Sea Stories Magazine

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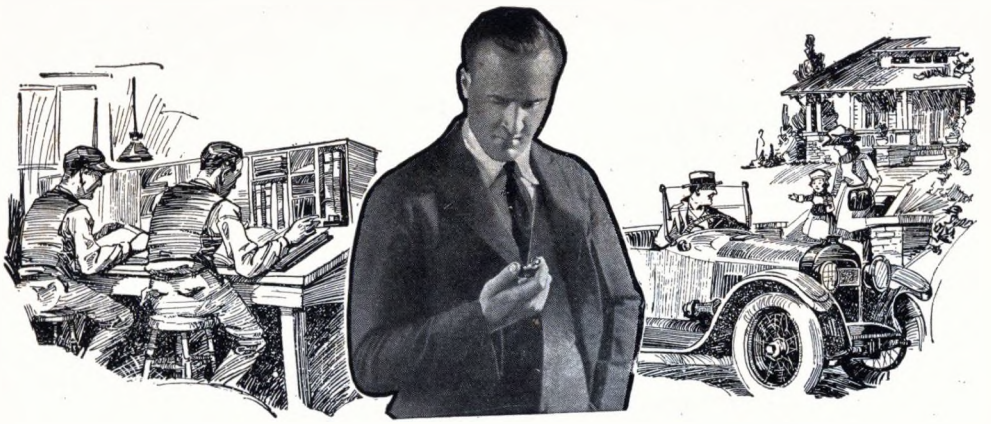
ACTION ✦ ADVENTURE ✦ TREASURE-TROVE



In every man's life there is one Big Moment when he makes the decision that robs him of success—or leads on to fortune.

Your One Chance to Earn *The Biggest Money of Your Life!*

HAVE you ever considered why our richest men come from our poorest boys? Isn't it a strange thing that it is almost invariably a young fellow who starts life without a cent in the world, without education, without influential friends—in short, without one single solitary advantage—who accumulates millions of dollars? Isn't it a miracle that inside of a comparatively few years a man can rise from abject poverty to fabulous wealth?

The Secret That Makes Millionaires

Astonishing, certainly—but more important, it is wonderfully inspiring. For it means that no man need be held down by circumstances. Once he knows the "millionaire's secret", he can put it into operation regardless of all obstacles that seem to block his path. He suddenly finds that everything he touches turns to gold—money flows in upon him—fortune showers him with its favors. Everything he wants seems to come to him just as surely and easily as day comes after night.

What is this amazing secret that can work such wonders? It is just this: **The thing behind all big achievement is Opportunity.**

To every man there comes one BIG Opportunity—the golden chance of his life. And in the moment he decides for or against that opportunity—whether he will seize it or let it pass—he decides the whole future course of his life.

National Salesmen's Training Association,
Dept. 4-W, Chicago, Ill.

I simply want to see the facts. Send me FREE your Book on Salesmanship and Proof that I can become a Master Salesman. Also tell how you can help me to a position and send list of lines with openings for Salesmen.

Name .....

Address .....

City ..... State.....

This very minute **you** may be face to face with **your** BIG opportunity—**your one** chance to earn the biggest money of your life! Right now your decision may mean the difference between a life of plodding, routine work at low pay and a career of inspiring success and magnificent earnings.

Choose Between Low Pay and Magnificent Earnings

Now you are offered the very opportunity that has made other men rich, that has brought them more money than they ever dreamed of earning.

It is the same opportunity that lifted Warren Hartle of 4425 N. Robey St., Chicago, out of a job in the railway mail service where in ten years he had never gotten beyond $1,600 a year, and landed him in a $10,000 a year job. It jumped Charles Berry of Winterset, Iowa, from $80 a month as a farm-hand, to $1,000 a month. It brought to C. W. Campbell of Greensburg, Pa., a clerk on the railroad, a position that paid him $1,562 in thirty days.

These men and hundreds more have found their **Big Opportunity** in the wonderful field of Salesmanship. They are all Master Salesmen now. They are earning the biggest money of their lives—more than they ever thought possible—they are engaged in the most fascinating work in the world—they are independent, come and go as they please—they meet big men—every minute of the day is filled with thrilling variety.

Your Big Opportunity may be here too, in the wonder field of Salesmanship. Perhaps you say you have never even thought of becoming a Salesman. But before you decide one way or the other, examine the facts for yourself. See what Salesmanship offers you—why it is the best paid of all vocations—why there is no limit to what you may earn. Read the amazing proof that no matter what you are doing now, you can quickly become a Master Salesman in your spare time at home—read how the National Salesmen's Training Association in its nation-wide search for men to fill the great need of Salesmen, has devised a wonderful system that reveals to you every Secret of Selling without interfering in the least with your present work. See how this famous organization helps you to a good position in the line of Selling you are best fitted for.

Facts That Will Amaze You—Sent FREE

Mail the coupon herewith. This will not cost you a penny—it places you under no obligation. It simply means that you will receive, entirely FREE, a wonderful, illustrated Book on Salesmanship and Proof that you can be a Master Salesman. You will receive, also, the personal stories of men throughout the country who today are enjoying magnificent success and earning five, ten and fifteen times as much money as ever before.

Send NOW—this minute may be the turning point in your life. Address, National Salesmen's Training Association, Dept. 4-W, Chicago, Ill.

JUNE, 1922

SEA STORIES MAGAZINE

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VOLUME I NUMBER 5

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THE PORT OF GENOA TO BE ENLARGFD

THE government has undertaken extensive plans for the enlargement of the port of Genoa. When completed the area of the docks and quays will be increased from twenty million eight hundred and seventy-five thousand square feet to forty-three million fifty-five thousand square feet, and the length of the railway tracks from thirty-seven to one hundred miles. The depth of the old harbor is also to be increased and improvements made in its mechanical equipment. It is estimated that the port will be enabled to handle yearly eighteen million tons of merchandise with these added facilities.

THE FIRST VESSEL

THOUGH there may have been floating or sailing vessels before, the first one described in history is Noah's Ark. This vessel was not intended for a voyage, but was built simply to keep afloat, which it did for a period of five months.

The measurements are given in cubits, but, assuming a cubit to be twenty-one inches, the Ark was five hundred and twenty-five feet in length, eighty-seven feet six inches in width, and fifty-two feet six inches in depth. It will be noted that the length is six times the breadth. This is the approximate proportion used in the building of all types of vessels. The Ark had three decks and, stocked for five months, it must have carried a very large cargo; but it was built without masts, sails, or rudder.

A NEW KIND OF PLEASURE CRAFT

THERE has recently been invented a pleasure craft which is a combination of a boat that travels afloat and one that travels submerged. In this new craft the passenger rides submerged to the shoulders, with the head constantly above the surface.

Interesting features of its construction are: a steel cylinder eighteen inches in diameter and ten feet long, pointed at both ends, which forms the body of the boat; a hollow keel fourteen inches wide and fifty-two inches long, suspended from one side, and inside of which are installed storage batteries and a motor similar to that of a street car; a propeller which extends behind the keel; and a rudder behind the propeller. A seat is fastened rigidly on the opposite side of the cylindrical body, and stationed in front of it is a steering wheel for operating the rudder. There is a quadrant and a lever on the wheel by means of which the motor is controlled through the rheostat, and a searchlight is mounted in front of the wheel. Conveniently within reach of the rider's feet and on either side of the boat are pedals which control the inclination of the four planes; they are pivoted, two in front and two behind the rider's seat.

In coöperation with the propulsion, these planes control the depth at which the boat rides in the water. If there were enough power and sufficient inclination of the planes the boat could be submerged to a great depth, but this is prevented by a buoyant ball that rises on a tubular guide at the stern of the boat as it sinks. There is a switch on top of the guide, which, when struck by the rising ball, cuts out the motor, thus preventing the boat from submerging more than to the rider's shoulders.

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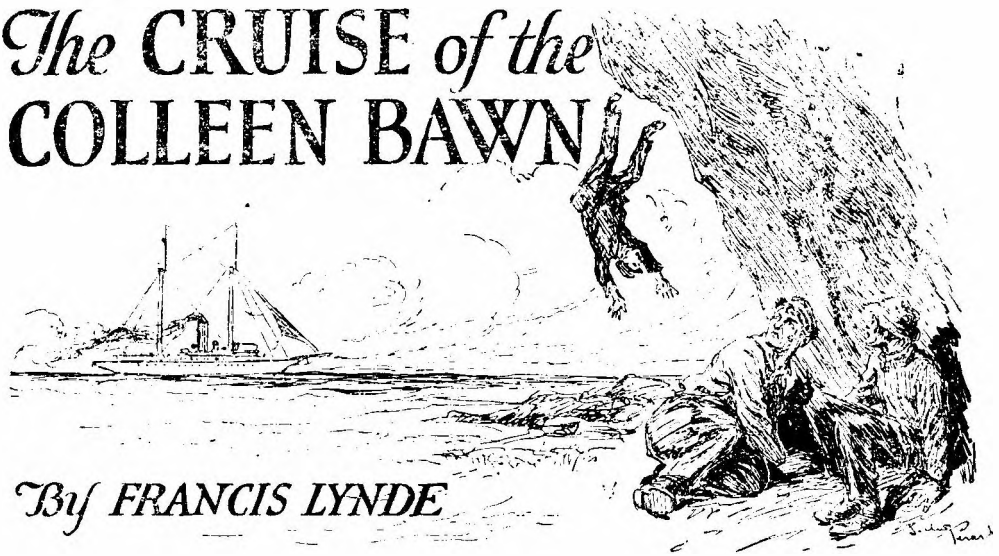
The CRUISE of the COLLEEN BAWN



By FRANCIS LYNDE

You will agree, after reading this, that Mr. Lynde has a story to tell, a story of a two-fisted, red-blooded, young man who was shanghaied because he had certain principles he thought were worth living up to. When the hero, a breezy young giant, full of enthusiasm for his work, finds himself on board the *Colleen Bawn*, and learns that he has signed for a voyage to the Pribilofs, as an A. B., his astonishment is unbounded. The voyage is an eventful one, as you will agree.

A COMPLETE NOVEL

CHAPTER I.

THE MODERN VEHMGERICHT.

IN a certain high-storied office building in a Western city whose name is synonymous with refrigerated meats and many excellent packing-house products, in the private room of a suite whose windows commanded a wide outlook upon the lower roofs and chimneys, and in which the furnishings were as rich and costly as they were simple, two great men sat soberly discussing matters of business.

One of the two, the one with sloping shoulders, a dome-shaped head with light, curly hair thinning to baldness, and the face of a middle-aged and slightly shopworn cherub, was the general traffic manager of the far-reaching railroad whose business offices filled several floors of the tall building.

The other, large-framed and of generous flesh, was the second vice president, whose private car was halting for the day at the company's executive headquarters. To go with the vigorous frame and big body, there were hard-lined features, relieved only by the crow's-feet at the outer corners of the eyes; wrinkles pleasantly humorous when the vice president was telling one of his inimitable after-dinner stories at the Railway Club, but remaining after the laugh had expired to give the strong face an unrelenting and rather forbidding aspect.

"Oh, yes; by the way, there was an-

other thing I wanted to take up with you while we are on this interstate business." It was the vice president speaking, and his voice had a distinct metallic quality in it that his after-dinner listeners seldom heard. "You have a young man on your pay rolls by the name of Livingston—a freight solicitor at St. Paul. What do you know about him?"

If the traffic manager wondered why his ranking officer should be interested in one of the general freight agent's young men, he was judicious enough not to let the wonder manifest itself, and his answer was categorical. "Not much more than the little Romer has told me in going over the personnel of his outside agencies. Romer says he is one of the few really 'live wires' among the field men."

"You have his record, I suppose?"

"We should have it. Doubtless it is in Romer's private files."

"Get it," was the brief command.

The traffic manager pressed one of the electric buttons in the row at the desk's end, and the shirt-sleeved stenographer answering the call was directed to bring the personal record—item, "Livingston"—from the general freight office. When the neatly docketed file came, the traffic manager read its notings aloud.

"Livingston, Sidney G. Native of New York, and a descendant of well-known family of that name. Education, public schools New York City and college course in mining engineering; entered service of the company immediately after leaving college at age 22; one year engineering department and one year agent at Crow Mines, Wyoming; one year clerk and two years outside solicitor and contracting agent district freight office, Denver——"

"Hold on," interrupted the listener. "How did he come to shift departments and give up his profession?"

"Romer spoke of that," explained the reader. "It seems that the young man developed some considerable business ability at the Wyoming mines, and the traffic department offered better pay and more chance for promotion."

"All right," was the big man's comment, and the traffic manager continued:

"——Promoted from Denver to St. Paul agency on merit. Record A-X-12."

"Which means?" queried the vice president.

"'A' is the bonding company's letter, and it refers to the fiduciary standing of the man. It is the highest marking. 'X' refers to his business ability, and is also a first-grade mark. 'Twelve' indexes his habits and manner of living; in Livingston's case it means that he is a decent fellow and lives within his salary."

"Go on," said the vice president tersely.

"That is all, save a footnote, added recently, I take it. It records two items, either of which explains the other: Livingston has bought a cottage in a St. Paul suburb, and he is engaged to be married."

"Engaged to be married, is he?" questioned the vice president. "To some girl in St. Paul?"

"The record doesn't say."

"Then the record is incomplete, and my New York files give better details. Tell Romer so, with a hint that he'd better get busy. I happen to know that the young woman lives in Denver; that her father is a lawyer and a rabid anti-corporation crank, and that she has a cousin who is a special agent for the Interstate Commerce Commission."

"Ah!" said the traffic manager, and his face was now the face of a middle-aged cherub mystified and mildly disturbed. Then: "You don't mean to say that Livingston has been injudicious enough to——"

"I'm coming to that," snapped the big man in the broad-armed easy-chair. "What are Romer's instructions to his field men?"

"To track the law, but not to lose the business. The outside man understands that if he takes illegal chances he does it at his own risk; that if he is caught in any evasion of the law, the company will not stand behind him."

"Those are the open instructions, of course. But neither you nor Romer let it stop at that, do you?"

"No, not completely. Livingston dropped in the last time he was in Omaha—a duty call to pay his respects to the new traffic chief, I suppose. Frankly, I was most favorably impressed. He is a breezy young giant, what you might call a laughing fighter, upstanding, and full of enthusiasm. After a bit of desultory talk about the company's business in this district, he came at me squarely for a definition of the company's attitude toward the law."

"And you gave it?"

