into the passage that led to the galley.

Billings was doing most of the talking, in a high-pitched, querulous tone, and Daniels answered only by grunts and low-pitched monosyllables.

"*Gigantia*—ten to-morrow—five million," were a few of the words and phrases Denman caught; and at last he heard the concluding words of the talk.

"Dry up," said Daniels loudly and threateningly. "Yes, thirteen is an unlucky number; but, if you don't shut up and clear off these dishes, I'll make our number twelve. Glad you've got something to think about besides that woman, but—shut up. You make me tired."

Denman went back to Florrie somewhat worried, but no longer puzzled; yet he gave the girl none of his thoughts that evening—he waited until morning, when, after a look around a bright horizon dotted with sail and steam, he said to her as she came up:

"Eat all the breakfast you can this morning, Florrie, for it may be some time before we'll eat again."

"Why, Billie, what is the matter?" asked the girl.

"We've traveled at cruising speed all night," he answered, "and now must be up close to the 'corner,' as they call the position where the outbound liners change to the great circle course."

"Well?" she said inquiringly.

"Did you ever hear of the *Gigantia?*"

"Why, of course—you mean the new liner?"

"Yes; the latest and largest steamship built. She was on her maiden passage when this boat left port, and is about due to start east again. Florrie, she carries five million in bullion, and these fellows means to hold her up."

"Goodness!" exclaimed the girl. "You mean that they will rob her—a big steamship?"

"She's big enough, of course, to tuck this boat down a hatchway; but these passenger boats carry no guns except for saluting, while this boat could sink her with the armament she carries. Look at those torpedoes—eight altogether, and more below decks. Eight compartments could be flooded, and bulkheads are not reliable. But will they dare? Desperate though they are, will they dare fire on a ship full of passengers?"

"How did you learn this, Billie? It seems impossible—incredible."

"Remember the gun and torpedo drill!" said Denman softly, yet excitedly. "Our being in these latitudes is significant. They put Casey ashore the other night and robbed the captain and me to outfit him. I overheard some of the talk. He has reached New York, secured a position as night operator in a wireless station, studied the financial news, and sent word last night that the *Gigantia* sails at ten this morning with five million in gold."

"And where do you think she is now?" asked the girl, glancing around the horizon.

"At her dock in New York. She'll be out here late in the afternoon, I think. But, heavens, what chances!—to wait all day, while any craft that comes along may recognize this boat and notify the nearest station! Why didn't they intercept the lane route out at sea, where there is no crowd like this? I can only account for it by the shortage of stores. Yes; that's it. No sane pirate would take such risks. We've plenty of oil and water, but little food."

That Denman had guessed rightly was partly indicated by the action of the men and the boat that day.

All hands kept the deck, and their first task was to discard the now useless signal mast, which might help identify the boat as the runaway destroyer.

Two engineers sawed nearly through the mast at its base, while the others cleared away the light shrouds and forestay. Then a few pulls on the lee shroud sent it overboard, while the men dodged from under. Beyond smashing the bridge rail it did no damage.

The dodging tactics were resumed. A steamer appearing on the east or west horizon, heading so as to pass to the northward or southward, was given a wider berth by a dash at full speed in the opposite direction.

Every face—even Florrie's and Den-

man's—wore an anxious, nervous expression, and the tension increased as the hours went by.

Dinner was served, but brought no relief. Men spoke sharply to one another; and Jenkins roared his orders from the bridge, bringing a culmination to the strain that no one could have foreseen.

The sudden appearance of an inbound steamer out of a haze that had arisen to the east necessitated immediate full speed. Riley was in charge of the engine room, but Sampson stood at the hatch exercising an unofficial supervision; and it was he that received Jenkins' thundering request for more steam.

Sampson, in a voice equally loud, and with more profanity, admonished Jenkins to descend to the lower regions and attend to his own affairs.

Jenkins yielded. Leaving Forsythe in charge of the bridge, he came down the stairs and aft on the run. Not a word was spoken by either; but, with the prescience that men feel at the coming of a fight, the two cooks left their dishes and the engineers their engines to crowd their heads into the hatches. Riley showed his disfigured face over the heads of the other two; and on the bridge Forsythe watched with the same evil grin.

But few blows were passed, then the giants locked, and, twisting and writhing, whirled about the deck. Florrie screamed, but Denman silenced her.

"Nothing can be done," he said, "without violating the parole; and even if——"

He stopped, for the two huge forms, tightly embraced, had reeled like one solid object to the rail, which, catching them at just about the knees, had sent them overboard, exactly as Sampson had gone before.

"Man overboard!" yelled Denman uselessly, for all had seen. But he threw a life buoy fastened to the quarter, and was about to throw another, when he looked, and saw that his first was a hundred feet this side of the struggling men.

He turned to glance forward. Men were running about frantically, and shouting, but nothing was done, and the boat still held at a matter of forty knots an hour. Riley grinned from the hatch; and, forward on the bridge, Forsythe turned his now sober face away, to look at the compass, and at the steamer fast disappearing in the haze that followed her.

Then, more as an outlet for his anger and disgust than in the hope of saving life, Denman threw the second life buoy high in air over the stern, and led the shocked and hysterical Florrie down the stairs.

"Rest here a while," he said gently, "and try to forget it. I don't know what they'll do now, but—keep your pistol with you at all times."

He went up with a grave face and many heartfelt misgivings; for, with Forsythe and Riley now the master spirits, things might not go well with them.

CHAPTER XXIV.

In about ten minutes Forsythe ground the wheel over and headed back; but, though Denman kept a sharp lookout, he saw nothing of the two men or the life buoys. He could feel no hope for Sampson, who was unable to swim. As for Jenkins, possibly a swimmer, even should he reach a life buoy, his plight would only be prolonged to a lingering death by hunger and thirst; for there was but one chance in a million that he would be seen and picked up.

After ten minutes on the back track, the boat was logically in about the same position as when she had fled from the steamer; but Forsythe kept on for another ten minutes, when, the haze having enveloped the whole horizon, he stopped the engines, and the boat lost way, rolling sluggishly in the trough.

There was no wind, and nothing but the long ground swell and the haze to inconvenience them; the first in making it difficult to sight a telescope, the second in hiding everything on the horizon, though hiding the boat herself.

But at last Forsythe fixed something in the glass, gazing long and intently at a faint spot appearing to the northwest; and Denman, following suit with the binoculars, saw that he was looking at —a huge bulk coming out of the haze carrying one short mast and five funnels. The he remembered the descriptions he had read of the mighty *Gigantia*—the only ship afloat with five funnels since the *Great Eastern*.

Forsythe called, and all hands flocked to the bridge, where they discussed the situation; and, as Denman judged by the many faces turned his way, discussed him and Florrie. But whatever resulted from the latter came to nothing.

They suddenly left the bridge, to disappear in the forecastle for a few moments, then to reappear—each man belted and pistoled, and one bringing an outfit to Forsythe on the bridge.

Two engineers went to the engines, Forsythe rang full speed to them, and the rest, cooks and all, swung the four torpedo tubes to port and manned the forward one.

The big ship seemed to grow in size visibly as her speed, plus the destroyer's, brought them together. In a few moments Denman made out details—six parallel lines of deadlights, one above the other, and extending from bow to stern, a length of a thousand feet; three tiers of deck houses, one above the other amidships; a line of twenty boats to a side along the upper deck, and her after rails black with passengers; while as many as six uniformed officers stood on her bridge—eighty feet above the water line.

The little destroyer rounded to alongside, and slowed down to a little more than the speed of the larger ship, which permitted her to creep along the huge, black side, inch by inch, until the bridges were nearly abreast. Then a white-whiskered man on the high bridge hailed:

"Steamer ahoy! What do you want?"

"Want all that bullion stowed in your strong room," answered Forsythe through a megaphone; "and, if you please, speak more distinctly, for the wash of your bow wave prevents my hearing what you say."

The officer was handed a megaphone, and through it his voice came down like a thunderclap.

"You want the bullion stowed in our strong room, do you? Anything else you want, sir?"

"Yes," answered Forsythe. "We want a boat full of provisions. Three barrels of flour, the rest in canned meats and vegetables."

"Anything else?" There was as much derision in the voice as can carry through a megaphone.

"That is all," answered Forsythe. "Load your gold into one of your own boats, the provisions in another. Lower them down and let the falls unreeve, so that they will go adrift. We will pick them up."

"Well, of all the infernal impudence I ever heard, yours is the worst. I judge that you are that crew of jail breakers we've heard of that stole a government boat and turned pirates."

"You are right," answered Forsythe; "but don't waste our time. Will you give us what we asked for, or shall we sink you?"

"Sink us, you scoundrel? You can't, and you'd better not try, or threaten to. Your position is known, and three scouts started this morning from Boston and New York."

"That bluff don't go," answered Forsythe. "Will you cough up?"

"No; most decidedly *no!*" roared the

officer, who might, or might not, have been the captain.

"Kelly," said Forsythe, "send that Whitehead straight into him."

Whitehead torpedoes be it known, are mechanical fish of machined steel, self-propelling and self-steering, actuated by a small air engine, and carrying in their "war heads" a charge of over two hundred pounds of guncotton, and in their blunt noses a detonating cap to explode it on contact.

At Forsythe's word, Kelly turned a lever on the tube, and the contained torpedo dived gently overboard.

Denman, looking closely, saw it appear once on the surface, porpoiselike, before it dived to its indicated depth.

"The inhuman devil!" he commented, with gritting teeth.

A muffled report came from the depths. A huge mound of water lifted up, to break into shattered fragments and bubbles. Then these bubbles burst, giving vent to clouds of brown and yellow smoke; while up through the ventilators and out through the opened lower deadlights came more of this smoke, and the sound of human voices, screaming and groaning. These sounds were drowned in the buzzing of thousands of other voices on deck as men, women, and children fought their way toward the stern.

"Do you agree?" yelled Forsythe through the megaphone. "Do you agree, or shall we unload every torpedo we've got into your hull?"

Old Kelly had calmly marshaled the crew to the next torpedo, and looked up to Forsythe for the word. But it did not come.

Instead, over the buzzing of the voices, came the officer's answer, loud and distinct:

"We agree. We understand that your necks are in the halter, and that you have nothing to lose, even though you should fill every compartment and drown every soul on board this ship. So we will accede to your demands. We will fill one boat with the bullion and another with provisions, and cast them adrift. But do not fire again, for God's sake!"

"All right," answered Forsythe. "Bear a hand."

Breast to breast, the two craft charged along, while two boats were lowered to the level of the main deck, and swiftered in to the rail. Sailors appeared from the doors in pairs, each carrying a box that taxed their strength. There were ten in all, of a total weight of about 500 pounds; the value of such a quantity of gold is approximately $160,000. They slowly and carefully ranged them along the bottom of one of the boats, to distribute weight.

While this was going on, stewards and galley helpers were filling the other boat with provisions—in boxes, barrels, and packages. Then the word was given, and the boats were cast off and lowered, the tackles of the heavier groaning mightily under the strain.

When they struck the water, the falls were instantly let go; and, as the boats drifted astern, the tackles unrove their long length from the blocks, and were hauled on board again.

Forsythe stopped the engines, and then backed toward the drifting boats. As the destroyer passed the stern of the giant steamer, a shout rang out; but only Denman heard it above the buzzing of voices. And it seemed that only he saw Casey spring from the high rail of the mammoth into the sea; for the rest were busy grappling for the boat's painters, and Forsythe was looking aft.

When the painters were secured and the boats drawn alongside, Forsythe rang for half speed; and the boat, under a port wheel, swung away from the *Gigantia,* and went ahead.

"There is your man Casey," yelled Denman excitedly. "Are you going to leave him?"

Forsythe, now looking dead ahead, seemed not to hear; but Riley spoke from the hatch:

"Hold yer jaw back there, or ye'll get a passage, too."

With Casey's cries in his ears—sick at heart in the belief that not even a life buoy would avail, for the giant steamship had not stopped her engines throughout the whole transaction, and was now half a mile away, Denman went down to Florrie, obediently waiting, yet nervous and frightened.

He told her nothing of what had occurred, but soothed and quieted her with the assurance that they would be rescued soon.

CHAPTER XXV.

The engine stopped; and, climbing the steps to look forward, Denman saw the bridge deserted, and the whole ten surrounding an equal number of strong boxes, stamped and burned with official-looking letters and numbers. Farther along were the provisions; and a peep astern showed Denman the drifting boats.

The big *Gigantia* had disappeared in the haze that hid the whole horizon; but up in the western sky was a portent—a black silhouette of irregular outline, that grew larger as he looked.

It was a monoplane—an advance scout of a scout ship—and Denman recognized the government model. It seemed to have sighted the destroyer, for it came straight on with a rush, circled overhead, and turned back.

There was no signal made; and, as it dwindled away in the west, Denman's attention was attracted to the men surrounding the boxes; only Munson was still watching the receding monoplane. But the rest were busy. With hammers and cold chisels from the engine room they were opening the boxes of treasure.

"Did any one see that fellow before?" demanded Munson, pointing to the spot in the sky.

A few looked, and the others answered with oaths and commands: "Forget it! Open the boxes! Let's have a look at the stuff!"

But Munson spoke again. "Forsythe, how about the big fellow's wireless? We didn't disable it. He has sent the news already. What do you think?"

"Oh, shut up!" answered Forsythe irately. "I didn't think of it. Neither did any one. What of it? Nothing afloat can catch us. Open the box. Let's have a look, and we'll beat it for Africa."

"I tell you," vociferated Munson, "that you'd better start now—at full speed, too. That's a scout, and the mother boat isn't far away."