"I did. I told him there could be no two ways of regarding a law which was spread upon the statute books, and which sharply penalizes the law-breaker. We might—and do—consider the law unjust and oppressive; we might go farther and refuse to be morally bound by it. At the same time, the company, holding its charter under the law, must keep its skirts clean. I told Livingston that, while we wanted all the business in sight, we took it for granted that our men would look out for themselves, bearing in mind the fact that the company could not and would not undertake to defend its agents and solicitors in the courts."

"That ought to have been enough."

"To tell the truth, I was afraid it might be a little too much," said the traffic chief. "Romer had given me a pointer on this particular young man, saying that, while he was one of the most successful solicitors in the field, he was a trifle too much inclined to think for himself in matters involving ethical questions. Having this in mind, I sent Wood, my confidential stenographer, out to take Livingston to lunch at his club. Wood knows pretty well what to say in such cases."

"What *did* he say, in this particular case?" grated the vice president. "That is the nib of the matter."

At this, the traffic manager's smile was entirely cherubic.

"I am not supposed to know—and I don't know officially. But in an unofficial talk with Wood that same evening, I got the gist of the club-table confidences between him and Livingston. Wood gathered that Livingston was having a rather difficult fight in the northern territory; that it was growing increasingly harder for our young man to hold his own against the northern lines on a strictly legal basis. Probing a little deeper, Wood found that Livingston had been comparing notes with our Chicago office, where, as you know, we have been compelled to wink at a pretty liberal construction of the rebate clause. Having got thus far, Wood gave him his tip."

"Just precisely what *was* the tip?" demanded the ranking official, with more than a touch of impatience.

Again the traffic manager smiled.

"You mustn't forget that I know nothing at all—officially. Wood didn't go into details with me; I didn't want him to. But in a general way he let me understand that he had given Livingston the necessary inch of leeway."

The big man in the armchair sat up and brought his fist down solidly on the broad chair-arm.

"Yes, and again I can give you details where you can give only the vague generality," he commented, with some asperity. "Your man told Livingston that he would be allowed a more liberal expense account, and that the items wouldn't be too closely scrutinized here in the general offices. From that he went on to suggest ways and means of evading the law; a dozen of them. With a small shipper he might make a los-

ing election bet, say, of a suit of clothes; for another he might make a convenient mistake in rate quotations, explaining it afterward by calling it a simple error in figuring and making it good with his own personal check to the shipper. These, and other similar outlays, he was to bury in his expense account under regular headings—automobile hire, hotel bills, and so on."

The traffic manager nodded gravely. "I know," he said; "or, rather, I carefully refrain from knowing. But I presume your information is correct."

"It is, and it goes still further. I can tell you precisely what Livingston said after your man had got through with his suggestions. He said something like this: 'Mr. Wood, if I could get my own consent to become a criminal for the company's profit, I should go the necessary inch farther and be a criminal for my own pocket first.' I venture to say that your confidential man didn't report that part of the talk to you, did he?"

Since even a general traffic manager may not be beyond the effect of a moral bucketing of cold water, the man at the handsome mahogany desk gasped.

"You may be very well assured that Wood didn't tell me anything like that!" he ejaculated. And then: "I suppose your report comes straight?"

"It comes in the form of a sworn statement," said the vice president dryly. "I don't mind telling you how it was obtained. Shortly after this club-table episode, Livingston went to Denver on some company business, didn't he?"

"I couldn't say, though it's quite possible."

"Exactly. And while he was in Denver he saw the girl he is going to marry, and repeated to her, word for word, what your man Wood had suggested, and what he had said in reply, making a cheerful joke of the entire incident. This happened at the girl's home, and the girl's cousin, who is, as I have said, one of the special agents of the Interstate Commerce Commission, was conveniently hidden in the adjoining room. There was also another listener, as it happened—the person who made the sworn statement I spoke of; a man from our New York office who had been instructed to keep an eye both on Livingston and on the young woman's cousin. That is where we stand now!"

The traffic manager smiled wanly, and shook his head.

"Always a woman at the bottom of it," he remarked, with mild cynicism. "I'm sorry for Livingston. He impressed me favorably, as I have admitted. We'll let him go."

Again the vice president smote the arm of his chair, and this time profanity went with the blow.

"That isn't enough! You must find some way to tie his hands. Don't you see what will happen? He will be called into this case that the department of justice is trying to make out against us, and, if he repeats this story under oath, as a young fire eater of his type is likely to, we may as well throw up our hands. Turn it over to Gantley, and tell him to get busy on it at once. There isn't any time to lose!"

The traffic manager shrugged his sloping shoulders ever so slightly.

"Of course, if you say so. But I'd hate to turn my worst enemy over to Gantley and the legal department. Can't we hurry this young man out of the country on some business errand? Won't that answer the purpose?"

"I don't care what you do with him, so long as the Washington people won't be able to find him with a subpœna. Fix it up among yourselves, you and Romer and Gantley. Only see to it that there is no misfire. We can't afford to take any chances."

The traffic manager nodded, and his smile was once more slightly cynical

when he said: "There will be one small ameliorating circumstance: the little Delilah out in Denver will get what is coming to her."

"Let us hope so," said the vice president; and, since the small matter of business had been definitely disposed of, he passed quickly to the discussion of larger affairs—a discussion dealing with the company's revenues, the probable size of the bumper crop which was already in harvesting along the company's lines, and, lastly, with a certain "gentleman's agreement" designed to maintain rates stiffly through the impending crop-moving car famine; all matters of much greater importance than the court-martial sentence which had been pronounced upon a joyous young ranker in the great traffic army, who had earned his effacement by talking too much to the young woman he was intending to marry.

CHAPTER II.

WHERE ROLLS THE PLATTE.

Denver, at its best a paradise for hustlers and convalescing "T. B.'s," and at its worst—namely on a dry summer day when a sand storm is blowing in from the suburbs—a good place to leave behind for a week-end in the mountains, bade good-by to Sidney Livingston about four hours after his arrival from St. Paul; that being the interval required for the transaction of the railroad business, which was his excuse for another Western trip, and for ascertaining upon good authority that Miss Philippa Goodwin had gone to spend a few days with the Armstrongs at Cliff Cottages in the Platte Cañon.

Thus it happened that in the early evening of the day whose forenoon had witnessed the conference between the second vice president and the traffic manager in the high-storied office building some hundreds of miles to the eastward, Livingston was sitting out the after-dinner interval on the puncheon-floored porch of an imitation log cabin in the Platte Cañon, enjoying the cooling airs of the high places and the magnificent Rocky Mountain sunset, with Philippa Goodwin, cushion-propped in a hammock swung across the porch corner, for his sharer in the scenic sky carnival.

"We shall never, never see anything like this in Minnesota, shall we, Siddy?" said the girl, with the faintest possible tremolo of regret in her voice. "Isn't it perfectly glorious?"

"It is, and we shan't," admitted the joyous young athlete lounging in the split-bottomed chair at the hammock side. Then he administered the grain of comfort which had been made to do duty before in more than one of the regretful moments. "We're still hoping it won't be for longer than a century or so, Philly. That's why I bought the St. Paul cottage in a suburb with growing values. When I get that lead-pipe cinch on the Denver general agency we're banking on, we'll sell out and come back to the tall hills."

The pretty girl locked her fingers under her head, and gave him a love glance out of a pair of bewitching eyes that could look anything that Miss Philippa wished them to look.

"What difference does it make, Sidney boy—so long as we can be together?" she asked softly.

"It will make a difference of about one hundred and fifty simoleons a month, for one thing," retorted the practical lover, with a good-natured grin. "Of course, we're far and away above counting the dollars just now, but every little so-while I have a thirsty sort of get-rich-quick attack—when I think of all the things I'd like to squander on you."

"Don't I know?" she said, still more softly. And then: "But money isn't everything. I'd rather have more of you and less of the money."

This time Livingston's grin was a laugh.

"You needn't worry, Philly; when you find a railroad man getting rich, there will be a blue moon in the sky—either that, or else he'll be a grafter."

"Cousin Miles is always saying that you are all grafters, and it makes me spiteful," said the girl.

To this Livingston made no reply. From the beginning of things, Miles Glendish, who was a cousin-german to the Goodwins, had been his *bête noire*. For one thing, Glendish was an ex-railroad man who had broken all the traditions by taking service under the Interstate Commerce Commission and using his inside knowledge of railroading to trap his former associates. For another and greater thing, he had been Philippa's tireless and most persistent suitor, dating from the period when she was a young girl.

"The sunset is even more gorgeous now than it was when we came out, don't you think?" was the rather clumsy way in which Livingston tried to bury the Glendish reference.

The girl's laugh was low and sweet. The best of women may not be above taking a rise out of a fond lover upon occasion.

"How you do despise Miles, don't you, Siddy?" she mocked. And then: "I should think you'd like him; he has always been so good to me."

"I'd break his blooming neck if he wasn't good to you!" grumbled the athlete. "Just the same, I wish you wouldn't be so chummy with him, Philly. I don't like to say it behind a man's back, but I wouldn't put it beyond him to try to get a nip on me through you. You don't tell him any of the things we talk about, do you?"

"The idea!" she retorted, but even in that blissful moment Livingston remarked that she did not specifically deny the charge—remarked it then and remembered it afterward.

"Because it might make no end of trouble," he went on, "not only for me, but for a lot of other people. I've told you some things that would take the lid off with a vengeance if they should happen to get out."

The girl sat up in the hammock with her lower lip trembling and her eyes suspiciously bright.

"Sidney Livingston, I'd have you remember that I am Mr. John Goodwin's daughter!" she flamed out, and in the after time he was to suffer an additional stab when he recalled that this, too, was not a specific denial.

After this a cool little mist of silence enveloped the pair on the slab-floored porch; a wet blanketing marking one of their few small misunderstandings. It was the young man who first flung the wet blanket aside.

"Forget it, Philly," he begged contritely. "I can't help being a man, and most men'll yelp when you stroke 'em the wrong way. Let's talk about something else."

"Let it be about the Denver agency," she suggested, meeting him gladly at the halfway station. "Do you really think there is a chance of your getting it, Sidney?"

"Sometimes I do, and sometimes I'm not so sure about it. Mr. Romer is my solid friend, and he'll do what he can when Grindley, the present Denver man, gets his step up. But I wouldn't bet quite so high on the new general traffic manager. Somehow, I can't help feeling that he's a—a——"

"I've seen him," the girl interrupted. "He was in Denver a few days ago—on an inspection trip with Mr. McEvoy. I thought he looked like a dear, tired-out old angel."

Livingston became instantly curious.

"How did you happen to meet him?" he queried.

"I didn't 'meet' him, of course; not to be introduced. But he and Mr. McEvoy went to the theater, and after-

ward, at supper at the Savoy, I had him pointed out to me."

"Did you say your father pointed him out to you?" said Livingston, with the fine subtlety of a steam shovel going into action.

"No; it was Miles." The twilight had fallen, and her face was no longer an open index for everybody to read. But she made the correction calmly, and quite as if there could be no possible reason why she should not have gone to the theater, and afterward to the Savoy, with her cousin.

Livingston found a cigar in his pocket, and drew it out to stare at it thoughtfully; so hard and so thoughtfully that the wrapper curled up and burst between his finger and thumb. One does not lightly suspect the loved one's motives or soberly cast suspicion upon things high and holy. But even the best beloved may be human enough to trip and stumble among the traps and pitfalls in some path of inexpediency. Livingston was groping about in his mind for the gentlest possible way of expressing his rooted disapproval of Glendish as Philippa's escort when a night man from the station in the cañon below came up the porch steps to deliver a telegram.

When the messenger had gone, Livingston tore the envelope across, and the flare of a wax cigar lighter sufficed for the reading of the message.

"What is it?" demanded the girl, once more sitting up in the hammock. "Don't tell me that they're not going to let you stay over Sunday with me, Sidney."

"You've guessed it, Philly," was his half-mechanical reply. "It's from Mr. Romer, and he thinks I'm still in Denver."

"And he is telling you to hurry back to St. Paul?"

"No; that is the crazy-quilt part of it. He tells me to take the night train from Denver to San Francisco, and when I reach to report *pronto* to a man named Gregory, whose address is in the telegram."

"Oh, dear!" said the girl; "that is always the way. We can never be together for a single day without these wretched telegrams coming to search you out and send you off to the other side of the planet! What will you do?"

Livingston was glancing at the face of his watch, using another wax match for illumination.

"The up train will be along in a few minutes; if I can catch it, I'll still be in time to make the Midland Limited at Leadville. I guess it's another case of 'Hello' and 'Good-by,' little girl." And since his suit case had not yet been unpacked, he got it and took his leave of her on the spot, hurrying away when the desperately inadequate parting was accomplished, to bolt down the path for the train catching.

As Disappointment, in the person of the athletic young railroad man, went stumbling down the path in the darkness, it was met by Surprise coming up; though the surprise was not for Livingston, and in the double shadow of the cliff trail he did not recognize the dark-faced, immaculately dressed man who was toiling upward toward the Armstrong cottage.

A few minutes afterward, the dark-faced one mounted the porch steps, and took the chair beside Miss Goodwin's hammock—the one lately vacated by Livingston. During the leisurely clipping and lighting of a cigar, he did not speak, and when he did, it was to say:

"I met Sid Livingtson going down the trail with his grip as I came up. I thought he was to stay over Sunday."

"So he was," returned the girl in the hammock, "but he had a telegram from the general freight agent, and had to leave by the first train."

"Called back, eh?" laughed the smoker. "He'll be called down as well as back some fine day if he doesn't quit

making his expense account cover so many trips to Denver."

"Miles!" protested the voice from the hammock. "Why is it you can be so nice to everybody else and so vicious when you happen to speak of Sidney? He wasn't called back. Mr. Romer wants him to go on to San Francisco by the first train."

Glendish's start was violent enough to make him drop the freshly lighted cigar. After he had picked it up and frugally wiped the end of it on his pocket handkerchief, he said quietly: "To the Pacific coast, eh? I wonder what that means?"

"Why should you wonder?" queried the lawyer's daughter half pettishly. "What difference does it make to you?"

"Not any difference to me, of course. But I should think it would jar you a little, Philippa. You're not likely to see him again for a long time, are you?"

"Why shouldn't I see him? Perhaps he will stop over again on his way East. I'll never forgive him if he doesn't."

Glendish turned slowly in his chair.

"Then you don't know—your father hasn't told you?" he asked curiously.

"I haven't heard from poppa since yesterday. What is it that I haven't been told?"

"I don't know as I ought to give it away; perhaps he's saving it for a surprise to you. But I'll take a chance, anyway. I was with your father a few hours ago—just before I left the city. He has been commissioned by the interior department to go to Alaska to investigate the coal-field muddle on the ground, and he is going to take you with him for the run up the coast."