"Will you shut up, or will I shut you up?" shouted Forsythe.

"You'll not shut me up," retorted Munson. "You're the biggest fool in this bunch, in spite of your bluff. Why don't you go ahead and get out o' this neighborhood?"

A box cover yielded at this juncture, and Forsythe did not immediately answer. Instead, with Munson himself, and Billings the cook—insanely emitting whoops and yelps as he danced around for a peep—he joined the others in tearing out excelsior from the box. Then the bare contents came to view.

"Lead!" howled Riley, as he stood erect, heaving a few men back with his shoulders. "Lead it is, if I know wan metal from another."

"Open them all," roared Forsythe. "Get the axes—pinch bars—anything."

"Start your engine!" yelled Munson; but he was not listened to.

With every implement that they could lay their hands on they attacked the remaining boxes; and, as each in turn disclosed its contents, there went up howls of disappointment and rage. "Lead!" they shouted at last. "All lead! Was this job put up for us?"

"No," yelled Munson, "not for us. Every steamer carrying bullion also carries lead in the same kind of boxes. I've read of it many a time. It's a safeguard against piracy. We've been fooled—that's all."

Forsythe answered profanely and as coherently as his rage and excitement would permit.

Munson replied by holding his fist under Forsythe's nose.

"Get up on the bridge," he said. "And you, Riley, to your engines."

Riley obeyed the call of the exigency; but Forsythe resisted. He struck Munson's fist away, but received it immediately full in the face. Staggering back, he pulled his revolver; and, before Munson could meet this new antagonism, he aimed and fired. Munson lurched headlong, and lay still.

Then an uproar began. The others charged on Forsythe, who retreated, with his weapon at arm's length. He held them off until, at his command, all but one had placed his pistol back in the holster. The dilatory one was old Kelly; and him Forsythe shot through the heart. Then the pistols were redrawn, and the shooting became general.

How Forsythe, single-handed against the eight remaining men, won in that gun fight can only be explained by the fact that the eight were too wildly excited to aim, or leave each other free to attempt aiming; while Forsythe, a single target, only needed to shoot at the compact body of men to make a hit.

It ended soon with Hawkes, Davis, and Daniels writhing on the deck, and Forsythe hiding, uninjured, behind the forward funnel; while Riley, King, and Dwyer, the three engineers, were retreating into their engine room.

"Now, if you've had enough," shouted Forsythe, "start the engine when I give you the bells." Then he mounted to the bridge and took the wheel.

But, though the starting of the engines at full speed indicated that the engineers had enough, there was one man left who had not. It was Billings, who danced around the dead and the wounded, shrieking and laughing with the emotions of his disordered brain. But he did not fire on Forsythe, and seemed to have forgotten the animus of the recent friction.

He drifted aft, muttering to himself, until suddenly he stopped, and fixed his eyes on Denman, who, with gritting teeth, had watched the deadly fracas at the companion.

"I told you so. I told you so," rang out the crazed voice of Billings. "A woman aboard ship—a woman aboard ship. Always makes trouble. There, take it!"

He pulled his revolver and fired; and Denman, stupefied with the unexpected horror of it all, did not know that Florrie had crept up beside him in the companion until he heard her scream in conjunction with the whiz of the bullet through her hair. Then Denman awoke.

After assuring himself of the girl's safety, and pushing her down the companion, he drew his revolver; and, taking careful aim, executed Billings with the cold calmness of a hangman.

A bullet, nearly coincident with the report of a pistol, came from the bridge; and there was Forsythe, with one hand on the wheel, facing aft and taking second aim at him.

Denman accepted the challenge, and stepped boldly out of the companion. They emptied their revolvers, but neither did damage; and, as Forsythe reloaded, Denman cast a glance at a black spot in the southern sky.

Hurriedly sweeping the upper horizon, he saw still another to the east; while out of the haze in the northwest was emerging a scout cruiser; no doubt the "mother" of the first monoplane. She was but two miles away, and soon began spitting shot and shell, which plowed up the water perilously near.

"You're caught, Forsythe," called out Denman, pointing to the south and east. "Will you surrender before we're sunk or killed?"

Forsythe's answer was another shot.

"Florrie," called Denman down the companion, "hand me your gun and pass up the tablecloth; then get down that hatch out of the way. We're being fired at."

She obeyed him; and, with Forsythe's bullets whistling around his head, he hoisted the flag of truce and surrender to the flagstaff. But just a moment too late. A shell entered the boat amidships and exploded in her vitals, sending up through the engine-room hatch a cloud of smoke and white steam, while fragments of the shell punctured the deck from below. But there were no cries of pain or calls for help from the three men in the engine room.

Forsythe left the bridge. Breathing vengeance and raging like a madman, he rushed aft.

"I'll see you go first!" he shrieked. He fired again and again as he came; then, realizing that he had but one bullet left in his pistol, he halted at the galley hatch, took careful aim, and pulled the trigger for the last time.

There are tricks of the fighting trade taught to naval officers that are not included in the curriculum at Annapolis. Denman, his loaded revolver hanging in his right hand at his side, had waited for this final shot. Like a duelist he watched, not his opponent's hand, but his eye; and, the moment that eye gave him the unconcealable signal to the trigger finger, he ducked his head, and the bullet sped above.

"Now, Forsythe," he said, as he covered the chagrined marksman, "you should have aimed lower and to the right—but that's all past now. This boat is practically captured, and I'm not going to kill you; for, even though it would not be murder, there is no excuse in my conscience for it. Whether the boat sinks or not, we will be taken off in time, for that fellow over yonder is coming, and has ceased firing. But before you are out of my hands I want to settle an old score with you—one dating from our boyhood, which you'll perhaps remember. Toss that gun forward and step aft a bit."

Forsythe, his face working convulsively, obeyed him.

"Florrie!" called Denman down the hatch. "Come up now. We're all right."

She came, white in the face, and stood beside him.

"Off with your coat, Forsythe, and stand up to me. We'll finish that old fight. Here, girl, hold this gun."

Florrie took the pistol, and the two men discarded their jackets and faced each other.

There is hardly need of describing in detail the fist fight that followed. It was like all such, where one man is slightly the superior of the other in skill, strength, and agility.

In this case that one was Denman; and, though again and again he felt the weight of Forsythe's fist, and reeled to the deck occasionally, he gradually tired out his heavier, though weaker, adversary; and at last, with the whole weight of his body behind it, dealt a crashing blow on Forsythe's chin.

Denman's old-time foe staggered backward and fell face upward. He rolled his head to the right and to the left a few times, then sank into unconsciousness.

Denman looked down on him, waiting for a movement, but none came. Forsythe had been knocked out, and for the last time. Florrie's scream aroused Denman.

"Is the boat sinking, Billie?"

He looked, and sprang for a life buoy, which he slipped over Florrie's head. The bow of the boat was flush with the water, which was lapping at the now quiet bodies of the dead and wounded

men forward. He secured another life buoy for himself; and, as he donned the cork ring, a hail came from abeam.

"Jump!" it said. "Jump, or you'll be carried down with the wash."

The big scout ship was but a few lengths away, and a boat full of armed men was approaching.

Hand in hand they leaped into the sea; and Denman, towing the girl by the becket of her life buoy, paid no attention to the sinking hull until satisfied that they were safe from the suction.

When he looked, the bow was under water, the stern rising in the air, higher and higher, until a third of the after body was exposed; then it slid silently, but for the bursting of huge air bubbles, out of sight in the depths.

About a year later, Lieutenant Denman received a letter with a Paris postmark, which he opened in the presence of his wife. In it was a draft on a Boston bank, made out to his order.

"Good!" he exclaimed, as he glanced down the letter. "Listen, Florrie, here's something that pleases me as much as my exoneration by the Board of Inquiry." Then he read to her the letter:

"DEAR SIR: Inasmuch as you threw two life buoys over for us you may be glad, even at this late period, to know that we got them. The fight stopped when we hit the water, and since then Sampson and myself have been chums. I saw both buoys thrown and held Sampson up while I swam with him to the first; then, from the top of a sea, I saw the other, and, getting it, returned to him. We were picked up by a fisherman next day, but you will not mind, sir, if I do not tell you where we landed, or how we got here, or where we'll be when this letter reaches you. We will not be here, and never again in the United States. Yet we want to thank you for giving us a chance for our lives.

"We read in the Paris *Herald* of your hearing before the Board of Inquiry, and the story you told of the mess Forsythe made of things, and the final sinking of the boat. Of course we were sorry for them, for they were our mates; but they ought not to have gone back on Casey, even though they saw fit to leave Sampson and me behind. And, thinking this way, we are glad that you licked Forsythe, even at the last minute.

"We inclose a draft for five hundred and fifty dollars, which we would like you to cash, and pay the captain, whose name we do not know, the money we took from his desk. We hope that what is left will square up for the clothes and money we took from your room. You see, as we did not give Casey but a little of the money, and it came in mighty handy for us two when we got ashore, it seems that we are obligated to return it. I will only say, to conclude, that we got it honestly.

"Sampson joins with me in our best respects to Miss Fleming and yourself.

"Truly yours,

"HERBERT JENKINS."

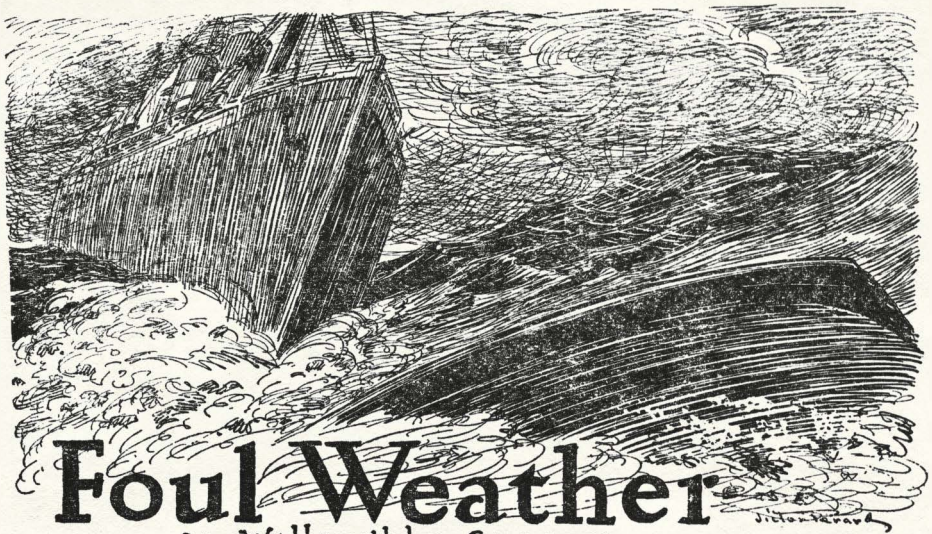
"Oh, I'm glad, Billie!" she exclaimed. "They are honest men, after all."

"Honest men?" repeated Denman quizzically. "Yet they stole a fine destroyer from Uncle Sam!"

"I don't care," she said stoutly. "I'm glad they were saved. And, Billie boy" —her hands were on his shoulders—"if they hadn't stolen that fine destroyer, I wouldn't be here to-day looking into your eyes."

And Billie, gathering her into his arms, let it go at that.

THE END.



Foul Weather

by Willoughby Speyers

Foul weather indeed, and you sit comfortably reading your morning paper. You note the ship news and the heading "Dangers to Navigation" and you read the brief report taken from some sailing ship's log or sent by wireless from some steamship at sea telling of a derelict floating in the route. What happens when a ship strikes a derelict? Mr. Speyers has written a vivid story of a steamship and a derelict at night off Cape Hatteras.

"WE want results!"

Stockbridge, president of the Caribbean Shipping Corporation, had thumped heavily on his mahogany desk. "We want deep-sea skippers who'll go through hell and high water. This is your first trip for us, and it depends on what you do as to whether or not it'll be your last. Any questions?"

Captain Hayes had shaken his head. He felt irritated at the attitude his new employer was showing, but he could not afford to talk back.

"I don't think you'll have any occasion to find fault with my work, sir," he had said. "I'll do my best."

He had walked out of the office, grimly determined to bring his new command in if it took a leg, and boarded a Brooklyn-bound car to the dock where the three-thousand-ton well-decked freighter was lying.

The *Klootchman* was plowing her way heavily toward New York through the gray welter south of Diamond Shoals. Her holds were full of coffee and hides from Curacao and Puerto Colombia, and ever since she had rounded Cape Maysi in the Windward Passage she had been bucking a persistent norther that cut her normal eleven knots down to a scant six. Hayes was worried, for she was already three days behind her schedule, and he did not relish the idea of another interview with Stockbridge.

He left the chartroom and climbed to the bridge, where he peered anxiously over the canvas wind-screen at the lead-colored sky ahead.

"Doesn't seem to be clearing any, sir," shouted the second mate in his ear, leaning close to avoid the wind. "How's the glass?"

"Same—twenty-nine and three hundredths," growled Hayes. "Hasn't changed since morning. We won't get the full strength of this blow until we clear the Cape, though."

The plunging bow smashed into a heavy sea as he spoke, and a solid sheet of spray drove aft. Both men ducked below the screen till it had passed, and Hayes backed down the ladder and entered the radio "shack."

"Call up the Diamond Shoals lightship, Sparks, and get a weather report," he directed. Nelson, the operator, glanced at his call book, started the motor generator, threw over the transfer switch and sent the call out over the tossing waters. In a few seconds the lightship answered, and in response to the *Klootchman's* request, sent the following:

"Barometer two nine zero three—wind NNW forty miles—sea heavy—visibility two miles."