The girl's comment could scarcely be called joyful. It was a half-smothered sob.

"To Alaska—to be gone goodness knows how long! And—and I may not even be able to exchange one poor little wire with Sidney! Oh, Miles, I simply *can't* go."

"When so good a father as yours wants to give you a little pleasure trip, you can't very well refuse him, Cousin Philly; and, besides, he needs you to take care of him. He isn't as strong as he used to be," said the dark-faced man, and in her heart of hearts Philippa knew it was true and said no more.

As for the ex-railroad man who had turned traitor to his salt, and whose ambiguous title of "special agent" covered duties ranging all the way from expert examinations of railroad records to "shadow" work in keeping track of reluctant witnesses, he smoked on in thoughtful silence long after Miss Goodwin had left her hammock and had disappeared within doors.

Later the thoughtful weighing and measuring bore fruit in a hasty consulting of time-tables, followed by a leisurely scramble, gripsack in hand, down the steep path to the small railroad station beside the tumbling river. A Denver-pointed freight was scheduled to come along within the next few minutes, and Glendish put in the waiting time writing a telegram. It was addressed to a certain official in the department of justice, at Washington, and it read:

> In re U. S. vs. Choltapec: (Choltapec being the cipher for the name of Livingston's railroad company.) Defendants are trying to run principal witness out of the country. Shall follow, and if no orders to contrary, shall arrest and bring him back Wire me care Bogota, San Francisco.
>
> GLENDISH, Spl. Agt.

CHAPTER III.

A FLYER IN OREGON PINE.

Livingston had less than five minutes to spare between trains at Leadville Junction, but the Livingston luck was with him, and he made the connection and so saw the sunrise from the

crooked reverse curves of the Saguache as the through train was storming up the steep approach to Hagerman's.

Farther along, after he had breakfasted and the train had threaded the long bore of the Busk Tunnel and was rocketing down the grades of the western slope, he had time to reread the telegram from headquarters, and to consider, if he chose, its wonder-provoking brevity and its hint that an exceedingly curious traffic situation must have developed in San Francisco to make it necessary to send a man measurably unfamiliar with the Pacific-coast end of things two thousand miles out of his way to deal with it.

As for this, however, the seasoned railroad man soon learns to take things pretty much as they come, knowing that each fresh business problem is likely to present all sorts of new angles. An order was an order, and for three days and part of a fourth—there was a washout in the Sierras that cost him twenty-four hours of lost time—Livingston wore out the eastward-racing miles as best he could, and as he had worn out many other miles of business travel; reading a little in his Pullman section, eating at stated intervals, and spending a good bit of the between-meals periods in the smoking compartment, hobnobbing cheerfully with the transient acquaintances to be made in any Pullman smoking room.

Recalling the uneventful trip afterward, he remembered that none of these smoking-room by-friends had individualized himself specially; and when, on the evening of the fourth day, he landed in the Pacific coast metropolis, it was as a stranger in a city full of strangers. None the less, at the great hotel at which he was presently registering, there was somebody to clap him upon the shoulder at the book-signing moment; namely, one Orson Brent, sometime city passenger agent in Denver, and hence a comrade.

"Well, well, Sidney, old man! What good-natured little old blizzard blew you out here?" was the passenger man's greeting, and Livingston was glad enough to grip hands with some one who was pleasantly remindful of his Denver days.

"Minnesota always means blizzards to you outlanders, even in the middle of summer, doesn't it?" he laughed. And then: "I don't know what sort of an ill wind it was that blew me this far west—not yet, but that will keep. Been to dinner? Don't say you have, because I want you to come in and eat a bite with me while we reminisce a few lines."

"Can't do it," said Brent; "not unless you can find somebody who will lend me another tummy. I'm just out of the dining room."

"All right; then you'll come in and sit down and watch me get my money's worth. I shall blow up if I don't get a chance to talk to somebody I know. No; excuses don't go. I know you're as busy as a cutworm in a cabbage patch, but that doesn't make any difference."

Brent laughed, and turned to the room clerk.

"If Mr. Farnham comes in, send for me," he directed. "I'll be in the café with Mr. Livingston."

With this for a start, the two young men killed a good half hour over a chummy table in the corner of the big café, bringing things up to date. It was their first meeting for something more than a year, and in the Denver days they had been as David and Jonathan.

"Of course, you chase back to Denver every once in a while," said Brent, when they had worked through the thick of the reminiscences. "How about the little Philippa girl? Didn't somebody tell me that you'd gone and got yourself duly and properly branded up at the Goodwin ranch?"

"We're engaged, and the date is set

for the first week in September," said Livingston, with proper dignity.

"Hail—two of 'em—put it there!" said the passenger man, reaching a congratulatory hand across the table. "So you did manage to run Cousin Glendish off the reservation, finally, did you? By the way, he's here in Frisco. Did you know that?"

"No!" exclaimed Livingston, and then: "Say—that can't be, Orson. I saw him in Denver the day I left."

"I can't help it. I saw him out yonder in the lobby, not more than half a minute before you came up to register. When I saw you, I was just wondering what sort of a job he was planning to put up on us poor railroad innocents this time."

Livingston was silent for a moment. The twenty-four-hour delay of his own train accounted for Glendish's ability to win if he were racing him to the coast. Then, because Brent was a good friend and a trustworthy, he made a break into the field of the business confidences.

"Of course, you know what Glendish is doing, Orson? They call him a 'special agent' for the commission, but, as a matter of fact, he is a sort of sublimated spotter. And this time I'm more than half inclined to suspect that he is after me."

Whereupon he told Brent briefly of the mysterious order from headquarters, and of his own conclusion that he had been sent into the Western field to cover the tracks of the local freight men in some transaction that would not bear daylight.

"What did you say was the name of the man you were told to hunt up?" asked Brent.

"Mr. Adam Gregory, of Gregory & Bolter."

Brent laughed silently.

"You're up against it this time, Sidney," he asserted. "They are a pair of freaks from Freakville. Lumber people, you know, with a record for skinning the market alive and frying the fat out of every combination that has ever tried to down 'em. Gregory's a little man with the glibbest tongue that was ever hung in the middle and set to wag both ways at once. And Bolter—well, he's a retired sea captain, and if his name wasn't Captain Kidd 'as he sailed, as he sailed,' people around here will tell you that it ought to have been."

"Big business?" queried Livingston.

"A whaling big business. They handle Oregon pine mostly, I believe, and they land contracts everywhere. How they do it is a mystery to me. You wouldn't think old Adam Gregory could ever stop talking long enough to do any business with anybody, and, as for the captain, they'll tell you at the lumber wharves that nobody has ever seen him completely and entirely sober since he's been in business here."

"Ump!" said Livingston, making no attempt to conceal his disgust. "When you fellows out here get hold of something too muddy to touch, you wire East, and rope down some poor fellow out of God's country! Where will I find this talkative Mr. Gregory?"

"It's two to one you'll find him at his shack office down in the lumber district any time up to midnight. He works while his partner carouses. But you don't need to tear off down there to-night, do you?"

"The sooner I go, the sooner I'll be able to get back to civilization," laughed Livingston, good naturedly sardonic, and just then a waiter came up with a message from the room clerk; the man for whom Brent had been waiting was asking for him at the desk.

The passenger agent got up reluctantly.

"That means that I'll have to vanish," he said. "I'm all kinds of sorry; I'd like to have the evening with you. But business is business. So long, till to-morrow."

After Brent had gone, Livingston took his time about finishing his coffee, and later, when he passed through the lobby to begin the quest for Mr. Adam Gregory, the passenger man had disappeared.

It was after he had left the street car which carried him down to the region of lumber yards and had walked two or three squares toward the water front that he first got the notion that some one was following him. More than once he made sure that he heard footsteps behind him; treadings carefully timed to match his own, but when, at the next lighted corner, he wheeled suddenly to surprise the shadower, there was no one in sight.

As he went on, the leaven set to work by the little confidence with Brent began to foster a huge discontent, and the solution of the mystery which had been hinted at in the talk with the passenger man grew into a conviction. Some freight deal—probably a crooked one—was to be put through with the man Gregory; and to "save the face" of the San Francisco railroad force—to enable its members to go into court, if need be, and swear that they knew nothing about it—he was to be employed as the deal closer.

It made him generously indignant for the moment. Thus far, as he had bluntly told the traffic manager's confidential secretary over the club luncheon, he had fought for business on a straight basis, and his record was clean. Now, as it seemed, the clean sheet was to be marred.

It was a hasty judgment that Livingston passed upon his superiors in the heart of the indignant moment, but Glendish's sudden appearance in San Francisco had the effect of clinching it. A crooked transaction was on the cards; the Interstate Commerce people had got wind of it, and their special agent was on the ground to try to get the evidence. When he reached this point in the broad highway of supposition, Livingston said: "Oh, dammit all!" and he meant it.

It was among the biggest of the lumber piles that he finally found the address he was looking for; a corrugated-iron office shed backed up against a sawed forest of Oregon pine ranged in towering stacks with only narrow wagonways between the rows. There was a light in the office to show that it was occupied, and Livingston went in. At a desk in one corner of the sheet-iron box sat a small, sallow-faced, shrewd-eyed man, seemingly up to his neck in work. But at the door opening he pushed the papers aside, and looked up quickly.

"Ah, it's you, is it, Mr. Livingston?" he said briskly. "We were hardly looking for you until to-morrow. You've made a quick trip across. Draw up a chair, and sit down."

More mystified than ever, Livingston took the indicated chair, and began to search in his pockets for his cigar case. But the small man at the desk forestalled him.

"Try one of mine," he interposed, taking a freshly opened box from a drawer in the desk; and, when Livingston had helped himself to one of the curiously twisted black smokes from the box—which bore no sign of a revenue stamp: "You needn't be afraid of them; there is nothing the matter with them except that they are a fairly famous Mexican brand, and they've somehow got in without paying the customhouse."

Livingston lighted the queer-looking cigar, and the first whiff was delicious. When it was going well, he leaned back in his chair, and took the measure of the man whom he had come so far to meet.

"When you are quite good and ready, Mr. Gregory, perhaps you'll tell me what I'm here for," he began, with the cheerfully challenging smile which

made him loyal friends and honest enemies wherever he went.

'Surely! Didn't they tell you at headquarters as you came through?"

"I was already as far west as Denver when Mr. Romer's wire found me, and I was merely told to come here at once and look you up."

The small man tilted his chair, and laughed—cackled, would be the better word.

"If that doesn't beat a hog a-flying wrong end to!" he chuckled. "Came right along, without knowing the first thing about what you were up against? That speaks volumes for the discipline on your railroad, Mr. Livingston; whole libraries, you might say. And all I wanted or asked for was a bit of inside information that they told me you could give me straighter than anybody else this side of Chicago."

"You'll have to show me, Mr. Gregory," said the one who had small use for the methods of indirection. "Who are you?"

"I'm in lumber, as you see—Oregon stuff mostly—and to-morrow you can look me up through the local railroad offices, if you feel like it. They know me pretty well up in Montgomery Street. I've put a good many thousand dollars' worth of freight in their way, first and last. But that's neither here nor there. We're on the edge of a big deal with the heaviest lumber buyer in Minnesota, and, if we can pull it off, we'll make a wad of money, and your road will get the freight. But the thing has got down to a point where we were practically obliged to see and talk with somebody who knows the Minnesota end of the business—somebody we can trust for a straight story about these people who are buying."

"Go on," said Livingston. "I'm beginning to see the hole in the millstone, though I can't see just why you prefer a railroad man's report to a write-up from the commercial agencies."

"All in good time, all in good time, Mr. Livingston," returned the little man genially. "Perhaps, for the present, it will answer if I say that we *do* prefer the personal report." Then, as he sprang up and began to sweep the desk litter into an open drawer: "Let's go out and hunt up my partner. He is really the man who won't trust the commercial agencies, you know; queerest old 'Captain Cuttle' you ever laid eyes, on Mr. Livingston—was skipper on a lumber hooker for years before he made his shore stake, and you'd take him for a retired pirate to this good minute. There's no telling where we'll find him at this time of night; most likely punishing a bottle of rum with some of his old messmates in a waterfront dive."

Livingston's experience hitherto as a railroad solicitor had been rich in incident, but not in any part of it had he found anything to compare with this San Francisco episode. The absurdities were crowding thickly upon him as he forthfared through the deserted streets of the lumber docks with his voluble guide.

Why any business man—even the queerest of Captain Cuttles—should want a personal verbal report on a distant customer before dealing with him, why he should prefer the verbal report to the accurate and detailed information which the commercial agencies could furnish, was a ridiculous mystery.

At this stage of the proceedings, Livingston was charging all of the absurdities up to the account of Gregory & Co. He knew railroading in all of its crooks and turnings—or thought he did—and it did not strike him as being in any sense absurd that his superior should send him a few thousand miles out of his way to gratify the whim of an eccentric shipper.

It was an easy, and a comparatively cheap, way of securing Gregory & Co.'s business, and was, of course—

and he reached this conclusion with a profound sigh of relief—a perfectly legitimate way of securing it.

But the ridiculous phase of the incident was still emphasizing itself as he tramped along with the talkative little lumber dealer; and Gregory himself seemed to feel it, since he interrupted his own stream of commonplace now and then to apologize for his "queer" partner and that partner's occasional lapses into unbusinesslike methods.

Being entirely strange to that part of the city through which his guide was piloting him, Livingston got little idea of directions or distances, but when they came into the peopled streets, he judged that they were still in the vicinity of the water front. At one of the least garish of the many saloons they were passing, the little man stopped, and said something about the extreme dryness of things, and, not to be overrighteous, Livingston went in with him.

Once inside, the lumber merchant seemed to lose sight, temporarily at least, of the business object. A friend of his, a Sonoma vineyardist, had lately put a brand of his own wine on the market, and Livingston must pass an opinion upon it.

At this point, with the slender half of a reasonable excuse, the young man from St. Paul would have deferred the entire adventure to daylight and gone back to his hotel. Without having any hard-and-fast prejudices or predilections worth speaking of, he had no notion of entering upon even the mildest carouse in the company of the voluble little man who dealt in Oregon pine and queer partners.

On the other hand, it seemed an ill thing to flout the little man's attempt at hospitality, and the upshot of the matter was that Livingston presently found himself sitting at a small round table in the barroom, sipping gingerly at a glass of the thin, acrid stuff which passes for wine with some Californians; sipping and listening with forced attention to Gregory's long-winded story of the vineyardist's ups and downs in the business of wine-making.

What followed was by no means easy to recall—after the fact. From listening and putting in the necessary word here and there, Livingston found himself growing unaccountably drowsy as the lumber merchant droned on and on. Somewhere in the dry desert of volubility there was a break; and, after that, a dim recollection of other wanderings, in which Gregory gave him a guiding arm and was always talking like a phonograph wound up and set to run indefinitely.

Beyond this there was a vague mental picture of the interior of a sailors' pothouse, reeking with the odors of bad tobacco and still viler liquor; of falling into a strange, half-comatose condition, in which it seemed quite feasible to stand apart and see himself sitting with his head in his hands and his elbows upon a pig-filthy card table; to see and hear Gregory and a hairy-faced buccaneer and a third man arguing over him, the argument ending with the shoving of a paper across the table and the thrusting of a pen into the hand of the helpless other self.

Without being in any way able to prevent it, Livingston—the part of him that was looking on—saw his dullard self at the table grip the pen and sign; and after that there was a vast and shoreless blank, stormful and troublous only as the vaguest dream may have disturbed the soundest sleeper of the fabled seven.

CHAPTER IV.

"YO, HO, HO, AND A BOTTLE——"

When Livingston awoke, as a single and sane personality instead of in the dual and somewhat uncertain rôle which figured as his latest recollection, he found it difficult to persuade himself

that he was not still struggling in the grasp of a dream which was now assuming another and a vastly more disconcerting form.

As nearly as he could determine, he was at sea, apparently the sole occupant of a ship's forecastle. That it was the forecastle, he could see by twisting his head and raising it a little to peer over the boxlike bunk edge; the stuffy, thick-timbered little den was triangular in shape, and the bunks were ranged in tiers of three, completely filling two sides of the triangle.

Having thus in a manner oriented himself, the next thing to claim his attention was a clumsy bandage upon his head; the dressing, as he soon determined by a throbbing pain, of a wound of some kind which was stiff with clotted blood.

Overhead he could hear the trampling of men and the creaking of spars and cordage; and from the regular lift and plunge and the rush of the surges under the ship's forefoot, it was evident that the vessel was in open water, sailing—as he was seawise enough to gather—fairly on the wind.

Even with all these evidences tangible and audible, the fantastic dream notion persisted. Lying back in the boxlike bunk, he strove to recall in detail the happenings of the night. They were clear enough, up to a certain point—the point at which the talkative little lumber merchant's story of the vine grower's ups and downs had begun to have a hypnotic effect. Could it be possible that he had been hypnotized—that he was still under the effect of the spell? Manifestly not. The rough realities were too obtrusive and too painful to be phantasmic.

What then? What had happened to him during the interval between sleeping and waking? Quickly he passed in review all the "shanghai" stories he had heard or read—he had classed most of them as fictions, believing that no shipmaster short of a pirate would take the risk of a kidnaper's penalties.

Then there came to him the recollection of the scene in the ill-smelling saloon; the scene in which he had seemed to stand aside to look on while his other self sat at a card table and signed a paper of some sort. Had he, in the drowsy trance which had robbed him of reason and accountability, been so besotted as to "sign on" with some skipper for a voyage to the unknown? Considered in the light of present evidences, it began to look extremely like it.

It was characteristic of the quality which his business training had developed that he began at once to dig for the primal cause. If he had been kidnaped, there must have been a plot, with some one to be benefited. Who was the beneficiary? Not Gregory certainly; the little man was too evidently only a tool—and not a very willing one, if the hazy recollections counted for anything, since the clearest of the dim pictures was the one which showed Gregory expostulating anxiously with the man for whom the paper had been signed.

But who, then? Livingston gave it up with a groan of exasperation; and, to his astonishment, the groan was echoed from the opposite bunk. Peering over his box edge again in the murky twilight of the place, he made out a haggard face lifting itself into view above the box edge of the opposite sleeping shelf. Then he made sure he was dreaming, for the face was the face of Philippa's cousin, Miles Glendish.

"Hello!" he ejaculated, and the exclamation was fairly jerked out of him in his astoundment at the apparition.

The man in the other bunk answered with a ghastly grin, and raised himself upon an elbow.

"Same to you," was the thick-tongued rejoinder. And then: "I thought they'd

got your goat. Knocked you out for keeps."

"Oh, you did, did you?" growled Livingston. "What do you know about it?"

"All there is to know, I guess," was the feeble reply, which was punctuated by a shudder of nausea. "You're signed on for a voyage to God knows where, and I've been shanghaied to keep you company."

Livingston propped himself against the bunkhead, and closed his eyes.

"You'll have to tell it over to me in words of one syllable," he protested. "It's a pure pipe dream, as it stands."

Glendish had another shuddering fit, sitting up in the blankets and doubling himself like a contortionist with his head between his knees.

"It's horrible!" he panted, when the fit had passed. "I—I've never been able to be seasick like other people. I'm a dead man, Livingston. I'll never live to get out of this!"

"Piffle! That's what they all say," snorted Livingston. "Buck up and be a man!"

"That's all right for you!" was the bickering countershot. "Wait till you get to the point where you're afraid you're going to die one minute, and the next minute you're afraid you won't!"

"I'm not going to get to that point, Glendish. But I'll tell you what I am going to do. I'm going to crawl over there and beat you to ravelings if you don't hurry up and tell me what happened last night."

"You were drunk! That's the first thing that happened!" was the vicious retort.

"That's a lie, Glendish—one of the million or so you've told and sworn to since you quit being a railroad man. But let it go. Drunk or drugged, it's all the same. I don't remember anything beyond sitting in a saloon with a man named Gregory and listening to his stories until I went to sleep."

"I know," said the special agent. "I went with you and stayed with you—more's the pity. That's why I'm here."

"But it doesn't tell me why I'm here," rapped out the victim.

Glendish had another contortion fit, less violent than the first, and, when he got his breath again, he went on, his manner showing that he found some little spiteful pleasure in the narration.

"You were a stumblingblock, and you had to be got rid of; that's all there was to it. I was at the Platte Cañon cottage the night you left, and Philippa told me about your wire from headquarters. You were wanted as a witness in the rebate case against the railroad, and I knew the railroad lawyers would try to put you out of reach of a subpœna. They've done it."

"Good Lord!" said Livingston. "You don't mean to say that Mr. Romer——"

"Most probably Romer didn't know anything about it. The lawyers fix these things up quietly among themselves, and you don't know you're hurt till you're plumb dead. Gregory did actually wire Romer to send you out to Frisco. That much of it was straight and aboveboard."

"And Gregory was hired to kill me off?"

"It shapes up that way. He was in trouble of some sort, tangled up in some crooked business deal, and your railroad people stood in a position to be able to swear him out of it. One good turn deserves another, you know."

"Go on," groaned the stumblingblock.

"You hiked for Frisco on your telegram, and I hiked after you. I was going to get a Federal court warrant and arrest you, if it came down to brass tacks. Then this Gregory man butted in, and that was all new to me. I shadowed you, and was big enough fool to be in at the death."

"Still, you don't tell me what happened, and how I got this broken head."

"I'm coming to that. I guess Greg-

ory doped the sour wine he bought for you; you acted like a drugged man afterward, anyhow. He dragged you around from one sailors' barroom to another until he found his sea-captain partner. The scheme was to put you on one of the lumber schooners bound for Alaska—at least, that was where she was clearing for. But really she was going to British Columbia for a smuggled cargo. Once they got you outside of the jurisdiction of the United States courts, they meant to hold you one way or another until the danger had blown over."

"And we're on the lumber ship now?"

"It's worse than that. At the last minute the captain of the lumber schooner kicked out. It was when he heard your name mentioned. It seems that he knew something about your folks in New York, and he said there'd be the devil to pay when the thing came out. At that, Gregory's old pirate of a partner pulled another man in; the captain of this hooker we're on now. There was some little talk that I didn't catch onto, and Gregory hung off; threatening to wash his hands of the whole business. But in the end they got you to sign the ship's papers, and started to take you aboard. Then the fun began. You put five of them out of the game before they clubbed you silly, and carried you down to the bay front. It was the prettiest scrap I ever saw."

"Lord, Lord! And I don't remember a blessed thing about it!" said Livingston weakly.

"You ought to remember it. What you did to that gang of thugs was a-plenty. But they got you, finally, as I say; and then it was up to me to find out what they were going to do with you. I don't love you any too well, Livingston, but I was going to keep you in America if I had to start a revenue cutter after you. But to do that, I had first to find out the name of this scow boat; and, while I was trying to pry that necessary fact loose, they nabbed me."

"Shanghaied you?" queried Livingston.

"That's about it. I overheard the captain's talk—a little of it. It seems he was going out short-handed, anyway, and was sweeping the corners for men."

Just here Glendish fell into another of the shuddering fits, and, when it was over, Livingston said: "Well, what's the answer? What is this ship, and where are we bound?"

The sick man shook his head dejectedly.

"I don't know any more than a goat, Livingston. But it's something crooked. She's a gasoline auxiliary, pretty smartly powered, and she's got the lines of an old-time clipper. She was towed out of her berth as cautiously as if she were stealing off without her clearance papers, and went slipping down the bay under sail. Some time before we got through the Golden Gate, the searchlights began to play, and a harbor tug chased us. Then we got the power on, and made a run for it. That's all I can tell you."

"Much of a crew?"

"I couldn't tell in the dark. But it's a tough bunch, all right, and four times as big as it need be. Just before I keeled over and got kicked into this hole, the mates went through the crowd for weapons. There was a free-for-all fight, and a shot or two fired. I don't know how it came out, and I wasn't in any condition to care very much."

Livingston sat up in the low bunk, and tried to get a fair grasp of the situation.

"You say that I signed the ship's papers. Does that mean that I'm in for the entire voyage and whatever they want to hand out to me—with no hope of squaring things when I get back to earth again? Is that the size of it, Glendish?"

"Same as," was the laconic rejoinder.

"And you haven't any idea as to where we're bound, or how long it will last?"

"No more than you have. At first I thought this hooker might be an illegal stealer, a 'pelagic,' as they call 'em in the treaties. But somehow the notion don't seem to fit. I was awake when the watch below turned in last night—God knows if I shall ever be able to sleep again—and it didn't seem like a sealer's crew, some way. Bad men from Bitter Creek would fit 'em better; and I don't believe there were three sure-enough sailors in the bunch, from their lingo."

"Still, you believe it's something crooked?"

"I hope to thunder it is!" rasped the sick man, in a sudden outburst of vindictiveness. "The crookeder the better. They've got me, but they don't know who or what I am, or what I can do to 'em if they ever make land within shouting distance of a customhouse flag! I'll make 'em sweat, Livingston! I'll put the last black-hearted hobo of 'em on the stone pile till his hair turns white and his teeth drop out! And I can do it. *I didn't sign any papers!*"

Livingston's grin was a strong man's easing of strains.

"First catch your hare," he advised. And then: "Yesterday, and for a good bit back of that, you were trying to cut my throat, Glendish; and I'll be frank enough to say that I wouldn't have missed a good chance to land on you. We're on opposite teams in the big game, and it's up to each of us to do the other, if he can. That's the status in America; it's for you to say what it's going to be while we are both at the mercy of this hooker captain. What's it to be—peace or war?"

Glendish sat up, and groaned again in one of his recurrent agonies. The light in the forecastle was poor, but Livingston could see the sweat starting in great beads on the sick man's forehead, and for the moment the dark face was ghastly and livid. When the paroxysm was over, Glendish fell back in the bunk, and when he spoke the words came jerkily.

"Big game—nothing!" he panted. "You know well enough why I swung over to the other side; it was to get a better chance to scrag you. And I'll never quit, Livingston—not while you live and Philippa Goodwin lives!"

"I understand," was the careless reply. "That's the status in America, as I say, and I don't know that I'd give a nickel to have it changed. But here and now, Glendish: do we go on feeling for each other's throat—you in your asinine vindictiveness, and I in sheer self-defense? Or shall we call it off for the present and buck up together against the common enemy?"

To this common-sense appeal, Glendish gave only a qualified assent. And behind the assent there were reservations. A stubborn slant toward treachery is not to be overcome in a single yielding to the more generous promptings.

"I'm not an ass," he said sourly. "I stand with you, of course—until we can claw out of this mix-up. All I ask is that you don't let them know who I am. If they should find out that I'm in the government service, they'd never let me get back alive; never in this wide world."

Livingston had a saving sense of humor, and he was able to laugh.

"Don't take yourself too seriously, Glendish," he counseled. "You've dropped out of 'this wide world,' and so have I, and I'll venture to say that neither of us has left more than a ripple to show where he went down. What sort of a splash we'll make when we come up again is another matter. But it's a safe bet that it won't be as big as we'd like to have it."

"Speak for yourself," said the tor-

mented one grittingly, and what more he might have said was lost in a sudden sliding of the forecastle hatch, the inrush of a blinding flood of daylight, and the blotting out of the same by the clambering descent of a big-bodied man in shapeless sea clothes and with a mate's cap to cover an uncombed thatch of tawny hair which bushed down over cheek and jaw in a silky yellow beard.

With only a contemptuous glance for the drawn-up figure in the port box bunk, the yellow-haired giant turned to Livingston.

"Da captain he say you coom vit mae to da cabin, and you coom—vitout any dem monkeyshane date you bane kickin' oop las' nate," he rumbled, in the broken speech which fitted accurately with the steel-blue eyes, the yellow mane, and the Viking beard. And Livingston, a little unsteady on his legs with the throbbing headache, turned out, and followed the mate's lead to the deck and the welcome outbreadth of sunshine and fresh air.

CHAPTER V.

CAPTAIN LAMB.

Though Livingston was New York born and bred, his seafaring experience had been limited to a few college-vacation yachting cruises on the Atlantic seaboard. Hence, what with the update into the dazzling sunlight and the strangeness of the surroundings, he was scarcely qualified to take the nautical measure of the stout, weather-beaten Western ocean schooner in the short passage from the fore deck to the main companion at the heels of the yellow-haired mate.

Nevertheless, so far as might be seen, orderly routine seemed to have succeeded to the chaotic mêlée of the night as described by Glendish. The schooner was going free, with a fair wind, and the course, as nearly as one might guess it from the position of the sun, was a few points west of north. The watch on deck was indistinguishable from the watch off duty.

There was apparently no work to be done, and the men—a pick-up crew, looking more like a nooning gang of railroad laborers than mariners—were idling in little knots and groups, with the usual number of pallid faces to mark the unseasoned landsmen.

Livingston recalled Glendish's descriptive phrase, and acknowledged its aptness. If appearances went for anything, the hooker's crew might have figured as a survival, not of the fittest, but of the flotsam and jetsam; the human skimmings of the great port of call they were leaving behind.