Nelson acknowledged, shut off his set, and passed the message to the waiting skipper, who read it frowningly.

"Probably have to fight this damn gale all the way to Ambrose Channel," he muttered. "Be sure you get Arlington's report to-night."

"All right, sir," Nelson answered as the "old man's" stocky figure shouldered out through the door and back to the chart room.

As night came on the wind shifted more to the north. The seas were running steadily, thirty feet high from crest to trough as they marched down undeviatingly, their surging flanks laced in streaked patterns of white foam. The *Klootchman* was meeting them head on, and most of the time her bow was either buried in the side of a comber, with tons of green water sluicing over her forecastle and forward deck, or pointed high out over the crest of the next advancing wave. Twice each minute her nine-foot bronze propeller thrashed clear out of the water as the bow plunged down, and the watch engineer cursed as he throttled down the race of the screw. But every hour saw five more knots added to the day's run, and by ten o'clock that night they had cleared the Shoals and were headed northward on the last leg to New York.

At ten o'clock Nelson slipped on his head phones, tuned the receiver up to twenty-five hundred meters, and waited for the nightly weather report and press message from the great Arlington station at Washington. First came the spaced "dot—dot—dot" of the "time tick," which captains use to check up their chronometers, and then the weather-bureau forecast, covering the Atlantic coast from Newfoundland to Florida. Nelson's flying pencil took down the usual report, but following it came this:

"Obstruction warning — derelict schooner bottomside up reported fifty miles NNE Cape Hatteras at noon, drifting southward at three knots an hour. Dangerous to navigation."

Following this came a "Q R X three," signifying a three-minute pause, and Nelson climbed the ladder to the wheelhouse with the report. Corbett, the third mate, opened the forward slide of the binnacle, scanned the sheet by the feeble light from within, and stepped over to the voice tube that led downward to the captain's room.

"Arlington reports a derelict, sir, just about our position now. Better come up at once." He turned away from the tube and took the wheel from the quartermaster.

"Johanson, jump for'ard and have the bos'n send a man up the foremast to watch for a derelict—quick!" He reached for the engineroom telegraph lever and rang down for quarter speed as the half-dressed figure of the captain appeared in the wheelhouse. Nelson handed him the report without comment and turned to go down to his cabin.

The *Klootchman* was midway down the slope of a wave when without warning it seemed as though a gigantic hand had reached up and grasped the ves-

sel as in a vise. Nelson and the captain were flung against the bulkhead by the shock, and Corbett saved himself by clutching at the four-foot brass wheel. For an instant there was a dead silence. Even the wind appeared to have lulled momentarily, as if better to hear the muffled crunch of the bowplates as they collapsed under the terrific strain trying to oppose the resistance of the derelict's hull. Corbett mechanically rang down the engines, looked at Hayes, who was staring rigidly through the spray-dashed window of the wheelhouse into the driving darkness beyond, and laughed weakly.

The captain turned abruptly from the window. "Mister Corbett," he snapped, "go forward and find out the damage. Have the first and second come up here, and tell the bos'n to keep all hands ready. Nelson, go down and stand by to send out an S O S if we need it. I'll give you the position later."

The two men raced down the ladder together. The deck lights were still on, no water having as yet reached the dynamo, and in any event, the emergency set of storage batteries in the radio room would drive the wireless for several hours. Nelson entered the room, and started his motor generator tentatively. It hummed up to speed with reassuring quickness, and throwing off the switch, he stood in the doorway, awaiting orders.

From the bridge above came the hiss of a searchlight and a slender white lance shot through the night, throwing the ship's bow in sharp relief against the tossing blackness beyond. The derelict had been driven to one side by the impact, and Nelson caught a glimpse of its low glittering bottom as it drifted past into the night. The *Klootchman* barely had steerage way on her and as the mate ran back up the ladder to make his report, she began to roll heavily.

"Whole stem's caved in, sir," shouted Corbett. "Chips is sounding the well now to see how much water she's taking." The chief engineer came up closely behind the mate.

"There's no water in the fireroom yet, sir," he said, "but 'tis but a metter of meenutes till the 'midships bulkhead goes. I'm theenkin' it's best to blow her off and draw the fires noo, sir; leastways we won't have the boilers going up and carrying us weeth 'em." He looked appealingly at Hayes, and the latter nodded in agreement.

"Go ahead, Mister McRae," he ordered curtly. "Mister Carr, take what men you need and rig a sea anchor out of that trysail in the for'ard storeroom, and swing it out as quick as the devil lets you. Then pay out both anchors to the limit. Mister Corbett, get the second mate and try to get a tarpaulin over the bow as a collision mat." He turned abruptly and began to work out a rough estimate of the ship's location, as a sudden roar from the steam pipe announced that the chief engineer was releasing the pressure from the boilers.

Presently he beckoned to the waiting Nelson, and as the operator ran up the ladder Hayes yelled in his ear, above the overpowering thunder of the escaping steam, "Position sixteeen miles nor' by east Diamond Shoals lightship. Tell 'em we're drifting onto the Shoals. Rush!"

Nelson dived into the cabin, started his set, and with trembling fingers sent out the thrilling three dot—three dash —three dot distress signal broadcast over the ocean, adding the ship's name and position. Nervously he snapped over the transfer switch and strained his ears for an answering spark. There was an agonizing pause for a few seconds, and then the welcome note of the lightship's set hummed into his phones, followed by the high-pitched tones of the Beaufort and Norfolk stations.

All requested further details, and Nelson described the situation tersely, adding an urgent "Rush—rush" at the end. Beaufort acknowledged, saying that a revenue cutter was being sent out from that port, and from somewhere to the eastward a destroyer's singing spark announced that she was headed for the *Klootchman's* position.

Through the cabin ports Nelson saw the red glow of a Coston signal, shot up from the bridge in the hopes of attracting the attention of some nearby vessel. The shimmering light caught the tops of the waves as they rolled down on the helpless vessel, turning them to a blood color. Sullen roars from the bow as the stoppers were pulled out indicated that the anchors were swinging far below the hull, ready to catch at the first holding-ground. Nelson wondered if they would be able to stop the vessel's relentless drift onto the deadly shoals astern. He had read of anchor chains breaking under similar circumstances, and at each plunge of the wildly rolling hull, he shivered.

Amidships the black-gang gathered on the gratings above the silent engines, and discussed the accident in low tones. One coal passer exhibited a red burn on his arm, caused when the shock of the collision had hurled him against a hot steam pipe.

At intervals Nelson sent out the distress call, in the hope that some vessel nearer than the destroyer or the revenue cutter would pick up the message. Most ships, he knew, were at that time copying the Arlington press, on a longer wave length than he could transmit, and it was likely that after the press was finished, he might get in touch with some other coastwise ship. Hayes entered the room as he was finishing one of his calls, an abstracted frown creasing his forehead.

"How much time have we, captain?" the operator asked, forcing a smile as he spoke.

"At this rate, we'll drift onto the north end of the shoals in about three hours," he answered moodily. "Too late for that cutter to do anything—she'll pound to pieces in an hour, unless the anchors can hold her off." He looked at his watch for the third time in five minutes, and staggered out of the cabin as a comber battered against the port bow, tossing the ship sidewise a full thirty feet.

At the entrance he met McRae, who had come up from the fireroom.

"Captain," the engineer began awkwardly, "I'm theenkin' there's summat strange aboot that bulkhead for'ard of the boilers—I dinna ken just why; it may weell be that the coffee has swelled up wi' the water, and jammed again' the stanchions, but be that as it may, there's scarcelins a drop comin' past." He paused for a moment, and Hayes looked at him searchingly.

"Do you think there's a chance, McRae?" he asked, his voice trembling with eagerness as he leaned against the heavy door frame.

"I wouldna go so far as to say that," was the cautious response, "but I'm theenkin' that if there was a chance—and we had suffeecient steam—a mon could, wi' due precaution, run oot o' here stern first, to ease the pressure on the bulkhead, ye ken. I doot it's worth trying, leastways." He shifted uneasily and spat into the darkness over the rail.

"How long would it take to get up steam again?" the captain asked.

"An hour, more or less, if the men wull come—it's but a volunteer job, ye'll understand, and I'd not be ordering ma men below." None knew better than the grizzled chief what the fate of the men below would be if the bulkhead should suddenly give way and the rush of water jam them up against the hot furnaces.

Hayes pondered. Stockbridge would not thank him for the salvage bill if

another vessel towed him into port, and if he could get the *Klootchman* to Hampton Roads under her own power there would be that much, at least, to his credit. But it was an awful responsibility to take—that of the lives of the firemen, in case the worst did happen. And yet it was the only chance. Once the vessel touched the shoals, it would be a miracle if any escaped from that boiling surge that played about the twenty-mile radius from Cape Hatteras. Hayes drew a sharp breath and turned to the chief.

"Go ahead, Mister McRae. When you get a working pressure, let me know."

The Scotchman clambered down the ladder and hurried aft to the engineroom door, where most of the black gang was gathered. Swiftly he explained the situation and called for volunteers to man the coal scoops. More than half the men responded, eager to do anything that offered even a slight hope of relief from the danger astern of them. An oiler groped his way into the storeroom, returning with two oil lanterns, and, led by the chief, the party clambered down the steel ladders into the engineroom and forward to the muggy stokehold.

To Hayes on the bridge above came the distant clang of a furnace door, and a few moments later a scraping thrill ran through the ship's hull. One of the anchors had touched bottom. A minute later the vibration came again, ceased, renewed, and stopped with a slight jerk. The rolling of the ship increased, and Carr, the first mate raced back from the bows where he had been standing a vigilant watch.

"Both hooks holding, sir," he shouted as he swung up the ladder. "Port chain is taut and the other's picking up the strain."

Hayes nodded. "Bring that sea anchor aboard, and keep it ready to drop over again if the chains go. Get all the tarpaulins you can over the hole to hold the seas out. Chief thinks we can make Norfolk running astern, and if you can give them an hour down below to get up steam, we'll make a try at it."

Carr slid down the handrails as the captain finished, and disappeared in the darkness with a muffled "All right, sir," while Hayes made a quick trip to the chart room. The glass was rising; it had gone up three hundredths already, though there was no perceptible difference in the wind, and he felt more hopeful as she returned to the bridge.

There McRae found him seventy minutes later, watching the northern sky for a possible break in the clouds.

"We've a hunder and thirty pound up, sir," he reported. "'Tis enough for steerage way, and I'll have her poppin' in half an hour."

"Very good, chief. Stand by your engines, and put steam on the for'ard winches when you go down. We'll get under way at once." He sent the quartermaster after Carr, and went down to the wheelhouse.

"Get the anchors aboard," he directed, as the mate appeared. "Send a man aft as soon as you have them up, and stand by to pay out that sea anchor again if she needs it. The rudder may not be able to hold her in this sea, and we'll need a drag to keep her heading properly. And send Corbett aft to rig preventer tackle on the rudder—it'll need it."

The mate ran back to his post, and as the rumble of the capstan winch heralded the rising anchor, the electrics glowed into whiteness as McRae started up the dynamo. The starboard hook was soon brought aboard and lashed, but Hayes waited impatiently for the other. Carr hailed him from the bows.

"Anchor's fast, sir," he shouted faintly above the gale.

"Unshackle it, then, damn it!" roared the captain.

A moment later came a crack and a roar as the released chain tore through the hawse pipe. Hayes jumped to the telegraph and jerked the handle to "half astern." The pointer leaped in answer, and the *Klootchman* slowly gathered sternboard.

"Full astern" went the lever, and down in the clacking engineroom McRae pulled the throttle wide. The vessel's speed increased, and Hayes, peering out at the faintly phosphorescent wave 'crests, snapped "Hard aport.' The quartermaster spun over the wheel, and the *Klootchman* veered out to sea. A comber picked her up like a toy as she swung in the trough, and sent her reeling over at a forty-degree slant. She struggled back to an even keel in time to meet another sea which surged clear over her decks, crushing one of the lifeboats in its slings and sweeping the fragments overside. A third wave sent her rolling again till the end of the bridge dipped on the lee side. But under the drive of the reversed screw her stern gradually headed into the north, and a minute later she was on her course, her flat fantail smashing into the seas as she drew away from the unseen shoals, marked only by the distant glow of the lightship.

Hayes picked up the mouthpiece of the radio-room voice tube.

"Sparks, call off that revenue cutter," he said exultantly. "Tell 'em we're on our way."

Nelson started up his set and raised Beaufort and the destroyer, advising them to cancel his S O S. Then he went up to the wheelhouse. "Anything else, sir?"

"No, go below and turn in," said Hayes, turning to the glass. It was up to 29.12, and the wind was already beginning to drop.

When Nelson awoke, it was broad daylight. The sky had cleared, and the sea was almost calm. The *Klootchman* was backing along at a triumphant seven knots. He climbed to the bridge and silently offered Carr a cigarette. The mate took it with a grunt of acknowledgment.

"When will we hit Norfolk?" asked the operator.

"Norfolk, hell!" returned Carr. "The old man says he's goin' straight home, just to show the owners he's a deep-sea sailor!"

HOW LONG CAN A NAKED DIVER STAY UNDER WATER?

IN the Mediterranean off the coast of Tunis are the best known sponge beds, and here the sponge industry gives a living to many divers, mostly Greeks. Most of the work is done in diving suits, but there are many "naked" divers. The naked diver has a line around his middle and holds in his hand a heavy stone made fast to another line; the stone is necessary to carry him down to the bottom. The record for "naked" diving at the Tunisian sponge beds is four minutes under water at a depth of two hundred and ten feet—at least that is what is claimed.