Larscom, the big mate, stopped at the companion stair, and motioned for his follower to go down. At the sudden transition from the bright sunshine to the port-lighted cabin, Livingston went blind again; when he could see, he found himself in a bare little den differing from the heavily timbered forecastle only in shape.

A swinging lamp was describing wabbling ellipses at the end of its chain, keeping time to the reach and lunge of the vessel over the long Pacific surges; there were three sea chests and a stool or two, and a roughly built table under the suspended lamp.

At the table sat a square-shouldered, well-set-up man in a pea-jacket and corduroys, with a yachting cap pulled down over his well-shaped head; a man in his early thirties, Livingston guessed, a pleasant-faced autocrat with a glimpse of humor in the gray eyes to temper the hardness of the straight-lined mouth and the angular jaw which was indifferently masked by a tightly curling brown beard trimmed to a point.

"So," said the waiting autocrat genially, "you were able to get up and come aft, were you, Mr. Livingston? I'm glad of that. Draw up a stool and sit

down. You haven't quite got your sea legs yet, or is it the tap on the head we had to give you last night?"

Livingston wanted to explode; it was undeniably his right and privilege as a kidnaper's victim. But short of doing something violent, he could think of no way of beginning a quarrel with the pleasant-faced skipper who had kidnaped him overnight and was now smiling level-eyed at him across the cabin table. So he took the nearest stool, and sat down with his back to the mainmast.

"That's right," approved the kidnaper, still cordially affable. "Ductility—a disposition to save breakages by yielding a little here and there—is the secret of a long and happy life, Mr. Livingston. To be a true philosopher, one must be malleable. I wish you might have realized that last night. It would have relieved us of a very harsh and unfeeling necessity—the necessity of clubbing you into a state of insensibility. However, we won't waste time on the bygones. Your head will doubtless heal, and then you'll be a philosopher again. I'm sure of it."

"Hold on," broke in the victim. "Perhaps it will be just as well if we don't begin by taking too many things for granted, Captain——"

"Lamb, if you please; Ignatius Loyola Lamb, if you want it entire," smilingly interjected the kidnaper.

"Well, then, Captain Lamb, as I say, maybe it will be better if we don't take too much for granted. When we get within hailing distance of a court of law again, I shall do my level best to make you pay—not only for the man-stealing, but for the broken head as well. Let's understand this definitely, right at the start."

The handsome skipper sat back, and buried his hands in his pea-jacket pockets.

"That is a future, Mr. Livingston, and we are too far away from Wall Street to deal in futures—and, incidentally, too far from the courts to let any anxious thought of them disturb the present. I sent Larscom after you a few minutes ago so that we might discuss your status on board the *Colleen Bawn*. Are you aware that you have signed on for a voyage to the Pribilofs as an able-bodied seaman?"

"No," said Livingston briefly. He was still hoping that Glendish's assertion might fall somewhat short of the actual fact.

Captain Lamb drew a paper from his pocket, and passed it across the table.

"See for yourself," he said succinctly, and Livingston looked and saw his signature fairly written under a transcript of the ship's articles.

"That, also, was a necessity which I would gladly have dodged," the captain went on smoothly. "But there seemed to be no possibility of inducing you to come with us voluntarily, and—well, to put it very crudely, we needed you."

"You mean that you needed the money you were paid for getting me out of the way!" was the quick retort.

"Oh, no; you are mistaken—completely mistaken now. Quite the contrary. I bought and paid for the privilege of enlisting you, odd as it may seem. For reasons which you will doubtless understand better than I do or can, somebody did want to get you out of the way, and the price, as I understood it, was to be divided between your friend, Gregory, and the skipper of a certain lumber schooner which was about to sail for some no-man's land in southern Alaska. At the last moment this hooker captain learned that you are one of the New York Livingstons, and lost his nerve. That was my opportunity, and I took it—purchased it, as a matter of fact. And it was this very bit of information about your personality that made me as eager to step into the breach as the hooker skipper was anxious to step out of it. Odd, wasn't it?"

"So blamed odd that I shall have to ask you to show me," growled the prisoner.

"I can't show you all of it, at the present time," was the even-voiced rejoinder. "Let it be enough if I say that this little expedition of mine needed a man with your equipment, Mr. Livingston; it couldn't sail without him, and I was at my wits' end."

"My equipment? Great Jehu! I'm a railroad man, Captain Lamb. Have you mistaken me for something else?"

"Ah! But before the railroading you were a university man. I do hope you haven't forgotten all you learned in college, Mr. Livingston. That would be an irretrievable misfortune!"

"I've nothing more than a smattering of engineering, if that's what you mean," said the victim, now thoroughly bewildered and mystified.

"It is precisely what I mean. You are a technical mathematician, and unhappily my acquirements in that field are only those of the amateur navigator. Now we can come down to that present which is trying so spitefully to elude us. I'm going to make you a proposal. As an ordinary seaman—which, according to the ship's articles, is what you have made yourself—you are entitled to pull and haul with the others, to get your meals at the galley door, and to sleep, luxuriously or otherwise, in the forecastle. And at the end of the voyage you get a seaman's pay."

"And you'll get yours at about the same minute!" was the wrathful interruption.

"No; hear me through," said the affable kidnaper mildly. "You will have no legal recourse; none whatever. There were two witnesses who saw you sign on: your friend, Gregory, and his rum-drinking partner. They're both in too deep to pull out, and to save themselves they'll swear that you signed voluntarily. That is what you are in for, Mr. Livingston, and, if I say the word, it's what you will get. But I don't want to make it hard for you. Quite the contrary, I'm going to give you quarters aft and a seat at the cabin table. And besides that, I'm going to hand over a liberal share of the prize money, *when you have helped to earn it.*"

"The prize money?" echoed Livingston. "That sounds like old-fashioned piracy, Captain Lamb. I thought we were past all that nowadays."

The captain's laugh was gently derisive.

"You can say that—and you a railroad man? Why, my dear fellow, this is the golden age of piracy, and our own glorious America figures as the Spanish Main, par excellence! We are living over again the age that Wordsworth was describing when he said:

"The good old rule
  Sufficeth them—the simple plan,
That they should take who have the power,
  And they should keep who can.

"But that is a trifle beside the mark. The *Colleen Bawn* isn't going to fly the black flag, save in the most modern and approved sense of the phrase, and all the arms she carries are safely under lock and key in my cabin. None the less, Mr. Livingston, there is a prize to be fought for and carried off—with your help—and when we have it safely secured—under hatches, so to speak—you shall have your share."

"No!" shouted Livingston, his anger flashing up again at the other's cool assumption of the entire and complete mastery of the situation. "I have only one thing to say to you, Captain Lamb, and you can take it or leave it. Put in at Victoria or Seattle and set me ashore, and I'll agree to let the kidnaping go as a mistake."

"But, my dear fellow, it *wasn't* a mistake," returned the master of the situation suavely.

"All right. Then you'll take the consequences, Captain Lamb, and I'll try to

make them big enough to balance my loss!"

"Your loss of liberty, you mean? Liberty is only a relative thing, Mr. Livingston. At the present moment yours, as well as mine, happens to be circumscribed by the visual limit of a sea horizon, but that is nothing."

"I didn't mean that, as you very well know."

"Well, what did you mean?"

"I mean the loss that must fall upon any fellow who drops out of the ranks and becomes, so far as anybody knows to the contrary, a deserter. You say you've cleared for the Pribilofs; that means three months, more or less—in this schooner. What chance would I have, showing up at the end of that time, with nothing better than an unbelievable fairy tale to tell to account for my drop out?"

"So far as your business prospects are concerned, you may safely ignore them. If we succeed only moderately well in our little enterprise, you will be able to tell your railroad job to go hang, Mr. Livingston."

"Money isn't everything," persisted the unwilling recruit. "A good name is worth something to some of us."

Again the captain's smile was mildly derisive.

"You are a young man, Livingston, but not young enough to excuse that anachronistic point of view," he objected. "Nobody asks nowadays where you got your money; it isn't good form. And the good name commonly goes with the bank account. You know that as well as I do."

"But there are other things!" said the victim, breaking out afresh. "Captain Lamb, I'm engaged to be married, and the day is set for the first week in September!"

"You can regard that as the lightest of your misfortunes," smiled the handsome tyrant on the other side of the square-legged table. "How is it old Tom Bayly puts it:

> "Absence makes the heart grow fonder:
> Isle of Beauty, fare thee well!"

Livingston swore, and started from his stool to hurl himself across the table at his tormentor.

But in a twinkling the humor died out of the handsome captain's eyes, and the affable smile became a teeth-baring grin of ferocity. Livingston stopped short, and drew back when he found himself staring into the muzzle of a Colt automatic pistol held low along the table top.

"It's only fair to tell you that the bullets are soft-nosed—the kind that make a hole in you big enough for a man's fist to follow," said the kidnaper coolly. And then: "Sit down, and take it easy. I'm master, and, if I choose to insist upon it, you are only a common sailor—with a common sailor's right to be killed if he mutinies. Sit down, I say!"

Livingston was no coward, but neither was he a fool, and he obeyed the command; though his obedience was entirely without prejudice to an outpouring of bad language designed to embody, tersely and succinctly, his opinion of his captor. Lamb dropped the pistol into his pocket, and waited. When the storm of passionate objurgation had blown itself out, he was smiling again.

"Now we shall get on much better," he said, and he proceeded calmly to define the victim's status. Livingston was to have the port stateroom, a stool at the cabin table, and the standing of a passenger. Failing to accept, he might take his place with the crew, and—the tyrant added significantly—take what was coming to him. "You see you have everything to gain and nothing to lose," was the summing up. "Which shall it be?"

"If you mean that I'm to be a pris-

oner on parole, I'll take my chances with the men."

The captain waved the condition aside unhesitatingly.

"I don't ask you to give your parole, nor do I withdraw my offer of a few minutes ago. You can participate as a shareholder in our little enterprise, if you like, but if you don't like you'll still do what I tell you to when the time comes—or take your medicine. And the same rule applies here and now. I'm the captain of this hooker, and what I say goes as it lies. You may come in as a friendly enemy, or as the other kind, but in the latter case, if I have to shoot, I'll shoot to kill. Do you fully understand?"

Livingston nodded.

"That's better," said the tyrant, with a return to his former affability. "Now, I'd like to ask a question or two. Who is this fellow who came aboard with you last night—the fellow who is shamming seasickness?"

Livingston took a little time to think. With no special motive for shielding Glendish, he was unwilling to become answerable for the government man's life. In the light of the late vivid object lesson, Glendish's fear of identification seemed less foolish than it had when the sick man voiced it.

"I can't answer that question," he replied shortly.

"Which is another way of saying that you can answer it, but won't. Let it go, and I'll try again. Is the man a friend of yours?"

"No, not so anybody could notice it."

"Would you mind telling me why he was following you?"

"No. By his own admission, he meant to have me arrested."

"Ah! Then he is an officer of some sort?"

Livingston shook his head.

"You've pumped the well dry, Captain Lamb."

Lamb stood up and stretched himself lazily, and Livingston marveled that he had not remarked what a fit figure of a man he made with the squared shoulders and the well-poised head.

"It has been a rather trying interview for you, I'm afraid, Mr. Livingston," he said, still friendly. Then he pointed across the cabin. "That is the door of your stateroom. Make yourself entirely at home, and, if you're lacking anything, ask for it. Luckily we're about the same build, and my sea chest will fit you out with what you'll need to be comfortable. No, don't mention it; I'd do as much for any gentleman in distress. Turn in and nurse that broken head a while. The cook will call you when dinner is on the table. So long, until you've had time to catch up with yourself."

And with a comradely wave of the hand, the captain faced about and went on deck.

CHAPTER VI.

THE MAN AT THE WHEEL.

Livingston had his call to the midday meal shortly after the interview with his kidnaper, and Captain Lamb, light-heartedly good-natured and genial, was his host and only tablemate. Livingston was hungry, the food was excellent and well served, and Lamb, who could evidently be anything he chose to be, made the one-sided table talk genially companionable.

Steering clear of the mysterious voyage and its object, and of their relations as captor and captive, the amateur navigator became the hospitable entertainer, bespeaking himself easily a man of education and world-wide experience. There were well-told stories of his adventures as a prospector in the South African diamond fields, of perils various in the Amazon rubber plantations, and still more wonderful tales of his wanderings as a government nat-

uralist in the unexplored wilds of Borneo and the New Hebrides.

Through it all, Livingston listened shrewdly for the note which might betray the romancing liar or the cheap braggart, and found it conspicuously absent. Whatever his moral twist, the good-looking skipper proved that he had a sense of fitness well developed. Though he figured as the hero in the greater number of the stories, it was never obtrusively, and there was always the neat turn of self-effacement at the climax to mark the artistic raconteur.

Listening partly because he could not help it, and later because the winning personality of the story-telling captain was fairly irresistible, Livingston realized that it was going to be constantly and increasingly difficult to maintain the prisoner-to-jailer attitude toward Lamb. Yet he was angrily determined that it should be maintained.

It was over the black coffee, which was served by the Chinese ship's cook with a fine disregard for the lack of table accessories, that the captain made his single reference to the *status quo*.

"From your silence, Mr. Livingston, I infer that you are still angry enough to be unphilosophical. I am sorry, as sorry as any host ought to be while his guest is still unsatisfied. I'm weak enough, or conventional enough, to prefer your friendship to your enmity. Is there any way in which I can make good?"

Livingston put down his cup, and his eyes were bloodshot.

"You can change the schooner's course and set me ashore at the nearest railroad port, Captain Lamb."

The captain waved the alternative aside with the hand that held the freshly lighted cigar.

"Apart from that, I mean," he said.

Livingston's "No!" was almost explosive.

"You are determined to be aggrieved, then? So be it. I can only lament the harsh necessity which makes us, in a certain sense, enemies when we really ought to be allies. Have you, by any chance, taken a look at your messmates forward?"

"At your crew, you mean? I should think you had swept the San Francisco gutters for it."

The captain's shrug was barely perceptible.

"I had to take what I could get, and run the risk of being able to knock it into shape after leaving port. It's a sorry lot, I must say, with plenty of loose powder lying around and only waiting for the opportune match to fire it. Later on, when the men find out what they are really in for, I should imagine that the right kind of a ringleader wouldn't have much difficulty in stirring up trouble. But I dare say you have already thought of that possibility?"

It was an interrogation, and Livingston answered it baldly.

"Yes; it was one of the things I had thought of."

The captain nodded gravely:

"Don't let your scruples interfere. The mere fact that we occupy the same part of the ship and sit together at the same table needn't make any difference with your plans. Go ahead and stir up a mutiny if you like. I'll promise not to put a straw in your way."

"You think it can't be done?"

"Nothing easier, I should say. But you won't do it."

"Why won't I?"

The autocrat's smile was shrewdly compassionate.

"For one thing, your limitations are in the way. Unless I am much mistaken in you, you are of those who won't admit that two wrongs make a right."

"You've put yourself beyond any pale of fairness, Captain Lamb. I'm under no obligation to observe the rules of the game."

"That's what you think now, but you'll change your mind a little further along—when you've had time to think it over coldly. It's a rather serious thing to father a mutiny; and, besides, the facts are against you; to all intents and purposes, you are a regularly contracted member of the *Colleen Bawn's* crew. That would put you in bad with the courts."

"I'll take my chances with the courts!" snapped the prisoner, losing his temper again.

The captain shot a glance across the table; a searching probe of a look in which Livingston might have read certain signs of triumph, if he had not been too angry to see straight.

"The other restraining factor is more practical, perhaps," Lamb went on smoothly. "If you kill me off, there will be no one left to navigate the schooner."

Livingston, getting a fresh grip upon his fighting coolness, did not reply. Without being a navigator in any technical sense, he still knew enough to take the schooner into port—some port—if the chance should fall in his way. But it was not needful to tell Lamb or to be drawn into confidences of any kind with the man he was determined to outwit.

After this, the talk languished, and a little later the captain went on deck. Left to his own devices, Livingston shut himself into his sleeping den, and threw himself upon the berth to think.

Taking it all in all, the situation was about as bad as it could be. If his immediate superiors were ignorant of the circumstances—as Glendish had hinted they might be—he could never hope to go back after any considerable absence and square himself. He knew the business world, and the facility with which it supplies recruits to fill gaps in the ranks. Long before he could return from the unscheduled voyage another man would have his place on the freight department pay roll, and he would be down and out, with only a fairy story upon which to make the fight for reinstatement.

And larger even than the business disaster loomed the affair with Philippa Goodwin. What would the girl think of him? Crediting her with all the imagination that a loving and trustful fiancée ought to have, what possible explanation could she devise that would come within a thousand miles of accounting for his mysterious desertion and disappearance?

At this point the train of thought took fire, and red wrath sat in the seat of reason. Philippa's distress and misery must be forestalled at any cost, at all costs.

For some few days, at least, the schooner would be within easy sail of the civilized coast and freedom. Livingston was feverishly considering all sorts of expedients, from garroting the captain or scuttling the schooner to swimming ashore, when wearied Nature reasserted her claims and he fell into a troubled sleep, to dream of wolves in sheep's clothing and of a particularly vicious and obnoxious lion whose name was Lamb.

When he awoke, the sinking sun was pouring its level-rayed volley through the cabin portlight, and there was no intermission of the long, steady swing of the stout little ship over the unbroken Pacific surges. While he had slept, some one had invaded his privacy. There was a change of clean clothing laid out in the opposite berth, and water for a bath.

After the bath and the change, he made shift to renew the dressing of the broken head and to examine as best he could by means of the cracked looking-glass on the wall the extent of the wounding. It was nothing more serious than a scalp cut with the bruise incident to a blow from some blunt weapon, and, when he had washed it

and tied it up with a clean handkerchief, he thought no more of it.

Rested and refreshed by his long sleep and the grateful bath, he was eagerly ready to begin the battle for freedom; and being before all else a young man of swift action, he went on deck to see what chance there might be for the striking of some preliminary blow.

Emerging from the cabin companion, he was optimistic enough to believe that he had chosen a fortunate moment for the preliminaries. The men, most of them, were lounging forward; the big, yellow-haired first mate was leaning over the windward rail in the waist, and the captain was invisible. Most fortunate of all, the man at the wheel was Glendish; a Glendish pallid and ghastly, with black rings around his sunken eyes, but still able, as it seemed, to take his trick with the others.

Not to arouse suspicion needlessly, Livingston took a staggering turn or two in the open before he went to sit on the break of the raised afterdeck within easy speaking distance of the pale steersman.

"I see they've got you at it," he began, and Glendish's agreement, whispered hoarsely to the swelling bunt of the great mainsail, was luridly and picturesquely profane.

"Yes; dragged me out of my bunk neck and heels, and, when I put up my bleat, they slugged me till I couldn't see any color but black! I'm going to have somebody's life for this, and the somebody is that big, yellow-haired devil hanging over the rail yonder!"

Livingston nursed his bandaged head in his hands, and tried to give the impression to any chance onlooker that he was unconscious of Glendish's presence.

"He isn't the man you want to kill," he returned, matching Glendish's low tones. "He is only the brass knuckle on the fist of the captain." And then: "Have you found out yet where we're cleared for?"

"Nothing but what I've heard the others say—the Pribilofs."

"That would mean a sealing expedition—couldn't mean anything else. We're not after sealskins this trip."

"How do you know?"

Circumstantially, and with his head still propped between his hands, Livingston told the story of his interview with Captain Lamb. There was no reason for concealment, and if Glendish were to be an ally in any break for freedom, the confidence was his due.

"Sniped you because you'd dabbled in engineering, did he?" said the wheelman. "What does that mean?"

"I don't know; I can't imagine."

"It's something crooked; you can bet on that. I've been talking with one of the men—a little, sharp-nosed gutter rat named Gillup that they crimped the same way they did me. He says we're in ballast; no cargo to speak of—nothing but a few cases marked 'Hardware.'"

"That's none of our business; our business is to get away from this hooker before we've sailed past all the chances. How far are we from the coast?"

"The Lord only knows. The course is northwest by north, two points off, and we've been clipping it off at about this gait ever since we left the Farallones. Dig up your geography, and say where that would put us."

Livingston closed his eyes, and tried to reconstruct a mental picture of the California coast. He was only partly successful.

"My geography's no good—outside of a railroad map," he confessed. "I can't remember anything up this way but a cape; Cape—Cape Medicine——"

"Mendocino," corrected Glendish; "that's it — near enough, anyway. What's your idea?"

Livingston was squinting between his

fingers at a small boat lying in its chocks on the roof of the deck house. Under the small boat's stern there was a diminutive propeller, and opposite the chocks were the davits for the launching, with the tackle properly clewed down and stoppered with lashings of spun yarn.

"That's a yacht's tender, with some sort of a motor in it," he suggested. "How many men would it take to put it over the side?"

Glendish nodded. "I've been thinking of that, too. Just guessing at things, I believe the two of us could work the davit tackle—with a dark night and not too much interference. But after we're overboard, it'd be up to you. What I don't know about popboats would fill a ten-story office building."

"Wait a minute," said Livingston, and he got up as one weary of sitting, and took a slow turn around the deck house, passing the Viking mate without earning so much as a nod or a look, and getting a fair sight of the interior of the small boat as he drifted aft again.

"It's a dinky tub of a thing," he told Glendish, when the slow round had been made. "Picked up at secondhand in a junk yard, I guess. But we'll make it do if you're game for it. When shall it be?"

"The quicker the better," said the wheelman, and he said it between his teeth. Then he added: "You told Philippa once that I was a coward—that I'd never hit a man in the face; I'm going to shove that word down your throat some day ahead of my fist, Livingston."

Livingston grunted. "Which is another way of saying that you are game for this jail break of ours?" he asked. "Call it a go, and let's get down to business. Every added day is going to lessen our chance, and probably add to the distance we'll have to cover. How about provisions and water and gasoline?"

"The chink cook has a barrel of ship biscuit in the galley locker, and maybe I can swipe the little water breaker out of the forecastle. I'll try both when I'm off watch, but I'm afraid we'll have to take chances on the gasoline. If I can get the biscuit and water into the launch——"

"That's the notion," was the prompt agreement. "I'll find out about the gasoline. The tender's tank is probably filled. Aside from being a trumpery little villain, you're the right stuff, Glendish, and I'll remember this some time when I'm tempted to break you in two and throw you out of the handiest window. You get the grub together, and I'll figure out the hoisting proposition. Which watch are you in?"

"Port. We have the second dog trick, but I'm off after eight o'clock. Make it nine, and be on deck for a smoke. And if you could manage to scrag the captain before you come up——"

Livingston was grinning joyously when he got up to move away before the yellow-haired giant in the waist should become suspicious. He had known Glendish as a clerk in the passenger office force before he had become a government agent, and the other clerks had called him "pussy-footed" and had made fun of his small fopperies in dress. Livingston's grin grew out of the sudden sea change which had been wrought in Cousin Miles.

In the haggard, wild-eyed steersman of the *Colleen Bawn*, grinding his teeth and thirsting for blood as he held the schooner up to her work, there were few reminders of the office exquisite who was wont to be unhappy if the band on his summer hat did not match perfectly with the tint of his necktie and the royal blazonry of his socks.

CHAPTER VII.

DARK NIGHT AND A YEASTY SEA.

Since time and sufficient daylight still served, Livingston did not go below immediately after leaving Glendish and his seat on the break of the afterdeck. Having been given, tacitly, at least, the liberty of the ship by the kidnaping captain, he made good use of the daylight opportunity, getting the run of the schooner's deck; examining the small boat's davits and hoisting tackle carefully so that he might be able to lay hands upon the lashings and downhauls if need be with his eyes shut, and even going so far into the minutiæ as to pace the distances so that in event of the darkness confusing him he could still find his way about.

Beyond this, he passed and repassed the chocked small boat until he had an accurate mental picture of its furnishings. There was a tiny engine amidships covered with a rag of tarpaulin; Livingston could only judge of its power by its size—or its lack of size—and he thought it might be overrating it to compare it to a pair of oars in the hands of a stout oarsman.

Besides the engine there was a stumpy mast with a wisp of sail wound around it, a bailing can, a small coil of harpoon line, and two cork life belts, much frayed and ragged about the edges. The fuel tank he finally located under the triangular bit of foredeck. Since the space it occupied was next to nothing, he argued that the tank was small, even for so small a motor. And he could not make sure that it was filled.

After he had learned what to listen for, he could hear the "slop" of the gasoline keeping time to the schooner's rise and plunge, but this told him nothing save that the tank was not entirely empty.

Having pushed his investigations thus far, he had a final word with Glendish, who had not yet been relieved at the wheel.

"There's gasoline in her tank; how much I don't know," he whispered, in passing the helmsman, and Glendish nodded.

At the next turn, Livingston began again:

"The engine's next door to nothing—as you'd guess by the size of the propeller. But such as it is, it's all we'll have. There are no oars and no rowlocks, and the rag of a sail doesn't amount to anything."

Again Glendish nodded, and at the third passing Livingston went on, stopping to lean over the rail with his back to his listener:

"We've got to have more gasoline. There must be plenty of it aboard the ship, since she's got an engine of her own. Shall I forage for it? Or will you?"

Glendish was staring into the freshly lighted binnacle, and it was to the binnacle that he said: "Keep the captain busy at supper time, and leave it to me. The juice is in cans, and I know where it's stored."

"That's all, then," was the answer. "The moon will rise between ten and eleven. Get word to me when you're ready, and we'll make the break. It's clouding up a little more than I like, and the wind is freshening, but we'll have to take our chances on the weather. Are you still game for it?"

Glendish let the wheel slip through his hands until the *Colleen Bawn's* huge mainsail cracked like a gigantic whip, and the big mate came running aft, bubbling profanity in broken English.

"Hike!" snapped the steersman to his fellow plotter, and as Livingston was moving toward the cabin companion he heard Glendish's parting word: "You'll harp on that string till some time I'll knife you—in the back!"

Livingston left Glendish and the big Swede to fight it out about the slip of

the wheel, and went below to shut himself into his cramped little den of a stateroom. Until time should serve, there was nothing more to be done. Sitting in pitchy darkness on the edge of his berth and waiting for the call to the evening meal, the sardonic humor of the thing overtook him again.

Twenty-four hours earlier he had been sitting at a luxuriously appointed table in the San Francisco hotel café, chatting comfortably with Brent, the passenger man, and seeing no farther into the future than the salmon sees when it thrusts its gills into the trawler's net.

And now, with the clock hands only in the final quarter of their second lap around the dial, the San Francisco hotel and the world it stood for had dropped into a fathomless abyss, chaos was come, and he was plotting with Miles Glendish—the last man in the world whom he would have chosen for his second in any battle—plotting and planning a desperate adventure, the most fortunate outcome of which could be only an exchange of jailers; a bartering of the kidnaping captain and his mysterious schooner for an open boat and the shoreless but no less imprisoning ocean.

None the less, for a hard-muscled young athlete of Livingston's make-up—a type in which there is always a good bit of the berserk and the shoulder hitter—the situation was not without its touch of humor; grim humor mixed up with a certain cheerful lust of battle which had hitherto had to content itself with the bloodless victories of business.

To come to actual, tangible handgrips with one's antagonist is a privilege not to be scoffed at in a world which has taught itself to stab and buffet only with tongue and pen. Livingston locked his hands behind his head, and laughed softly to himself in the darkness.

"I think I'll begin on the captain himself—as Glendish suggested," he mused. "It strikes me that I owe him something. I've been posing as a sulky little boy robbed of his candy, and I guess it's about time to shake hands and put on the gloves with Captain Ignatius Loyola Lamb, man fashion. I'll do it, after supper. I'll need to warm up a little, anyway, before we hit the bunch on deck."

It was only a few minutes after this when the Chinese cook came to tap softly upon the door for the cabin supper call. Livingston made his appearance promptly, and found the genial master of the *Colleen Bawn* waiting for him.

"You're a man after my own heart, Mr. Livingston," was Lamb's greeting. "You don't keep the wedding guests waiting. I hope you've brought a good appetite with you. What is it that Shakespeare puts into *Macbeth's* mouth?

> "Now good digestion wait on appetite,
> And health on both!

"Draw up and let's see what Ting Foo has conjured up for us. Whatever it may be, we're better off than the murdering Thane of Cawdor was—there won't be any *Banquo's* ghost to come and sit with us."

"I've brought my appetite with me," laughed Livingston, "which is also going *Macbeth* one better." Then he made honorable amends. "A few hours ago you predicted that I would get around to the philosophical point of view, captain, and so I have; at least, far enough to be able to put the sour grouch to the wall. Don't mistake me. I'm still determined to make you all the trouble I can. But we needn't let this small fact interfere with our table manners."

With this for a starting point, the table talk lacked nothing but an appreciative audience, and Livingston held up his end like a man and a comrade.