SPEED OF THE *BLUENOSE*

IN the last race off Gloucester, Massachusetts, between the fishing schooners *Bluenose* and *Henry Ford,* the triangular course of forty miles was covered by the winner—the *Bluenose*—in less than five hours. On one leg, with wind and sea in her favor, the Canadian schooner logged fourteen knots, which is very fast for a fishing schooner and a true ship—not speaking of yachts built for speed in light and moderate winds and comparatively smooth water.

By Frank H. Shaw

A Steamboatman

You've all heard it, told by some man of the old regime, navy or merchant service—"We used to have wooden ships and iron men, and now we have iron ships and wooden men!" Like many other epigrams that get fixed in our civilization, it is but a half truth or quarter truth and the falseness is more harmful than a whole untruth. Mr. Shaw who writes this bonny cracking story, has known intimately the deck of the windjammer, as well as the steam liner and the tramp. When you have read the story, you will want to take up anew the old question—Were they better and braver men in the days of old?

IT demanded some courage to meet old "Bucko" Bateman on a matter of this sort, and Frensham was conscious of a sinking sensation in the neighborhood of his solar plexus as he opened the garden gate of The Moorings.

He had met the old skipper only once, so far as he could remember, and on that occasion the discussion had been more acrimonious than polite, for it had turned on the old theme of steamboat men as compared with proper sailors—the stick-and-string school, who trusted to God's good winds for their journeyings to all the corners of the world.

Captain Bateman, during the debate, summed up his arguments in biting phrases, in which he likened steamboat men, and especially liner men, to the contents of the cook's slush-tub or the final sweepings of long-fouled bilges.

Frensham poignantly remembered that day, and as he waited on the step, after applying himself to the knocker, he prayed that Captain Bateman might not recognize him. After all, the skipper was old, his memory unstable.

It was Bessie Bateman who opened the door to him, fortunately, and the sight of her bonny, flushed face, steeled him in his purpose. What was an old man's temper when there was Bessie in the offing; and Bessie had admitted, too, that there weren't any other male interests in her life beyond her father and John Frensham! Frensham, being above all things an opportunist, whisked the girl into the nearest open doorway and promptly kissed her. Meeting with no hostility he kissed her again.

"Well," he said triumphantly, "how about things?" A hand on either shoulder, he held her off to rejoice in her young loveliness, and that meant it was necessary to kiss her eyes separately, and her hair, and the tip of her irresistible nose, and so as a matter of course, to her lips again.

"You might as well make the most of me," Bessie declared, after she had struggled gaspingly free. "It will probably be the last time. He's in a raging temper this morning—I never saw him worse. He's *fearful!*"

"I'm surprised you put up with it. But it's hard luck that it should be his bad day, on this day of all others. However, it's best to get it over; but don't you go worrying about last times and things of that sort. I'm going to marry you with his permission, or without."

"Jack Frensham, you know very well that I would never, never, do anything of the sort without my dear daddy's permission. I've told you so."

"Then you don't care a bit; and—you told me that, as well. Women are deceivers and fickle as—as the devil. But I'll get his consent, so you needn't worry."

From farther within the quaint old house, that gave the impression of an ancient ship ashore, sounded a growing roar that reminded Frensham of titanic thunder. Some one in the background was demanding to know why his favorite pipe had been shifted from its appointed place, and the inference was that nothing less than the delinquent's head on a charger would appease his wrath.

"I—I think you'd better choose another time," Bessie whispered falteringly. "It's his liver, you know; and last night he was fretting about having retired from the sea. He's always worse after one of those times. Won't you go now, and come back afterward?"

"No; it's got to be now." Impossible to be afraid, with Bessie's dear, palpitating presence to steel a man's resolve. "I've to catch the afternoon train, and the *Tiberius* sails to-morrow; this is my last chance for *umpteen* months. And anything might happen while I'm away. You might forget me; marry another man—anything."

"Silly! As if I was ever likely to forget! But——"

Frensham squared his shoulders and licked the lips that had become a trifle parched.

"May I see your father, Miss Bateman?" he asked precisely; and after that there was nothing to be done save usher him into the old martinet's presence.

Bucko Bateman—he had earned his title fairly in days when the sea was a rougher school than it is to-day—snorted and blew through his beloved and recovered pipe. A piercing screech answered the action.

"Well, and what the devil might you want?" he demanded ferociously. "Eh? What? Why—why! You're the impertinent young puppy——" Bessie fled and closed the door behind her, but in her going she left a waft of delicate perfume behind, and it might have been that that stiffened Frensham's determination.

"Sit down, sir," he said firmly; "and don't risk apoplexy." He might have made a fairer beginning, but he had never been renowned for tact.

"Apoplexy be damned! Don't you go trying to teach me what to do and what not to do! Well, what d'you want? Come to apologize for daring to tell me to my face that a windjammer sailor was as much use nowadays as—confound you, sir! I don't remember precisely what you said, but it was infamous. What d'you want?"

Frensham fidgeted. "I want to marry Bessie," he blurted out after an agonized pause.

Captain Bateman went the color of beet-root. He had been making to seat himself, but he checked that intention and stood upright again. He ran a finger round his exceedingly loose collar and made noises suggestive of imminent strangulation. A little fleck of froth appeared on his lips and ran down his beard. In a choking, rasping voice that

was suggestive of a saw's teeth on steel, he managed to articulate:

"Wha-at? You go to——" He particularized the destination with adjectives suitable to his mood. But the stout courage of desperation came to the soul of John Frensham in that moment of stress, and when it was possible to make himself heard, he began again:

"I want to marry Bessie. We're in love with one another. I've got a fairly decent position, as chief officer of the *Tiberius;* and I'll be given a command before so very long. Not of a liner, perhaps, but of one of the big cargo boats. I've got some money saved, too, enough to set Bessie up as your daughter should be set up——" He considered this a happy inspiration.

He was now wound up to eloquence; but Bucko Bateman had no intention of being spellbound. He thrust himself past the young man and dramatically opened the door.

"Get out!" he said; "before I hurt you!"

It was only with the utmost difficulty that he contrived to eject the words which died away in throaty hoarseness. But Frensham stood his ground. There were men who said that he had never lacked pluck in hours of crises.

"You're going to hear what I have to say," he stated; "if I've to floor you with your own poker and tie you up with the curtain cords. And I'm a bigger man than you; younger and stronger. Listen patiently. I want to marry Bessie. I intend to marry Bessie, because I don't think you're the man to stand in the way of your girl's happiness, and Bessie cares—she's said so, several times."

Captain Bateman gulped, and his eyes protruding, said: "My girl couldn't care for a—for a—steamboat man. She couldn't; it's not in her to do it. If a daughter of mine so far forgot herself as to do it, I'd—I'd keelhaul her! Now, go, before I throw something at you—something heavy!"

"What's your objection to me?" asked Frensham, not going, but planting himself more firmly on his feet. "As a husband for Bessie, I mean. That is—apart from being a steamboat man! I'm fit, and I'm young, and I've got a good future as a sailor. I'm getting more pay as chief of the *Tiberius* than ever a windjammer skipper got."

He would have said more but that Bucko Bateman's roar of wrath drowned him out, as a lean gray Atlantic comber might drown out a staggering collier's galley fire.

"A sailor! You? You're not a sailor, you're a steamboat man. A—a—dash it! you're a dandy-fine, gold-laced ship conductor, that's you! You know as much about going to sea as a cow does about handling a musket. A sailor—you! Lord keep me sane till I tell this whippersnapping, sextant-handling, passenger-patting, baggage-checking, fine-weather son of a Pullman-car porter what he really is!"

And for counted seconds, the raging veteran delved deeply into the bowels of his sea vocabulary for an adequate sufficiency of expletives to do him justice. He warmed to his work as he proceeded. Out of a dark and awful experience he created poignant similes. He inferred that no steamboat sailor ought to be allowed out of sight of land, because such a one did not know his ear from breakfast-time. Twice over he said it all, with amendments such as occurred to his fancy—that picturesque fancy of the deep-waterman which nobly answered to his demands.

"I'd rather see that girl of mine blistering in Tophet than married to you!" he panted, in an interval for breath. When he became inarticulate and could only wheeze and point threateningly to the door, Frensham licked his lips.

"What good's a windjammer man nowadays?" he demanded. "In ten

years there'll be none of your old stick-and-string anachronisms anywhere, except down in Gibraltar Bay, serving as coal hulks; and even there they're using condemned steamers. Besides, I served my time in sail, but I cleared out as soon as I'd got my tickets, because there wasn't any future there for an ambitious man. And you can do more with a steamer than you can with a sailing ship. You'd have to comb Fiddler's Green to find a pukka sailing-ship man nowadays. Who in God's name'd stick out that sort of life when there was a chance of bettering himself?"

"It's a life that breeds men!" Captain Bateman croaked, "not a pack of collar and cuffs, patent-leathered bridge-ornaments that are scared of getting their pretty feet wet or their hands dirtied. But that's enough of it—get out! Why, you can't even swear! You go and *ask* a deckhand to do a job of work for you these days; *ask* him! I used to hit a man with a belaying-pin and *tell* him, and if he jibbed, I hit him again. I knew something of the elements of discipline. See here, you! I've gone for three weeks on raw salt beef and biscuit, and only brackish water to drink. You men in liners grouse—that's your dandy word, isn't it?—if you don't get seven courses to luncheon. Oh, go away!"

"Now that you've got all that off your chest, sir," Frensham said politely, "are you going to give your consent to my marrying Bessie?"

"Eh, what? D'you want more? There's plenty where that came from. My daughter, sir, will marry according to my pleasure—and you don't please me. I've seen very few men I've disliked so much as you. Very, very few. Damned few! None! Have you got that? I've always been skipper of my own ship, and I'll be skipper in my own house. Bessie—Miss Bateman—will marry the man I choose for her; and he won't be a——"

Beginning at the beginning, he repeated all he had already said, and ran a row of painted ports round the whole magnificent declamation. Frensham left the parlor with its ship models and its terrible picture of the *Welcome Home* weathering the great hurricane of '99; its picture of the *Happy Warrior* at anchor off Garden Reach, and its picture of the *Star of Devon* entering the Golden Gates full-sailed; together with the dried shark's tail, the Malay krisses, the swordfish sword, and the carved coconuts from Pitcairn, and all the other oddments that told silently the story of Bucko Bateman's sea-life.

The disheveled and smutted general servant let him out by the front door; she was still pallid and tallowish of complexion, after a recent disciplining. A full-leafed shrub intervened between the parlor window and the front gate, and from behind this Bessie stepped.

"Was he very terrible?" she asked, as Frensham's arm went around her trim waist.

"Pretty bad. He doesn't seem to like me. We'll have to run away and get married on the sly, sweetheart—when I come back from the next voyage. That's only six months. How you manage to put up with it, I don't know."

Bessie shook her head, pursing her tempting lips, which Frensham promptly kissed because it seemed the only thing to do, and, also, he needed some sort of a stimulant after his recent grueling. Opposition to his suit had the effect of quickening his affection for the girl, he discovered; Bessie, forbidden, appeared even more desirable than Bessie potential.

"I couldn't—it would break his heart," she whispered. "I'm afraid it's altogether hopeless. You've only seen the worst of him, but he's a darling."

"Well, you're only nineteen yet," Frensham said, with the sublime optimism of the man wholeheartedly in love. "When you're twenty-one you

can please yourself. And if a girl loved a man as she's said she does—no, it's no use pretending, you did say it—she's going to make that man happy. It's her duty," he averred solemnly, and kissed the girl's puckered brows.

But when he caught the afternoon train his high optimism had somewhat abated. It was a thousand pities that Bessie Bateman was troubled with such a fatty enlargment of the conscience, he thought. Here she was, absolutely under the thumb of that old tyrant of a father of hers, afraid even to think her own thoughts or feel her own feelings; a female slave and a chattel.

Something came running from the station entrance, something that he whisked into his compartment and effusively embraced; a fluttering, sweet-scented something that raised moist, warm lips to his and clung to him until the guard had blown his whistle the second time.

"He went to sleep, and so I was able to get away," panted Bessie. "Good-by; and—I *do* care. But—can't you change over to a sailing ship?"

"I'd change over to a catamaran if there was any chance of getting you," said Frensham fervently; "but a fat lot of good that would do. You'll have to go, unless you're going to risk it."

"Why, I've not even got a hat on," said Bessie, and leaped for the platform as the train was starting.

"What's that, out there?" asked Captain Tollemache, of the *Tiberius,* wiping the object glasses of his binoculars. He had just come onto the liner's bridge after a fitful two or three hours below on the settee of his deck cabin. High-flung spindrift rattled on his sou'wester as he spoke, and the roar of the gale whipped the words from his lips mockingly. Frensham, his arm locked about an awning stanchion, was already raking the newly revealed horizon with his glasses.

"I've been watching her ever since daybreak," he bellowed; anything less than a shout must have passed unheard. "Looks like a windjammer of sorts—there's the muck down again!"

Storm fog closed down in blinding swirls about the laboring *Tiberius;* so that even the cowering figure of the forecastle lookout vanished from view. A high comber lifted itself menacingly abreast of the chattering bridge and hesitated, as though looking for a vulnerable spot on which to administer its blow. It fell inboard in thunderous enormity; and the forward deck became a very maelstrom of devastating water that lashed and thudded and boiled and hissed. Wash ports clattered as they did their best to deal with the inundation; the liner's twin propellers raced viciously, for the *Tiberius* was now standing on her nose as though making ready for the ultimate dive into the North Atlantic's deeps.