As before, Lamb proved himself the

prince of entertainers, and more and more Livingston was led to wonder how and why such a man should have found it either necessary or attractive to exchange the legitimate for the criminal.

That the voyage of the *Colleen Bawn* was in some way a privateering scheme, there could be no reasonable doubt. And that Captain Lamb could be as desperate as any buccaneer of them all was also beyond doubt. And yet——

From one fascinatingly interesting recountal to another, Lamb went on, checking himself finally when Livingston, from pure human interest, had gone speechless again.

"I believe you're good-natured enough to let me go on telling my braggadocio stories till midnight, Mr. Livingston," he laughed, when the abrupt pause brought the listener alive with a start. "Have I bored you stiff?"

"Not at all," said the railroad man, and he meant it. And then: "You are not so very much older than I am, captain, but you've lived the worth of a dozen such lives as mine."

"Only to bring up at last as the skipper of a South Sea Island tramp schooner, as you see," smiled Lamb. And after the coffee-drinking pause: "Come now—be frank with me. Haven't you any curiosity at all to know what kind of an enterprise you've embarked in, Mr. Livingston?"

"No; since I don't expect to take any part in the enterprise, curiosity on my part would be rather out of place, wouldn't it?"

"But you are going to take part in it, my dear fellow; a very important part," protested the other.

"That remains to be seen. I say no."

"And I say yes. But we won't spoil our dinner. Will you go on deck to smoke?"

Livingston had been listening against time while Lamb was telling his stories of perils by land and by sea, and he was now willing to delay the rising moment as he could to give Glendish his chance to set the scene for the boat-stealing act, and to give him his cue, though just how Glendish would find some means to pass the word to the cabin was rather beyond imagining.

But at the moment when further delay threatened to involve difficulties, Glendish proved himself amply equal to the emergency. Ting Foo, the Chinese cook, had brought the cigars, and was clearing away the table remains. At Livingston's side he stooped and picked up an open letter with its envelope torn and pocket-soiled.

"Maybeso you losee dis flom pocket?" he said, in his soft Cantonese singsong.

Livingston, making sure that this was the missing cue, nodded and took the letter. When he glanced at it, he was glad that Lamb happened to be lighting a cigar, and was, by consequence, measurably unobservant. That was because the pocket-worn envelope bore the date mark "Denver," and was addressed, in Philippa Goodwin's round, girlish, and most unmistakable handwriting, to "Mr. Miles Glendish, Washington, D. C." Beneath the superscription there was a pencil-scrawled line with one word underscored, and this was in Glendish's hand: "If *you* haven't lost your nerve, get action!"

If Livingston needed an extra flick of the whip to make him fighting fit, the juggled envelope with its address in Philippa's handwriting gave it. Quietly pocketing the letter, he waited only until the Chinaman had vanished, leaving the cabin door ajar.

"You were asking if I'd go on deck, Captain Lamb," he began. "I am going presently—after I have found out whether you are really the man-eater you ought to be as the master of this hooker. Will you put up your hands and fight me fairly?"

The handsome skipper's leap to his feet and his hand pass for the pocketed

weapon were gambler swift, but Livingston had the advantage of foreknowledge. "Ah, would you?" he said, with the good-natured grin wrinkling at the corners of his eyes, and he went across the table in a hurdler's plunge. Lamb tried to back for distance and pistol space, but the stool was in the way, and before he could kick it aside Livingston had pinned him in a clever wrestling hold, and the fight was on.

For a gasping minute the two men swayed back and forth, each feeling for the other's weak point. Livingston's gymnasium trainer in a part of his college course had been a Jap wrestler, and it was a subtle Oriental trick that enabled him to twist Lamb's right hand out of the pea-jacket pocket and to force him to drop the hastily clutched weapon.

Breaking his hold for the needful fraction of a second, Livingston kicked the pistol under the table, and, after another straining half minute in which Lamb matched trick with trick and strove by all the arts of a skilled boxer to break the clinch, there was a crashing fall with the captain underneath.

"Will you fight like a man if I let you up?" panted the victor.

Lamb's answer was that of the savage. With a quick jerk of his head, he fastened his teeth in Livingston's shoulder. With less of vindictiveness than the act proclaimed, Livingston wrenched himself free, set a knee upon Lamb's chest, and held him immovable while the quieting blow could be delivered.

It was a cold-blooded thing to do, but Livingston realized that he had crossed the dead line. As an articled member of the *Colleen Bawn's* crew, he had lifted his hand against his captain, and the answer to that was death, with ample justification for Lamb.

The one blow, planted skillfully at the exact juncture of the parietal bone with the sphenoid just above the ear, ended the matter. When Livingston got up, the fight was over, but a new danger was announcing itself in a sound of descending footsteps on the companion stair. Instinctively the flushed victor sprang to the door, and stood beside it, his fists balled and the big veins knotting themselves in his forehead. He had gone too far to retreat now.

It was not the yellow-haired first mate who pushed the jarred door open and came blinking from the outer darkness into the glare of the lighted cabin, as Livingston fully expected it would be. It was Selden, the second officer, a gnarled and twisted little Cornishman with bleary eyes.

At the moment of door opening, he apparently saw nothing but the limp figure on the floor, and Livingston left him kneeling beside Lamb and trying to arouse him. It was the climaxing instant of opportunity, and the winner seized it, darting quickly up the companion and shutting and hasping the slide to gain whatever respite the fastened hatch might give.

Ten seconds later he had groped his way past the corner of the deck house, ignoring the silent figure at the schooner's wheel. Glendish was waiting for him in the shadow of the chocked launch. The wind had freshened to a ten-knot gale, and the schooner, still carrying everything but topsails, was leaping the surges like a thing alive.

"Quick!" urged Livingston. "If we can't make the riffle now, we may as well go overboard with our bare hands! I've taken a biff at the captain, and the English mate's just catching on! Have you got a knife?"

Glendish's reply was a couple of deft slashes at the rope-yarn tackling stoppers, and the davit falls swung free. Hastily the tackles were hooked into the ringbolts at the launch's stem and stern, and the pair of them took the slack and heaved for dear life. It

proved to be more than a two-man job to lift the small boat out of the V-shaped chocks, as Livingston had feared it might. By getting a leg hold over the rail and putting both weight and muscle into it, he could barely swing his end free. But at the other tackle, Glendish could only climb the downfall and dangle on it like a mechanical monkey on its cord.

Meanwhile the ship was waking up. Under the cabin companion slide, the angry-eyed second mate was battering with his fists on the obstructing hatch and shouting to the man at the wheel. From forward came the hoarse call of the big Swede turning out the watch below, followed by the quick patter of many feet on the resounding deck.

"Let go, and come here!" panted Livingston. "One end at a time, and heave with the wave lift!"

Under the united effort the stern of the launch rose awkwardly out of its cradle to slam itself with a crash against the reversed davit iron, and in a twinkling Glendish had made fast.

"Now the other end!" Livingston prompted, and, dodging under the swinging menace, they heaved together at the bow tackle. Once again they caught the critical instant of the lift and plunge of the *Colleen Bawn*, and the launch, swinging free, cleared the rail, and hung between wind and water.

"In with you, and stand by to cut the other tackle!" gasped Livingston.

Glendish obeyed like an automaton, and had one leg over the launch's gunwale when the interference, headed by the yellow-haired viking, closed in upon them. Livingston, hanging to the bow davit tackle and sustaining the full half weight of the suspended small boat, was practically helpless. To let go was to spill the launch, bow foremost, into the smother over the schooner's side. To hold on was to be murdered without striking a blow.

It was Glendish, the postgraduate office man and connoisseur in rainbow-hued ties and clocked hosiery, who rose to the avid demands of the occasion. The cabin companion hatch was yielding in kindling-wood cracklings to the battering from below when he dropped to the deck and flew like an angry cat at the big mate and his followers.

"Get her over the side!" he gurgled, stabbing and slashing with the stolen clasp knife fairly under Livingston's upstretched arms.

But, after all, it was the helmsman of the *Colleen Bawn* who turned the scale, quite without meaning to. At the wrong moment, the moment when the companion hatch burst upward as from some internal explosion, and the dim glow of the binnacle lamp showed him a bloody-faced man and another fighting for precedence in a mad rush up the companionway, the helmsman—who chanced to be Glendish's "gutter rat" Gillup—lost his head and his grip on the spokes of the wheel at the same instant. Prompt to take the bit in her teeth, the *Colleen Bawn* broached to under her huge spread of canvas, taking one of the swelling surges fairly over the weather rail, and burying her main boom ten feet deep in its fellow to leeward.

It was the slackening of the tackle in his hands as the launch lifted on the crest of the broaching wave that gave Livingston his cue.

"Drop it and come on!" he yelled, in the thick of the smother; and Glendish, choking and sputtering, came up out of the watery pandemonium and flung himself into the stern of the launch to cut and hack at the belayed tackle while the broaching wave took the strain—to slash it through just as the schooner was righting under a fresh hand at the wheel—and the thing was done.

Crouching in the bottom of the tossing launch, the two fugitives had, from the crest of the following wave, a vanishing glimpse of the *Colleen Bawn*

racing down the wind to leeward, saw a quick succession of matchlike flashes leap away in their direction from her raised afterdeck and heard the whip-lash whine of one bullet and the sullen "spat" of another. But after that there were only the darkling surges and silence.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE KICK BOAT.

It was Livingston who first broke the silence of their sudden isolation.

"Glendish?" he called; "are you hurt?"

The government man was hanging over a thwart, just as he had fallen, in the last stages of exhaustion.

"No; I'm only shamming!" he yapped back. Then he got upon his knees to shake a trembling fist at his fellow conspirator. "Am I game, or am I not?" he yelled shrilly. "If you say I'm not, I'll crawl up there and cut you into fish bait!"

"Easy, old man!" laughed the shoulder hitter, who still had a heart-warming picture of the little ex-clerk cutting in under his guard to slash and stab at the overwhelming odds. "You're a fighting man, all right—even if you don't always remember to fight fair. But, after this, everything goes, Glendish. If we get out of this alive, you may lie about me to your heart's content, and I'll never yip."

"Shut up!" shrieked the rage-maddened knife bearer, and with that he collapsed over the thwart again, and when Livingston reached him his teeth were set and he was gasping as one stricken with death.

There was not much to be done for him, and small chance for the doing of the little. Livingston stretched him out in the bottom of the boat, stripped the canvas covering from the engine to put under his head for a pillow. Then he got busy for their common safety.

The cockleshell launch was light enough to ride the waves like a dry chip, but with no motive power it was helplessly at the mercy of the big billows, tossing from crest to trough and wallowing like a water-logged derelict.

Since it was obviously impossible to overhaul the engine and its electric-sparking mechanism in the dark, Livingston stepped the stumpy mast, and shook out the bit of sail. The three-cornered scrap of canvas was a poor excuse for driving power, but it sufficed to give the boat steerageway, and when Livingston had propped himself in the stern with a leg over the short tiller he was relieved to find that the little ship answered the helm well enough to permit him to edge a slow course to the eastward.

That the course was to the eastward was largely a guess. The high-flying clouds were thinning somewhat and now and then a star peeped through. But until the moon should rise or the pole star become recognizable, there could be no assurance of the compass points, and Livingston was taking his direction from the wind.

The course of the *Colleen Bawn* had been northwest, with the wind on the port quarter; therefore, the wind must be blowing out of the south; therefore, again, if the launch should take the wind on the starboard beam, her course should be—roughly at least—eastwardly.

Having settled this rather dubious question to his own satisfaction, the amateur mariner at the launch's tiller made the bit of straining canvas do its best. Estimating the distance to the nearest land at no more than fifty miles—and it might be twice that—the hazards were still plentiful.

For one thing, the amateur knew motor boats and their engine vagaries, and was heartily suspicious of a stopped motor. For another, he felt sure that Captain Lamb was still to be reckoned with. That the *Colleen Bawn*

would come back to look for her launch was a foregone conclusion, and as the horizons gradually widened under the clearing skies, Livingston was glad to find them blank and untenanted.

In due time the moon came up, and with its appearance a good half of the desolation of the watery waste vanished. Also it became apparent that Livingston's dead-reckoning setting of the course had been well reasoned out, since the fair white disk appeared squarely over the launch's bow. Also, again, the force of the half gale was visibly abating, so rapidly, indeed, that the three-cornered sail no longer sufficed to hold the small boat out of the wallowing troughs.

Lashing the tiller with the loose end of the sheet, Livingston began to tinker tentatively with the dead motor. Luckily the battery box was under the stern seat, and it proved to be a rough-weather outfit snugly stowed in a watertight case. Livingston found the switch plug, inserted it, and tried the spark coil. It buzzed encouragingly. The batteries were alive.

Next he turned the gasoline on at the tank, crawling cautiously past Glendish to get to the bow. The ex-clerk had apparently passed from the coma of exhaustion into a heavy sleep. He was breathing deeply and muttering to himself as one dreaming. The knife with which he had fought back the big mate and his half-hearted followers had slipped from his fingers, and Livingston picked it up in passing, and stuck it under one of the rib strakes.

With the gasoline turned on, Livingston crept back to the motor and flooded the carburetor. On the thousandth chance he rocked the tiny flywheel, and turned it over. Nothing happening, he tried again, and yet again, with no better results. Any number of things—things which could by no means be investigated by moonlight—might be wrong. The amateur's heart sank when he remembered that the commonest of the wrong things is the sooting of the spark plugs, and without a wrench—as yet the furnishings of the launch had not turned up anything remotely resembling a tool kit—he was helpless.

At that point he would have given up to wait for daylight if he had not been born obstinate. As it was he went on turning the flywheel and hoping against hope. To the patiently stubborn come sometimes the fruits of the slow-bearing trees of persistence. At the fiftieth turn—or it may have been the eightieth or the hundredth—there was a faint cough in one of the miniature cylinders.

With hope renewed, Livingston spun the weary wheel yet other times. Glendish moved uneasily in his sleep, and began to mutter again. As if his dumb protest were all that was needed to break the spell, the tiny motor started off with half a dozen back firings. Livingston adjusted the spark and throttle, and opened the oil cups. Then he scrambled back to his place at the tiller, and the launch began to plow a modest furrow diagonally over the swelling surges, pointing straight for the heart of the rising moon.

Throughout the long middle watches of the night, while the moon rose higher, and the monotonous lift and fall of the billows grew dizzyingly unnerving, Livingston held the course to the eastward, dropping asleep at times with the tiller between his knees and waking again with no sense of the passing of the lapsed minutes.