It was about as raw and menacing a dawning as the heart of sailorman could wish for; for the gale, that had gathered force ever since the *Tiberius* passed the Straits of Gibraltar, was reaching its extremely spiteful climax in increasing squalls, with sleet and snow driven down on the breast of the shrieking wind. The month was February, when the Atlantic remembers all its ancient quarrels with such folk as use the sea, and endeavors to wipe out old debts.

"We're in for the devil's own delight of a dusting!" pronounced Captain Tollemache as he braced himself to the ship's sickening plunges. "Who'd sell a farm and go to sea? We're making two miles of leeway for every mile we're making ahead, too, so there'll be wigs on the green when the coal bill's audited. Who cares? How'd you like to be in a windjammer at this present instant, Frensham?"

"I've been thanking all sorts of gods that I'm a steamboat man," gasped the *Tiberius'* chief officer. "We'd be about

goosewinging the main lower topsail now and wondering whether we'd get the lifeboat covers off before the old hooker went down the locker. There she is again!"

A sudden flurry of snow and sleet had blared down upon them, with a wind behind that threatened to pick the *Tiberius* up bodily and throw her like a leaf to leeward. But as the roystering gust passed, it left a clearance in the mist, and there, plain to behold, was a sorry something that plunged and wallowed and cavorted like a maniac suffering from acute seasickness. Even yet it was nothing more than a blur; a patch of misshapen darkness against the quick brightening of the horizon, but to the sea-trained eyes beholding, it possessed both form and meaning.

"Derelict, eh?" mentioned Captain Tollemache. "A windjammer that's got her gruel!"

"Windjammer, yes, sir—derelict—not so sure."

The mist thickened about the *Tiberius* in baffling eddies. Now it was barely possible to see the summits of her smoke-belching funnels; her forecastle was concealed, and the boat decks ran away and disappeared in a grim yellow density. But the two men on the liner's bridge could still discern each other's faces, and in reply to an expression on Frensham's, Captain Tollemache nodded.

"Decent thing to do," he growled; and the chief officer tacked to the wheelhouse. The steam wheel spun smoothly, and the lubber's line flickered from point to point in the compass bowl. "Steady, so," Frensham said to the quartermaster. "That'll about do it." And when the next clear came, the object was directly ahead.

"I don't see any signals," announced Tollemache, working away with his binoculars. "She must be derelict. Crew picked up by something passing, eh? Left her to go at her own time?"

The sodden hulk ahead presented a problem. It was a ship, or something that had once been a ship; and it appeared in sorry case. Its canvas was gone with the exception of a few fragments that stood out straight on the storm's bosom like steel plates; one of its masts was also gone. From time to time the dark fabric of the woundy hull disappeared clean from view beneath terrible cascades of white and roaring foam.

But both the watchers knew the enormous tenacity of a ship. A landsman must have said that this pitiful hulk was already doomed; a sailor realized that she might still contain battling men, whose pluck had refused the abandonment of hope.

"Looks like some sort of a flag aft," said Frensham.

"Don't think so—bit of canvas, if you ask me, Mister Mate. Still, we'll see. But isn't it one hell of a day for boat work?"

Maybe it was knowledge of the fact that the wreck was a sailing ship that sent Frensham's thoughts away from the battling *Tiberius* to a small, curious house known as The Moorings. Whatever the cause, the effect was that he found himself thinking very strongly of Bessie Bateman. That overwhelmed thing out there in the seaway was the sort of craft Bucko Bateman wanted his daughter's husband to command. Consequently Bucko Bateman was a fool and the father and mother and remote ancestor of a fool. As if any sane man would choose that sort of existence to the safety and comfort of a luxuriously appointed liner, with a couple of hundred well-to-do saloon passengers stowed away behind her storm doors and not allowed on the wave-washed decks under any circumstances whatever!

At seven bells Frensham would be relieved by a capable officer holding an extra master's ticket, and he would go

down to his well-warmed, bone-dry cabin, where hot coffee in abundance would be awaiting him; there he would strip and indulge in a steaming hot bath and a change of clothing, all damp undergarments being carefully dried by his steward on the radiators, in preparation for such a breakfast as the best West End hotels couldn't beat.

For eight hours afterward he would be to all intents and purposes his own master; able to converse with charming women and interested men, to read, to play cards, to carry on life as it is lived ashore. And for doing this he was receiving more pay, probably, than ever Bucko Bateman received even in his most prosperous days. The *Tiberius'* holds held three times as much cargo as any sailing ship had ever done in the world's history; and she was transporting the stuff at three times the speed of which the best of windjammers was capable.

"To the devil with windjammers!" he thought.

"It wouldn't be right to go on without making sure," boomed Captain Tollemache in Frensham's ear.

"We've *got* to make sure, sir," said the man who had been priding himself on his present lot. "Shall I ease down toward her?"

But it was the best part of an hour before the liner was within decent distance of the wreck, for the run of the seas delayed her, and the furious racing of her emerging screws meant the constant slowing of her engines.

It had been a somewhat turbulent hour in the passing, for the storm had apparently made up its mind to show these presumptuous liner men what it could do if really warmed up to its job. The foredeck of the *Tiberius* was gaunt and bare as a bleached bone; her ventilators were flattened, her spare anchors were shifted on their beds. For the most part she had given an excellent imitation of a half-tide rock.

"Derelict," Captain Tollemache pronounced, after close scrutiny.

"Not so sure, sir—looks like a man lashed to the wheel-grating, there. We've got to make sure."

The *Tiberius'* captain laughed. "From the way you're talking one'd think you *wanted* a bit of boat work."

Now, a great bond of genuine friendship existed between senior and junior; and when witnesses were not present, Tollemache usually unbent from the dignity required of him in his dealings with subordinates. The two had been shipmates before, one as third mate and the other as second, when the barriers of discipline were not so high and thick as now they were supposed to be.

"I don't want to go off to her, but —it's possible, isn't it?" asked Frensham. "I mean—with a drop of oil, and you giving me a decent lee. And there *might* be a chance of doing something."

"If you're counting on salvage so that you can set that girl of yours up with a car and sables, you've missed it, old chap—we've got the mails and we can't do anything but save life. Towing is out of the question."

"I wasn't thinking of towing. But I——"

"Of course, we'll investigate. Think of the fine silver teaset I'll get if we pull it off! And you, who'll do the work, will get a pair of binoculars. Well, isn't it time we set about it?"

Frensham took this as an order, and blew the whistle he took from his pocket. A boatswain's mate appeared, blown up to the bridge like a leaf along a lane. He was bidden to sound the hands, to discover which were likely to volunteer for the exceedingly risky boat work pending, and to bring such along to the bridge. The rest were to devote themselves to preparing one of the starboard libeboats. The carpenter and his mate were to station themselves at appointed places with drums of the

thickest oil carried by the ship and, at a signal, permit that oil to trickle forth upon the very troubled highway that would reach between sound ship and battered ship.

"She's not been abandoned in her own boats, anyway," Captain Tollemache stated when Frensham returned to his side. "Either her people are still aboard or else they have been picked up by something passing. Give her a rouser on the whistle."

But repeated blasts on the mighty siren failed to evoke an awakening of interest aboard the wreck; and explosive rockets, bursting high with mighty detonations, had a like result.

"Don't know whether it's worth risking it," pondered Tollemache.

"I'm willing to go, sir," replied Frensham.

He hardly knew what impulse was driving him to the venture, unless it was that in a vague, undefined way, he imagined the ultra-critical father of the girl he loved might consider this a worthy action on the part of a despised steamboat man. It would show old Bucko Bateman that his daughter's suitor was not precisely the starched, no-good dandy he credited him with being; too, Bessie would be pleased—afterward. And a man had to do something, if he loved a girl and if his case were as hopeless as Frensham's appeared to be from Bessie's scanty letters. The last one even said that Captain Bateman had firmly refused to permit any further correspondence between the two.

But in the main there was no opportunity for definite and coherent thought. The beat of hurrying wind and the incessant thresh of spray and whole water, stunned men, dazed them, left them to rely more on instinct than considered judgment. There is a vast amount of physical and mental fatigue engendered by a storm, as all sailormen know, so that the brain becomes atrophied and dull; and only long training drives the muscles to action.

Anyhow Frensham felt that it was up to him to make the attempt. And if a fellow who was getting the best out of the sea, couldn't help fellows who'd got the wrong end of the stick to hold, it was a pity.

"Try your luck, then, old chap," said Tollemache. "We'd better let the passengers out, if they feel like it." Being a conscientious shipmaster, even in this hour of peril, he had an eye to the company's interest. Passengers passed the good word along; and it wouldn't do the company any harm when it became known that a daring rescue had been effected at the very height of a heavens' hard gale.

"There's a plenty volunteers, sir," the boatswain's mate reported. "Them D. B. S.'s is all ready an' willin'."

"Ah, I'd forgotten them," Frensham said. In her steerage accommodation the *Tiberius* carried a motley assortment of men of the sea—Distressed British Seamen, as they are officially called; men whose ships had paid them off in foreign ports, and whose means compelled them to apply to their consuls for relief. There were oddments of all sorts and all nationalities, but all had served under the Red Ensign on their last official voyage. "Well, I'll choose a few of both lots, so there'll be no ill-will."

The men were eager to go. They knew Frensham for a good man in a boat, cool, level-headed, firm of purpose; further, they possessed that excellent spirit which characterizes the deep-water seaman; the desire to lend a succoring hand to fellow-seamen in distress.

So that the *Tiberius'* passengers reached the sleeted decks in time to see the lifeboat trudging dangerous across a clamorous void toward a draggled, disheveled, wallowing tragedy that had once been a gallant ship; and they raised

a heartening cheer. Frensham did not hear the approval; he was too busy scanning the wreck for a point of vantage. Also, he had to watch the doings of the heavy boat, as it towered upon the summits of the swells which were as high as the waves themselves had been before the oil caressed them into quietude, although their crests were no longer broken and furious.

The slightest mistake might easily mean disaster, and it demanded the exertion of all his skill to prevent the boat from swinging beam-on to the high-piled and hurrying water. Times were when he deemed the completion of his task impossible; but he kept at it, spurring on the men at the oars with praises and curses and threats all mingled savagely into incoherence. But the mixture possessed the necessary bite, and presently the boat ran under the stern of the wreck and into boisterous havenage under her lee.

But no single face showed above her breached bulwarks, and no single figure in her loosened rigging. There was, however, a tangle of ropes hanging over her lee side, and a spar or two hammered at her plating. Frensham, being thorough in all his undertakings, drove the boat alongside and, issuing orders, scrambled aboard.

The ship was derelict, he realized, after a quick survey. Every space devoted to her complement was deserted; there were evidences the fabric had been abandoned in haste. A wan and draggled cat welcomed him with piteous mewings as he continued his search. He picked it up in his arms and gentled it, dodging the whole water that incessantly crashed aboard. A rat scampered into view, and disappeared again. Frensham went below, sensing the "feel" of the ship when once he was out of the merciless drive of the storm.

The purpose was not yet half-formed in his mind, but it was taking shape—it was taking shape. Catching sight of his face in the mirror over the captain's washstand, he saw that it was grimed above its whiteness and that his jaw was set like a cliff. Also, he realized that his heart was beginning to throb quicker than the normal.

"By holy Jerusalem!" he ejaculated, as the full-formed plan slid into his mind. "I wonder——"

Through the terrific uproar overhead he heard the detonation of a rocket and the bray of the *Tiberius'* siren; Tollemache was getting impatient. He sprang to the deck and down to the boat.

"Give way!" he thundered; "she's derelict. Back to the ship!" The cat had crept under his oilskin and was nestled there in comfort. It was still there, when after crossing furious fathoms of water to leeward of the derelict, water that had not been smoothed with oil, for once the boat had gained the wreck's lee, Tollemache, according to sea custom, had steamed to leeward to pick up the boat on her return, he gained the *Tiberius'* bridge and made his report.

"Hard lines—after all your trouble!" Tollemache said. "Well, we'll get the boat in and—eh? What? You didn't hit anything with your head, did you?"

"I'm quite sane, sir," said Frensham, and grinned with his mouth, though his eyes were steady with purpose. "Give me this chance, sir—please! Those D. B. S.'s will likely volunteer—they're sick of eating their heads off; windjammer men, most of 'em, too. And a few of our own crowd won't be missed. I don't believe that ship's sinking: her crowd panicked and left her when they got a chance, that's all. She wouldn't have lived through this last flurry if she'd been done for."

Tollemache shook his head.

"Too big a risk," he said. And then, under the lee of the weather-dodger, Frensham gave lucid reasons why he

desired to take the risk, providing he could get men to accompany him.

It would be his own fault if naught came of the venture; no blame would rest on any one's shoulders but his own. But he believed the ship was seaworthy enough to be handled and taken into port by a determined crew who were not afraid of a bit of risk. Then there would be salvage, in which Tollemache would share, also the owners of the *Tiberius*. There would be no extra work; there was a sufficiency of officers aboard the liner to take Frensham's place. There was a fighting chance of success, too.

"And you're married yourself—you know what a girl can mean to a man," Frensham urged. "Can't you see? It's my chance to put myself right with Bucko Bateman. He had me on the mat for not being a windjammer man; but if I can worry home with an abandoned windjammer—he hasn't a leg to stand on. You know what a fellow's willing to do for a girl he cares a lot about!"

After further demur, Captain Tollemache threw up his hands in surrender.

"Go, if you like—and if you can get any other damned idiots to go with you," he said; but he threw a sudden arm about Frensham's shoulders as he gave the permission, nevertheless.

Frensham dived down to the deck below, where most of the *Tiberius'* people were clustered, wondering why the liner remained slowed down and her boat still in the water. The D. B. S.'s were among these interested watchers.

To the combined assembly, Frensham made his appeal. There was a crewless ship that, in his belief, was yet seaworthy; it was possible to patch her up and work her into port. A risky job; he did not attempt to deny that fact. But for such as brought her home there would be fat pickings—also the satisfaction of knowing they'd succeeded where other men had failed. And the D. B. S.'s were sick to the soul of eating the bread of idleness and earning no pay!

"Right you are, my sons; I thought you'd come. All windjammer men make ready," said Frensham, and went back to the bridge to report that he had got his crew. Several of the *Tiberius'* men pleaded that they, too, had served in sail; some of her black squad stated that if they knew more about shoveling coal than handling masts and yards, they were yet willing to learn a new trade, because anything for a change of scenery appealed strongly to them.

"Well, good-by, old chap; and I wish you luck," said Tollemache. "I think you are God's own fool, but—I wish I'd your chance! You can keep the boat until you're ready to hand her over to the company again. Good-by, and cheerio!"

An hour later, standing straddled on the water-washed poop of the *Windflower,* Frensham watched the smoke of the *Tiberius* disappear finally from view below the northern horizon. The sea appeared very big and lonely, and he fancied that his first command was in more parlous plight than he had originally imagined. He gathered his assorted crew about him—they had been inspecting forecastles and galleys and suchlike places and massed them on the poop.

"We've got the devil's own delight of a job in front of us," he informed them. "But it's a case of do it or drown. Now, then, get busy!"

He asked questions, discovered two men with officers' tickets; these he appointed mate and second mate. He discovered also a Norwegian carpenter, a cook, a sailmaker—the ship was sufficiently manned. Then they got busy and entered into a seemingly interminable nightmare of savage and pitiless battling against a foe that showed no

disposition to make allowances for their mad chivalry.

There was much and very much to be done, Frensham found after a survey. The joy of the whole matter to him now was that, on a windjammer's deck, it was as though the intervening steam-years had never been. Old knowledge came pouring into his brain, ancient memories revived with blessed clarity. A sailorman may easier forget the wife of his bosom than the lore of his younger years; and Frensham had learned the craft of the sea in sailing ships where a man must work his fingers to the bone if he would survive.

The gale, which had seemed to ease a little during the boarding of the *Windflower* blew up again with increased ferocity, and Frensham drove his men to the construction of a hasty sea anchor from the overside wreckage and certain spare spars and sails, with a spare stream anchor to weight its apex, and led the construction ahead at the end of the stoutest hawser the ship possessed.

Then he had the pumps examined and manned; and through the whole of a blinding night, with the fabric squelching and groaning, heaving herself to roaring wave-tops wearily, plunging sluggishly into yawning abysses, the men of the *Windflower* pumped in alternate watches. Realizing the worth of a driving force beyond the normal desire for conquest, Frensham kept them lavishly supplied with food and steaming coffee, well laced with grog; for the ship's store-lockers were well stocked.

He toiled himself with the best of them, setting the pace, for he was determined to win out in this biggest battle of his life if ordinary endurance could achieve victory. It was slavish, killing work at the best; for they were compelled to pump while up to their waist in chilly brine, and the ragged, boisterous motion of the ship rendered it a matter of much difficulty to hang on; but the twin drivers of fear for themselves and desire for conquest kept them going, and with the dawn the newly appointed carpenter ran the sounding rod into the wells, and reported that they were gaining on the merciless inflow.

Meals and coffee were cooked on the cabin stove, for the cabin floor was not more than a foot under water, while the deck galley was a ruin, swept constantly by big water. Those actually off duty slept where they could find something approaching dryness.

The following day brought a treacherous easement that lulled them to a belief that they had already won out; but the ensuing night caught them unawares and undid all they had already done. It was during the middle watch of this night that certain of the D. B. S.'s began to grumble, and Frensham, wakened from a fitful sleep in damp canvass on top of the creaking chart house, turned from a cheerful; encouraging friend to a bitter, savage, driving enemy. Where cajolery failed he used sheer brute force, and backed his threats with the muzzle of a menacing revolver. He stormed among them like a runaway traction engine going down a steep hill; and, resentful but cowed, they flung themselves on the pump-handles and bell-ropes and toiled as they had never, perhaps, toiled in their lives before.

So the ending of that amazing gale found the *Windflower* still afloat; more disheveled than ever, perhaps, but astonishingly above water.

"Now we'll start in to get some jury rig on her," said Frensham, "and work her into port. What's happened has been just a holiday for you men; we'll begin the serious work at once."

Driven by him the men roused up spare sails from the lockers and bent them. With the ship hove-to under her main topsails, they got the sea anchor

aboard and stripped it, so that the spars composing it were available; and after forty-eight hours' purgatory they had a jury foremast shipped, together with a topmast and a yard that would hold a said crossed. They occupied their trifling leisure in pumping. Three times during this period greedy tramps ran down and signaled, offering assistance in the way of a tow. These offers Frensham sternly waved aside. The longer he continued at this task the more his determination grew. He began to forget his desire to prove to Bucko Bateman that the art of seafaring had not died with the passing of masts and yards, and labored mainly for the sake of his personal honor and by reason of his lifelong vendetta with the sea.

Came one glorious day when the carpenter reported the wells bone dry. The *Windflower* was then, full-rigged, clothed in improvised canvas from her forlorn trucks to her stripped waterways, bowling along at a fair five knots, the wind a point abaft the beam. Frensham summoned the men aft and broached a fresh case of whisky in honor of the occasion, and talked happily of salvage money enough to fill a man's every pocket. Toward evening the *Windflower* was spoken by the *Tiberius,* outward bound.

"Going strong," Frensham signaled back.

Tollemache infringed regulations to the extent of stopping and lowering a boat and dispatching a full cargo of such comforts as might appeal to the souls of hard-worn men. The crew of the *Windflower* gave the liner a cheer as she gathered in her boat and scuttled away at a steady seventeen knots. Frensham availed himself of this opportunity to obtain his position and to check the chronometers which he had wound and set at hazard.

The *Windflower* encountered another gale as she flogged farther north. It ridded her of some of the fresh canvas that had been set, and lifted the fore topmast out of her, it also reopened some of the worst leaks; and all the bitter work was to do over again. But they did it, because at the head was a white-faced, square-jawed man with steady, merciless eyes, who demanded that they should, to a man, do a man's full work, and himself set the example.

The wind was fair and blowing a steady ten knots when they sighted the Lizard and headed for Falmouth. Without availing himself of the services of a single one of the many offering tugs, Frensham sailed his first command into a safe berth and let go her anchors in a running moor. Then he coiled down on the still-damp cushions of the chart house settee and slept the clock round.

Frensham opened the gate that led to the front door of The Moorings, and his heart quickened its normal beat.

"Oh!" said Bessie, who opened to his summons. "You? Why—I thought ——" As before Frensham whisked her into the nearest open doorway and kissed her hungrily.

"That's good," he averred. "Now, can I see your father?"

"He's in a terrible mood this morning," Bessie said, her color coming and going very fascinatingly. "Listen!" From the distance came stentorian roarings concerning a mislaid pipe. "I'm surprised you dare come here," Bessie went on, as Frensham kissed her again.

"You wait a bit," he said, and placing her aside he followed the direction of the bellowings. Captain Bateman looked up as his unannounced visitor entered.

"Well, I'm damned!" he gasped. "You here again?"

"Shouldn't be surprised if you are damned," quoth Frensham. "Yes, I'm here again. Same reason, too—I want your permission to marry Bessie." He hitched the book he carried

under his arm into a more comfortable position.

Captain Bateman commenced to say similar things to those he had said eight months before. Patiently Frensham heard him out, and then:

"I take it that your objection to me is that I'm not a windjammer sailor? I'm too much of a gilt-edged dandy, eh? Well, what d'you make of this?" He shifted the volume he had carried to the table and opened it. He placed a finger on a certain line of writing on a certain page.

"That's your signature, isn't it?" he asked firmly.

Bucko Bateman drew nearer to the table stealthily, and surveyed the open page; as he read his eyes commenced to protrude. "Where the devil did you get that?" he asked.

"What—the official log of the *Windflower?* I found it in her cabin after I boarded her. Her skipper was in such a hurry to leave that he forgot his official log book. I reckoned that he must have been scared; only a very scared man would leave the most important documents of the lot behind. I'll admit I was surprised, though, when I saw your signature. I thought you'd swallowed the anchor finally, and definitely settled down ashore."

Captain Bateman gulped thickly. "A man can please himself," he stated, with an attempt at a Cape Horn bellow. "If an old man gets tired of being ashore and takes the chance of another deep-water voyage, what's it got to do with any one?" His voice was losing some of its intolerance, however.

"Nothing—nothing!" Frensham said. "But you'd think that such a man would try to finish the voyage, once he'd started. But you abandoned the *Windflower*——"

"Curse it, she was sinking—done for; and the crowd mutinied. They forced me to leave her! She might have floated for a while after the *Michigan* picked us up, but—but——"

"I anchored her in Falmouth Harbor day before yesterday," said Frensham calmly. "Didn't even engage a tug—just sailed her in, under jury-rig. You, with your talk of windjammer men and discipline! You let your crew dictate to you; you left your ship when there was still a chance of saving her, and—I brought her into port. Now, what about it?"

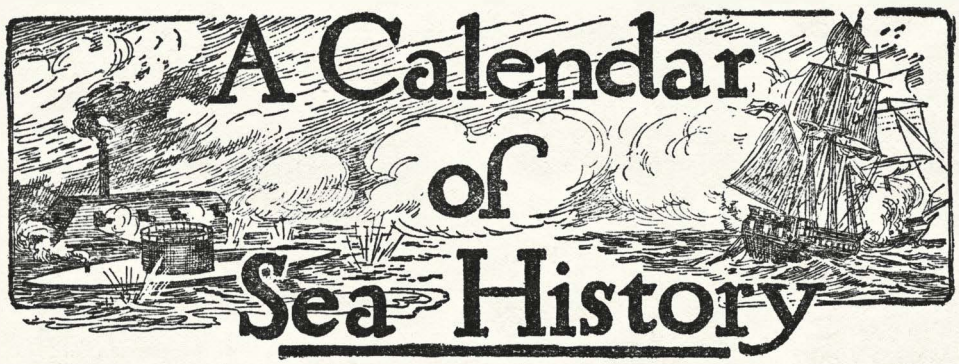
Captain Bateman sat heavily down in his armchair; from his pocket he produced a huge bandanna handkerchief, he blew his nose violently.

"You'll find Bessie somewhere in the house," he said; "wait: I'll call her!"

"The New Chief Mate," another thrilling story by Frank H. Shaw, will appear in the next issue, January 20.

WHEN THEY CALLED "LARBOARD WATCH, AHOY!"

IT was in 1834 that Richard Henry Dana shipped on the brig *Pilgrim* for a voyage from Boston around the Horn to the California coast. He kept a diary and from it wrote his immortal "Two Years Before the Mast," which was published in 1840. He uses the expression "larboard" throughout the book—as "Go below, the larboard watch!" In a footnote to the second edition, which was published in 1869, he wrote: "Of late years the British and American marine, naval and mercantile, have adopted the word 'port' instead of larboard, in all cases aboard ship, to avoid mistake from similarity of sound." He explains that in 1834 the word "port" was used only at the helm. Thus it would seem that the word "larboard" went out of use about the time of the American Civil War.



Past Perils, Battles, Achievements, and Romance of the Deep, presented in calendar form day by day

JANUARY.

January 1, 1894.—The Manchester ship canal opens, and ships sail where ships never sailed before.

January 1, 1900.—In a speech the Kaiser declares his purpose to make his navy as strong as his army.

January 1, 1915.—H. M. S. *Formidable* sunk in the English Channel.

January 1, 1917.—British transport *Ivernia* sunk in Mediterranean by submarine.

January 2, 1890.—S. S. *Persia* wrecked on coast of Corsica with loss of one hundred and thirty lives.

January 3, 1898.—Commodore Dewey takes command of Asiatic squadron.

January 4, 1917.—Germans sink a Russian battleship, *Peresvyet*.

January 5, 1922.—Shackleton, famous ocean explorer, dies at sea.

January 6, 1895.—Many vessels and lives are lost in a Fiji hurricane.

January 6, 1916.—H. M. S. *Edward VII.* mined and sunk.

January 7, 1891.—The Chilean navy revolts against government and eventually wins.

January 7, 1912.—Italian cruisers sink seven Turkish gunboats in the Red Sea.

January 8, 1857.—Many vessels founder in storm along European shores.

January 9, 1861.—S. S. *Star of the West* fired on in Charleston harbor; first gun of the Civil War.

January 10, 1803.—West Indiaman *Active* lost while coming into port.

January 11, 1862.—The *Alabama,* famous Confederate raider, sinks the U. S. cruiser *Hatteras.*

January 11, 1917.—H. M. S. *Cornwallis* sunk in Mediterranean by U-boat.

January 12, 1910.—Canada decides to build a navy.

January 13, 1892.—S. S. *Manchow* sunk in the Yellow Sea with loss of four hundred.

January 13, 1917.—U. S. S. *Milwaukee* goes ashore at Eureka, California.

January 14, 1911.—U. S. S. *Arkansas* launched.

January 15, 1815.—U. S. S. *President* is beaten by *Endymion.*

January 15, 1865.—Union fleet ends the bombardment of Fort Fisher; last naval action of the Civil War.

January 16, 1780.—Admiral Rodney, of the British, defeats Spanish fleet off Cape St. Vincent.

January 16, 1863.—The *Florida,* Confederate cruiser, breaks through blockade fleet at Mobile and sails on voyage of destruction.

Where Danger Lurks in the Seven Seas

By LYLE WILSON HOLDEN

In all ages, since man first went down to the seas in ships, the tale of death has woven itself about some geographical name, some locality of the sea or of a land in or near the sea where the elements overwhelm man. The ancients had their rock Scylla and the whirlpool Charybis in the sea route between Sicily and the Italian coast. Here you are told of the places that modern sailormen speak of gravely, as they speak of all things of death.

KIPLING, in one of his poems of "The Seven Seas," says, "there's never a wave of all the waves but marks the English dead," and no one knows better than the old salt how true this is, not only of the English, but of every searfaring nation which sends forth her sons to battle with the wind and wave.

Every old sailor knows that there isn't a spot in all the Seven Seas but may be fraught with fearful peril, and that there is no sea which is safe at all times. However, there are a few areas upon the broad ocean which have a terrible reputation for storm and shipwreck, and every sailor holds these in special dread.

Along the Atlantic coast of the United States there are two places which are especially feared by every mariner, and they have earned a disreputable fame for treachery and sudden death that is world-wide.

One of these, known as "The Graveyard of the North Atlantic," is Cape Sable, lying at the southern extremity of Nova Scotia. This dreaded promontory extends out into the stormy Atlantic in just the right manner to catch any unlucky vessel which has lost its exact course in plowing blindly through the mists and dense fogs of the Grand Banks of Newfoundland.

The second spot, which is rightly regarded as a deadly menace to the sailors and shipping of the United States, is the Diamond Shoals, lying off Cape Hatteras, on the coast of North Carolina. When the storm king howls in rage about that ever blustery cape, and the white water gushes over the spouting sands, the prayer of many a poor sailor upon the small steamers and sailing vessels beating their way up the coast, has been that he may be delivered from a glimpse of Diamond Shoals. The fogs here are so dense that ships often run upon the shoals in fair weather; when the tempest i s raging, the ship that is driven out of its course in this region is soon a helpless wreck.

The fogs of the Grand Banks of Newfoundland have already been mentioned. This danger spot of the North Atlantic has been alluded to so often in articles and stories that nearly every one is familiar with the terrible death toll it levies each year. Icebergs and sunken rocks are an ever-present menace, especially in winter, when the dense fogs hang like a pall above the troubled waters. The case of the *Titanic,* which met her fate in this region even in pleasant summer weather, is so fresh in one's mind that the Grand Banks are regarded with a fearful respect.

There are two places within a few miles of the entrance to New York harbor which constitute a constant menace to the vessels seeking that port. Fire Island Beach, along the south coast of Long Island, in an offshore wind is pounded by a mighty surf, and if a ship approaching New York in thick weather should be a few miles out of its reckoning, it would be lucky, indeed, if the Fire Island rollers were not grinding its wrecked pieces before daylight. Off the New Jersey coast, south of the harbor

entrance, lie the Brigantine Shoals, and many a ship and steamer have they caught while they were toiling up from the south through the heavy seas.

Nantucket Shoals is another danger spot where the fog wreath plays havoc with the giant ships blundering along through the mists. Each year ship after ship runs ashore in this treacherous region, or smashes blindly into a sister ship vainly seeking a safe passage through these mazes of shoals and waters.

The awful hurricanes of the Caribbean Sea at times render the West Indian region extremely dangerous to navigators. Even the best harbors afford a poor protection to shipping when one of these terrible storms breaks with all of its fury. Then, too, the maze of currents among the islands of the Caribbean often puzzles the best of seamen. Often a skipper will find, after he has run his ship upon a coral reef, that, for no apparent reason, he is a number of miles out of his course.

Nearly every one has heard of the dangerous passage around Cape Horn. It is said that the seas here are higher than anywhere else in the world, and cases are actually upon record of vessels having been rolled over and engulfed by the giant waves of this bleak coast. You perhaps wonder why sailing vessels nearly always brave this dangerous passage, instead of going through the Straits of Magellan. The reason is that, although a steamer can make the passage with little difficulty, at places there is not room to maneuver a sailing vessel; and high winds blowing down the mountain gorges, locally known as williwaws, are a source of great peril. It is reported that an American frigate was once eighty days in working through the strait.

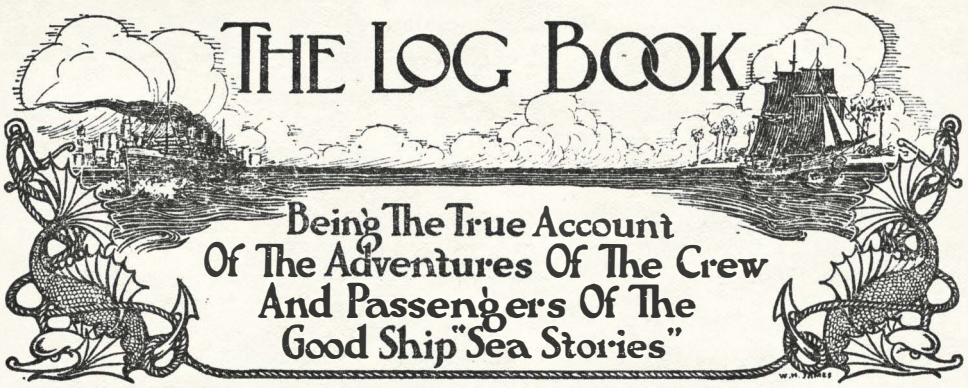
No graveyard of the sea is more celebrated than the Goodwin Sands, and every sailor admits that about the worst danger spot of all the Seven Seas is this chain of shoals and quicksands which lie off the coast of the English County of Kent, from five to twelve miles distant from the mainland. Even as far back as Shakespeare's time these shoals were famous, and in "The Merchant of Venice" the poet wrecks upon them one of Antonio's ships. In the play the rumor of the wreck is commented on in this passage:

"Antonio hath a ship of rich lading wrecked on the narrow seas; the Goodwins I think they call the place; a very dangerous flat and fatal, where the carcasses of many a tall ship lie buried."

Far back in the dim past, during Saxon times, these shoals were dry land, being part of an estate of four thousand acres belonging to Earl Goodwin. According to a tradition still recounted around the Kentish firesides, the Earl Goodwin, at a wassail bout one night, sacrilegiously drank a profane toast from a golden communion cup which he had looted from a neighboring abbey. Immediately a great storm arose, and his most prized possession, the fair Isle of Goodwin, was engulfed in the waves, and the submerged sands were forevermore a perpetual peril.

Another account says that at the time of the Norman Conquest the island was bestowed upon the Abbey of St. Augustine of Canterbury, and, for some reason the sea wall being neglected, it was submerged in the waters of the channel. At any rate, whatever the reason, we know that the once beautiful island became the dreaded Goodwin Sands about the year 1100.

That so many good ships have come to grief on this dangerous spot is not due to any lack of foresight upon the part of the British government, for the Goodwins are said to be the best-marked shoals in the world. A system of lightships, beacons, and bell buoys are maintained here at a great cost, but all these safeguards are powerless to render the sands harmless or even reasonably safe.



This department is designed as a meeting place for all farers on the sea of life who wish to hail one another in passing by, who desire information in connection with maritime matters, or who have had unusual salty adventures, and wish to tell about them. In other words, it is designed to be a sort of get-together club for Sea Stories' readers, and we feel that the correspondence which follows is full evidence of how interesting this department may be made to all readers of this magazine.

We extend to you a cordial invitation to use these columns either to ask or to give information, or to tell some anecdote which you feel would interest or amuse a few hundred thousand fellow creatures. After all, a good yarn usually has a pleasant little trick of brightening things up for most of us.

ARTHUR E. WELLINGTON, of Troy, New York, contributed a poem to the November 20th number of the Log Book, entitled "The Rhyme of a Salt-Sea Sailor." We did not convey clearly when publishing it that the poem was written by Mr. Wellington, and was not a copied contribution. Mr. Wellington also referred to his early seagoing days when they had "salt pork, green with mold, and salt horse; roaches in the molasses with which we sweetened our imitation tea and coffee, made from burned beans—on deck at all hours of day and night—wind whipped—snow and hail beaten—teeth chattering—hands and feet frostbitten—clothes frozen—kicks and blows cheaper than half farthings—curses more plentiful than either——" et cetera.

Certainly it was a direful description of the sailor's life. But he added, "These days are over now, and now that they are over I am glad of the experience." Doubtless this last sentence held the honey spice of seductiveness for many of our younger readers, and they forgot the hard, sordid picture of the reality, keeping in mind only the romance. Who shall blame them? The Skipper himself, when a boy, was fired by Captain Marryatt's stories; he got to know "Midshipman Easy" by heart, and so he went to sea, and afterward vowed, many a time—as nearly all seamen do vow—that if ever he got ashore in his home country and was free of the service, he would never again set foot upon the deck of a ship, except, perchance, as a passenger in luxury. The vows were later forgotten, and back he went to sea, and so it has been in all ages since Jason sailed in the *Argo*.

Now, this is all by way of telling that Mr. Wellington, in spite of his discouraging picture of the sailor's life, has been getting letters from young chaps who read his letter in the Log Book, asking him how they might get started on a seafaring career. One of these letters has been forwarded to us. The writer lives in an inland city. He writes as follows:

I would very much appreciate if you would answer me the following questions:

Would I have any chance on a ship?

Would you advise me to get on a steam or sailing ship?

How should I go about getting a job?

Are there any difficulties to go through before one can get placed on a ship? If so, what are they?

Where would you advise me to apply?

I am eighteen, five feet and eight inches, about one hundred and thirty pounds.

Ships and the sea itself appeal to me and there would be nothing more I'd want than to be in contact with it.

We could not conscientiously advise any young man who has had no experience to seek a "job" just now in the merchant marine. Deep-sea business is very dull. It is true that leading financiers of the nation more than ever look forward to the establishment of an American merchant marine that will become one of our greatest and proudest industries, in which the qualified young men of the nation may develop a successful career. Ex-President Wilson sought to establish such a marine, and President Harding has been urging it more forcibly than any other feature of the administration's program. The ship-subsidy bill in Congress was the most definite and direct attempt to realize the ideal of a great and going American merchant marine attempted by any government administration since the Civil War. We believe that, in one way or another, American ships will again sail all the seven seas.

In the meantime, our young men who love the sea and want to adopt it for their careers must be patient.

There are a hundred ways of getting a berth in a ship, but unless the applicant is duly qualified and acquainted with ship captains, engineers, pursers, or other officers, or may bring to bear the influence of ship owners, stockholders, business officials of the line, et cetera, it is almost impossible to get a place through letter correspondence. The unknown man must personally present himself on board the ship or at the shipping office or other agency of the ships.

In New York City the South Street Seaman's Institute, 25 South Street, has the largest available fund of information for use by those desiring to ship before the mast, or for those who plan to prepare for a career at sea as an officer. All large seaports in the country have such an institution and they willingly advise young men.

If any young man among our readers is bent on entering the service of the United States navy, we would advise him to write to the Bureau of Navigation, Navy Department, Washington, D. C., and ask for a copy of the booklet "The U. S. Navy—Enlistment, Instruction, Pay, and Advancement." This is the best book of the kind ever issued by the navy department.

JAMES T. RYDER, chief engineer, 154 Cypress Street, Watertown, Massachusetts, conveys the impression that he would be a valuable member of the watch ashore who forgather to exchange reminiscences, practical wisdom, and good fellowship. His letter speaks for itself:

May I express my appreciation of SEA STORIES with special reference to the Log Book? I have followed the sea for many years, as have all my people from Cape Cod, and after rising to chief of the "black gang" have been set ashore by matrimony and other considerations.

Your book is like a fresh salt breeze to freshen up what is now to me a very monotonous existence. I was very much interested in "Full Speed Ahead" [story of the Great Lakes] appearing in the November 5th issue, and in connection therewith may I ask a question?

I note that the author refers to "the Chadbourne, that intelligent nerve between bridge and engine room." This is the first time I have ever heard the telegraph as we understand it called by that name. It is possible that this is a Great Lakes term which I have never happened to hear, as the only instru-

ment of this nature that I have ever handled was made by Cory. Will not some reader please advise me on the subject?

It appears, from the testimony of two deep-sea captains of the merchant marine—Western Ocean—who called at the Skipper's office, that Chadbourne is the name of an English manufacturer of ship and engine-room telegraphs. These captains know the instruments but have "never been shipmates with one," nor have they ever heard them called "the Chadbourne." They say that there are a number of manufacturers of such instruments, mostly English. The best known American manufacturer seems to be Charles Cory & Son, of New York.

JOHN JEWITT, of New Denver, British Columbia, sends us a photo-engraving of the *Cutty Sark*, swiftest of the old clippers of the 'seventies in the Australian trade. She was recently bought by Captain Dowman and given to the English people. She is permanently moored at Falmouth, England. The picture shows yards—lower, double topsail, and topgallant—only on the fore. The main and mizzen appear to be fore-and-aft rigged at present. Several references have been made to the *Cutty Sark* in the Log Book, and perhaps many of our readers do not know that she was famous throughout all the shipping world forty-five years ago. She is a British composite ship of 921 tons and was ship rigged. In December and January of 1875-1876 she sailed from the Lizard to a point fifty miles south of Melbourne in fifty-four days. This is still the record passage for a sailing ship from England to Australia. The second best record is held by the *Thermopylae,* 948 tons, sixty days from London to Melbourne—pilot to pilot—in December-January of 1868-1869.

You will like to read Mr. Jewitt's letter so here it is:

I have taken SEA STORIES right along, only missing the first two issues. I like the magazine very much; to a man once connected with the sea "it appeals," and one awaits with interest each succeeding issue; the articles and stories are fine, and though an error once in a while creeps in, that sort of thing has got to occur now and again to keep us in mind that we are but human.

In my early days I sailed out of London, England. I crept up to a position and was designated second mate of one of Watkin's tugs hailing from London, one of a fleet, all ending in "ia;" the *Oceania* was the largest tug on London River at that time. I was in the *Hibernia.* We went to the Baltic and the Mediterranean and, though we were sometimes on English Channel work, ours was mostly a long haul.

At present I am a railway agent and operator for the C. P. R. in a little place tucked away in the mountains of British Columbia in a mineral belt, close to Nelson and Kaslo in the Kootenay district.

I inclose for your use and reproduction, if you care, a cutting taken from an English pictorial paper, a likeness of the old *Cutty Sark.* I never had the luck to get a tow of this clipper, but I'll bet she has given some tugs a run before they got on her quarter. Some one of the many readers of SEA STORIES may remember her and perhaps would like to say where they saw her; others may be able to wield the pen, and in recalling voyages of other days may perhaps be able to include her in a story.

The topsail-schooner discussion has now about got to the state where the "aye's have it." Though this is my first launch out into correspondence to a magazine, I would like to add my quota; for instance, my grandfather, Joseph Jewitt, owned three topsail schooners out of Goole on the Humber in the early days. One was a "billy boy" schooner, broad of bow and stern; one would think she had to shove the whole North Sea before her when under weigh. The vessel grandfather sailed himself at the last, was named the *Shamrock.* Later my uncle, William Jewitt, took charge of her, my father at about this time running a fish cutter out of London, later on going back into sail. I have many seagoing friends in England, and can with assurance affirm that two and three-masted topsail schooners out of Fowey, Falmouth, and Plymouth in the English Channel were very frequently met with, and given a good sailing breeze with everything doing its bit, coupled with good steering, I can assure you they made good time.

J. J. KILGOUR, 50 Clay Street, San Francisco, without any reservation or secret evasion of mind, writes his opinion, which may be weighed by putting in the balance his many years in deep-water ships, both sail and steam. We print part of his letter:

When I clapped eyes on a copy of the first issue of SEA STORIES in a store on Market Street, San Francisco, I made a grab at it. I took it aboard and sat up all night and read it through from shark's tail to taffrail. I sure thought it good—not a poor yarn in the lot. I haven't missed an issue yet, and I haven't read a poor story yet.

I went to sea in January, 1880, in a salt-water ship and sailed continuously in square-rigged vessels up to 1916, when I started in steamboats, not because I prefer it to sail, but on account of the old windbags being scarce around here.

The Log Book is fine. Please hurry along the "Missing Messmates" department.

Here is a chantey I heard when I was a kid, the best capstan chantey I ever heard. Maybe you'd like to print it.

BLOW YE WINDS HEIGH HO!

On the fourteenth day of the month of May,
Way down in the southern seas,
We lay becalmed near a coral reef,
Awaiting for a breeze.

CHORUS:
Blow ye winds heigh ho!
Blow ye winds heigh ho!
Clear away the morning dew
And blow ye winds heigh ho!

The Old Man he was down below,
The crew were lying around,
When under our bows we heard a splash
And then a terrible sound.

"Man overboard!" all hands did shout,
And for'ard we all ran.
There, hanging onto our best bower chain
Was a jolly old bluff merman.

His eyes were blue, his hair was green,
His mouth was as large as three,
And the big, fat tail he sat upon
Kept a-waggling in the sea.

Up jumps the bos'n bold as brass,
"What cheer, messmate?" says he.
"I've a message for your captain bold;
I've a favor to ask of he."

Then the Old Man came on the fo'c's'le head
And he looked in the water blue.
"Come, tell me, my man, as quick as you can,
What can I do for you."

"You've dropped your anchor athwart my house
And blocked my only door.
My wife can't get out to swim about,
Nor our kids, one, two, three, four.

"It'd break your heart to hear them shout,
And the racket they've raised with me,
For I was out last night to a big booze fight
At the bottom of the sea."

"My anchor shall be hove up at once
And your wife and kids set free,
For I never saw a scale, from a sprat to a whale,
Before as could talk to me.

"Your face looks like a sailor bold,
And your talk like a sailorman,
But where did you get that wonderful tail?
Come, tell me, if you can."

"Oh, a long time ago in the ship *Hero*
I was washed overboard in a gale;
Down below, where the seaweeds grow,
I spied a girl with a tail.

"She saved my life, I made her my wife,
And my feet left instantlee,
As soon as I married this pretty fair maid
At the bottom of the sea."

Mr. Kilgour spells it "shanty," which spelling has claims to authority, and a considerable number of language experts have insisted that "shanty" is older than the accepted "chantey." What can our shipmates tell us about it?

"Are there at present any girls filling the position of radio operator?" Miss L. H., of San Francisco, asks the question. She adds: "I have heard of only one, three or four years ago, on the American steamship *Apache*."

MISS EVA DEMPSEY, of Atlantic Beach, Florida, whose penmanship rates high, impulsively writes to us, saying:

It was by accident I saw, upon a news stand, a picture of an old Spanish galleon

on the cover of a magazine. The picture attracted me, so I investigated and found the very best magazine I ever read. I did not miss one word of that number of SEA STORIES, and then I mailed it to my brother in Cuba. I could scarcely wait for the next number, and now I am glad to know that every two weeks the good ship SEA STORIES will bring us a cargo of the best stories *ever*.

I live right in sight of the grand old ocean. My father raised me to be a sailor. He was in the U. S. navy from 1860 to 1864 when he was a young man.

C. J. POOLE, 129 Madison Street, Brooklyn, N. Y., furnishes the evidence of an eyewitness who has seen a square "moonsail."

In answer to A. R. Wetjen, who asks if any reader of SEA STORIES has ever seen a full-rigged ship with a "moonsail," I will say that when I was a young sailor I saw many gib-headed moons'ls, but only one square moons'l—in other words, only one ship that carried a moons'l yard. She was the *W. R. Rice* of Boston.

I was in St. Helena, lying at anchor, when she came in for water and men. She was short-handed. She was a big ship—something over two thousand tons, bound from Manila to Boston. She came in with light breeze abaft the port beam, with every sail she could set on her—three skysails and main moons'l, and foretopgallant and topmast studdingsail. She was a wonderful ship. That was in January, 1888.

I continued going to sea until 1902, but I never saw a square moons'l after the *W. R. Rice* faded out of sight on the hazy horizon after lifting her anchor in St. James Bay, St. Helena.

Mr. Poole sent a pen-and-ink sketch of the *W. R. Rice* "coming into St. Helena," with the caption "A memory sketch after thirty-four years." The picture shows the ship with all sails set —four head sails, four staysails on the main and three on the mizzen, studdingsails on the fore, three courses and spanker, double topsails, topgallants, royals, and skysails on all masts, and a moonsail on the main.

P. W. GIFFORD, of 3637 Vincennes Avenue, Chicago, Illinois, requests the use of this department for the purpose of publishing a memorial hymn. We are very glad to extend its use to him.

Being the son of a New England whaler, now deceased, I wonder if you will allow me the pleasure of inscribing my name on the Log Book in a general tribute to those who have been lost at sea.

The verse following was set to music and privately printed several years ago, so that only a few copies are available. Am not musical myself, but have been told by others that the music is as good as the words. However that may be, you may reprint the words in your Log Book if you care to do so. I think they might be interesting to many of your readers.

MEMORIAL HYMN TO THE DEAD OF THE SEA.

By P W. Gifford.

Many sorrowing hearts are now turning
With grief to the ocean wave,
As they think of the loss of beloved ones
That lie in a watery grave;
And the mighty, intrepid old ocean,
As it writhes in a billowy maze,
Seems at heart like a cruel, cold monster,
And its face like a wild demon's face.

But over the sea is a glory,
A brighter, ethereal view:
The sunlighted cloudlets at sunset,
Stars at night in their heavenly blue;
And the heavens, radiant in glory,
Find nothing at all amiss
In bending down to the waters,
Nor the sea reaching up for its kiss.

Then a thrill of the deepest emotion
Replaces each sorrowing sigh,
As the deep, deep blue of the ocean
Blends with the blue of the sky,
For I know that my Father in heaven,
Preserver of sky and sea,
Suffers only a change in the fleeting,
But the soul—it shall always be!

B. CAUTHER, 553 Thirteenth Street, San Pedro, California, desires to enter in the Log some information regarding old shipmates.

In the Log Book of the November 5th number I read a piece about the four-masted bark *Monongahela*. I know the crowd on her—at least I used to. I put in two years on the four-masted bark *Moshulu*, and the *Monongahela* was in Manila when we ar-

rived. That was on the trip before Dave Shaw and John Oleson quit her and shipped on the *Moshulu*. Dave later shipped on a barkentine. The last I saw of him was in Newcastle, Australia.

You will find the *Moshulu* crowd all over. Peterson is married, Mickey is working for his old man. Heiney is in Baltimore on the beach. Slim, the boatswain, is in Pedro longshoring. Cauther, the champ of the *Moshulu*, is on the Standard Oil tanker *El Segunda*.

THE family of J. F. McGinnis, 339 Fifth Street, Brooklyn, New York, once fed a sailor who was flat on the beach. By way of payment the sailor recited a poem which Mr. McGinnis contributes to the Log Book. How many of you have ever heard it before?

THE MIDNIGHT WATCH AT SEA

I pace the deck in the dead of the night,
When the moon and the starlight fail
And the cordage creaks in the lazy swell
And heavily flaps the sail;
In the darkness glimmers the binnacle lamp
With its feeble and lonely spell,
And no sound is heard but the sentry's tramp
Or his measured cry, "All's well!"

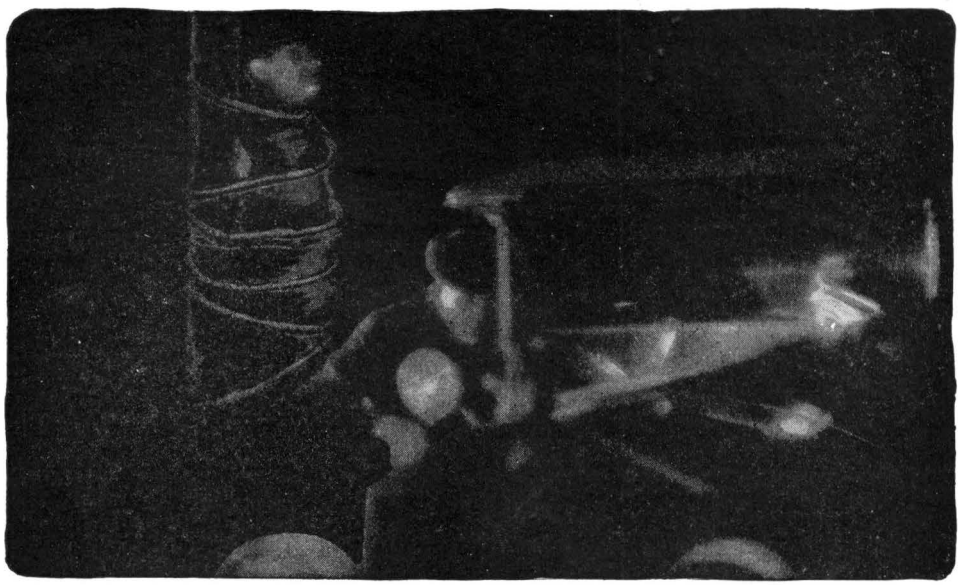
To and fro with accustomed step
I have walked in the night alone,
And I think of the thousand watches kept
In the years forever flown,
Or the friends in whose manly fellowship
I labored long ago,
Until death relieved them of their watch on earth
And they went to rest below.

And I think of the gallant ones who died
When our broadsides shook the sea,
And tears of sorrow subdued the pride
Of our cheers of victory;
Or of those who fell in the fever lands
Or sank 'neath the 'whelming wave,
Their corpses bleach the burning sands
Or float in a fathomless grave.

And the looks revive that were faint and dim
In the shadows of the years,
And I scan them o'er till my eyelids swim
With a strange delight of tears;
They people the dark with their pallid brows
As they silently throng around,
And the sea its phosphor radiance throws
On the faces of the drowned.

Many a noble heart is cold
That shared my duties then;
I have looked full oft in the face of death,
But he's come to better men;
And let him come in his chosen time,
Some friend will think of me,
And I will live in his lonely hours
Of his midnight watch at sea.

—Author unknown.



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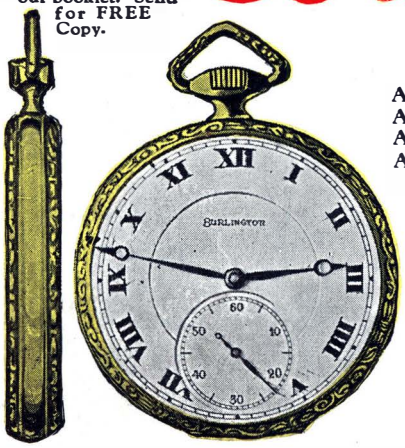

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