From hour to hour the miniature motor kept up its steady trampling tune, and, though he had no means of determining the launch's speed, Livingston grew hopeful as the moon climbed slowly to the zenith. Allowing no more than six miles to the hour, the breaking dawn should mark the completion of a long lap in the desperate race, and with another day of good weather and

no engine trouble, the worst would be over.

The stars were beginning to pale in the east when Glendish suddenly flung aside the sail with which Livingston had covered him and sat up.

"Hello!" he said, with the bickering rasp still in his voice. And then: "How long have I been dead?"

Livingston pointed to the lightening streak in the east.

"It's morning."

"And we've been doing this all night?"

"Yes; most of the time. I got her going as soon as there was moonlight enough to show me how to find things."

Glendish crawled aft over the hot little motor, burning himself more than once because he was afraid to stand up and step over it.

"You get over there and take your forty winks," he directed sourly. "You ought to have kicked me alive and made me stand watch and watch with you. No signs of the schooner, I suppose?"

"No; no sail or any kind."

"How far have we come?"

"Thirty-five or forty miles—for a guess. If we can keep it up, we ought to sight land some time to-day."

"All right; you go and chew off a piece of sleep. I guess I can make out to hold the tiller a while."

Livingston rummaged in the stern locker, and was fortunate enough to find a can of engine oil, from which he replenished the feed cups on the engine.

"There isn't anything to do to her," he said. "If she stops, call me." And, rolling himself in the discarded sail, he fell asleep as suddenly as Glendish had awakened.

It was the stopping of the motor, some three or four hours later, that aroused him. When he sat up, blinking sleepily, Glendish was shading his eyes with his hand and staring northward.

"I did it," he explained, without looking around; "pulled out that dodinkus between the wires. There's a ship of some kind out yonder, and it's heading this way."

"Not the *Colleen Bawn?*" gasped Livingston, starting to his feet.

"See what you think. It's a schooner, anyway, and I thought we'd better cut out the *put-put*. What will happen to us if Captain Lamb runs us down will be a-plenty."

Livingston steadied himself by the stumpy mast, and picked up the sail on the northern horizon.

"It's past me," he confessed, after looking long and earnestly. "But, anyway, you're wrong about the course. She's heading away from us. We'll neither be saved nor sniped this time."

Glendish reached over, and put the switch plug back into its socket.

"Why don't she go?" he demanded.

Livingston grinned, and turned the wheel, and the toy trampling began again. "You have to encourage 'em a little now and then," he said. And then: "How about the grub? Were you lucky enough to find anything last night?"

Glendish nodded toward the forward locker.

"It's in there. Help yourself. I'm not hungry."

Livingston opened the locker, and found a good store of provisions, a bag of ship's biscuit, and plenty of tinned things. Also, there was evidence that Glendish had already eaten; there was an empty meat can, and the biscuit bag had been opened. Livingston broke into a can of salmon, and munched a dry biscuit, while the man at the tiller looked on with evil triumph in his eyes.

"Where's the water?" asked the late breakfaster, when the salt in the salmon began to bite.

"There isn't any," said Glendish coolly. "That's one of the things I couldn't swipe."

"No water?"

"That's what I said."

Livingston put the food away and shut the locker.

"I'm like you—I'm not hungry any more, Glendish. What made you let me open that salmon?"

"I thought maybe it would make you thirsty—as thirsty as I am right now," was the churlish rejoinder. Then: "I'll bet I can outlast you, Livingston. You'll be the first one to go mad; the beefy ones always are."

Livingston was shaking his head.

"It won't take long to shikari both of us—under this sun. The gasoline's our only hope now. By the way, where's the extra supply of it?"

"That was the other thing I couldn't swipe. It was in ten-gallon tins, and I couldn't muckle it."

"Lord! Then we've got only what's in the boat's tank?"

"That's the size of it."

Livingston got upon his knees, and lowered one end of the harpoon line through the filling plug in the tank top. It came out dry, except for a couple of inches at the extremity. That was bad enough, but the shape of the tank, which was built to fit the prow of the launch, made it worse. Two inches of depth in the narrow bottom meant that the motor might run for an hour longer, more or less.

The situation was beyond words, and there was nothing to do but to wait. Livingston propped himself against a thwart, and fixed his eyes upon the distant, heaving, eastern horizon. Slowly the little boat crept from surge to surge, and the climbing sun beat down hotter and hotter. At the end of a long hour, Glendish lashed the tiller, and crept forward.

"I've been wasting my chance of outlasting you," he said, with evil grimace. "What little breeze there is blows the engine heat all backward."

Livingston's grin was more than half mechanical.

"I've always thought that you were about half devil, Glendish, but I'm beginning to think now that I've been doing you an injustice. There are times when you don't seem to have more than a negligible trace of humanity in you."

"I'm human enough to owe you more than I can pay while you're alive," was the inhuman retort.

"Don't get over into that part of the field, Miles. Philippa Goodwin and I are engaged to be married. That ought to settle it—would settle it for anybody but a crazy crank like you!"

Glendish's smile showed his teeth.

"I tell you I'm going to outlast you," he reiterated. "By this time to-morrow, you'll be dippy. By this time the day after to-morrow, you'll be taking a header overboard. That's the way they do at the end of it—and the big ones go first."

Livingston's big jaw began to stiffen.

"For Philippa's sake, I'm going to beat you at your own game, Glendish," he announced. "When I go mad and jump over the side, there won't be enough left of you to hurt anybody."

"For Philippa's sake. You say it's settled, but it isn't. You've bullied her into saying 'Yes,' but that doesn't count—only when you're with her."

Glendish was balancing on the edge of a volcano crater, but if he knew it he made no sign. Livingston kept his eyes upon the distant horizon. He was afraid if he looked aside at Philippa's cousin he might lose his self-control irretrievably.

"When I'm with her," he echoed. "You mean that——"

"I mean that when a woman is really in love with a man, she will keep his secrets," said the tormentor evenly.

Without taking his eyes from the hopeful distances, Livingston reached over and laid a hand on Glendish's knee.

"Last night you saved my life, Miles; I don't want to forget that; you mustn't

try to make me forget it. But I'll wring your neck if you insinuate that Philippa isn't true to me!"

"I insinuate nothing; I'll merely ask a question. How did I know where you had gone that night when you left the Armstrongs' in the Platte Cañon and took the train to catch the Midland?"

"Philippa didn't tell you!" retorted the badgered lover. "I know you told me yesterday morning in the schooner's forecastle that she did, but I knew then that it was a lie. You were in Denver the day I left; I saw you there!"

"I was at Cliff Cottages that night, and I can prove it to you. You left the Armstrongs' just before the up passenger came along, and halfway down the cliff path you met a man going up. I was the man."

"That's enough; cut it out!" stormed Livingston, and his eyes were flaming. But the seed had been sown for the sure harvest of doubt and misgiving, and almost immediately the tares sprang up and the bitter crop began to ripen.

It was in the interval of threatening silence that followed that the motor slowed down, gave a few expiring coughs, and went dead. Livingston roused himself with an effort.

"We agreed to keep the peace until this thing has worked itself out," he said, when the engine stopped, "and it's up to both of us to do it. Help me get this rag up, and we'll make what we can out of the windjamming—which will be little enough. I'll take the first trick at the tiller."

Such was the depressing beginning of a day thickly bestudded with hardships for the castaways. By ten o'clock the brisk half gale of the night had died away to a summer zephyr, the sea had subsided, the sun beat down with tropical fierceness, and the heat, augmented by the reflection from a sea of molten glass, was ovenlike.

After the stopping of the motor, the launch made little headway; at times the three-cornered sail hung limp from the stick, and the small boat's bow swung with the slow surges to all points of the compass. Though there was a fair inference that they were in the track of traffic between the Puget Sound ports and San Francisco, the horizons remained blank, and the vanishing sails of the schooner seen by Glendish in the early hours of the morning were the only break in the disheartening monotony of sea and sky.

Of the land toward which the launch had made such good progress in the night, there were no signs; no drift; no change in coloring in the deep blue of the under depths; no faint cloud line in the east where the crest of the coast range would first lift itself above the burning sea mirror.

Again and again Livingston ransacked his memory in the effort to recall the northern California coast line and its seaport towns, if any there were. But to him, as to many more of the hundred-odd millions, the geographies had told little or nothing. If there were any shipping ports between the Golden Gate and the mouth of the Columbia, he had never heard of them.

It was not until the summer sun was fairly overhead that Livingston began to realize the torments of the thirsty in full measure. Without ever having thought much about it, he had supposed that a strong man could go without drink, as without food, for at least a day or two before the lack would be more than an inconvenience. But the hot day, following the night of fighting and fierce excitement, cruelly shortened the period of endurance. By noon Livingston would have given a fortune for a drink of water, and before the afternoon was half spent his tongue was like a dry stick in his mouth, and he would have bartered life itself, at the rate of a year for a swallow, if the chance had been given him.

That Glendish was suffering no less acutely he could not doubt. From the break at the motor stopping, the clerk had kept his place in the bow, sitting on the boat's bottom with his back to a thwart and maintaining a stubborn silence. If he had accepted the truce, it was apparently a truce under arms, sullen and minatory. The longer the silence lasted, the more Livingston realized that his companion in misery was settling down in savage earnest to win in the battle of endurance, as he had promised to.

That conviction started another train of tormenting thought for the thirst-maddened lover. Was there anything more than a liar's vindictive stab in Glendish's hint that Philippa had been intentionally faithless? With the sun beating upon his uncovered head and the dry stick tongue to torture him, Livingston could not think straight.

Had Philippa really told her cousin of his intended San Francisco journey, and this while his own farewell kiss was still warm upon her lips? It was incredible, grossly and sickeningly unbelievable. Yet Glendish had found out, in some way; and Philippa had never specifically denied the cousinly confidences, and she had gone about with Glendish—she had even corresponded with him. Was there not the letter which Glendish had sent by the ship's Chinese cook—sent in vindictive triumph, no doubt—to prove it?

Livingston drew the letter from his pocket cautiously, so as not to attract Glendish's attention, and stared gloomily at the round, girlish handwriting of the superscription. And surely it was the thirst mania that made him forget himself so far as to take a folded inclosure from the envelope, yielding to the fierce desire to read it.

As it chanced, he was saved from falling into this final ditch of degradation. The inclosure of the pocket-worn envelope proved to be a sheet of blank paper, folded to take the place of the original letter.

Glendish jerked himself around at the faint rustle of the paper in Livingston's hands, and his laugh was a dry, cackling gibe.

"I thought you'd do that, sooner or later," he mocked. "I'll tell her about it—when I have won out, and you haven't."

Livingston crushed the blank sheet and the envelope into a ball, and half started to his feet with the unshipped tiller in his hand and murder in his heart. But at the moment of uprising, the bow of the launch swung lazily to the west, and across the blazing path of the declining sun Livingston saw a sight to make him forget his wrath.

Clearly outlined against the vivid blue of the sky line and crawling eastward in the light breeze with every stitch of canvas set and drawing, was a fore-and-aft-rigged sailing vessel. Livingston rubbed his hot eyes, and looked again. There was no mistake; it was the *Colleen Bawn*. Before he could speak, Glendish staggered to his feet, and pointed in the opposite direction. On the eastward horizon, standing out as clearly as if it had risen by magic out of the ocean, Livingston saw the coast of desire, backed by its range of sun-tinged mountains.

CHAPTER IX.

THE MIDDLE PASSAGE.

It is a thankless thing to prolong the agonies. Let it speak for itself, the picture of the two thirst-weakened fugitives in the stolen launch pulling down their mast and sail and crouching in the bottom of the boat with only their eyes level with the gunwale, waiting and watching, while some invisible ocean hand drew their little craft slowly landward, and the equally invisible sunset breeze wafted the ship of fate down upon them.

There was nothing to be done. With the sun still an hour high, there was little hope that darkness would come soon enough to shield them, and it did not. After an interval in which the dragging seconds lengthened themselves into minutes and the minutes into ages, they saw the schooner's course change, and after that they did not try to hide.

It was perhaps a minute or two after the sun had dipped below the horizon when the *Colleen Bawn* bore down upon them, and the big mate, with a bandaged arm to show for Glendish's knife slashings, took the launch in tow with a boat hook. The captain, with a strip of adhesive plaster across his temple to mark the placing of Livingston's knock-out blow, was leaning over the low rail.

"Come aboard," he commanded, in the tone of a patient man whose patience has finally been rewarded, and when the fugitives had laboriously climbed the rail: "This is what you might call playing in pretty hard luck, isn't it, Mr. Livingston?—and with the goal fairly in sight, too?"

Livingston did not answer. The watch on deck was getting the launch hooked in the davit tackles, and the *Colleen Bawn* was wearing to resume her northward course. Lamb thrust his hands into his pockets, and went on evenly:

"Under the circumstances, I suppose I should be justified in putting you both in irons for the remainder of the voyage. In the eye of the law you are merely a pair of common seamen in revolt against your officers. What have you to say for yourselves?"

It was Glendish who spoke up:

"Nothing! Take your turn while you've got it. When ours comes, you'll find that you've bucked just about the biggest proposition on the planet."

"And that is?"

"The government of the United States."

"Ah? So you're in the government service, are you? I tried to persuade Mr. Livingston to tell me the day after we sailed, but he refused."

Lamb turned to the big Swede, and gave a low-toned order. Then he gave Livingston his chance.

"You seem determined to make it hard for yourself, and for me, Mr. Livingston. After what has happened, you can't blame me for taking ordinary precautions. You may have your former status if you'll promise not to make me kill you in sheer self-defense."

Livingston looked up, hot-eyed.

"You needn't make any distinction between us, Captain Lamb. We stood together last night, Mr. Glendish and I, and we'll stand together now."

The captain's lip curled.

"I thought you said he was not your friend?"

"We are not friends, as people ordinarily use the word, but that doesn't make any difference."

"Suppose I find it necessary, under the peculiar circumstances, to put this no-friend of yours under hatches for the remainder of the voyage; what then?"

"What is good enough for him is good enough for me," snapped Livingston. His mouth was growing drier with every added word, but he would have died rather than ask for a drink of water.

Lamb shrugged slightly, and turned away.

"As you please," he said, and a moment later the viking came to push them ahead of him to the opened main hatch.

"You vill go down, or Hae skall t'row you down," he growled, indicating the square of darkness and the black depths below. "Dere iss vater and dere iss breadt. If da skipper tal me, Hae gif you da rope's endt, too."

It was, perhaps, as well for all concerned that the water was below. With the ability to get anything less than a parching simoom into his lungs, Livingston would have tried conclusions once for all with the yellow-haired giant. But since a thirsty man may not fight, he followed Glendish into the black depths, and immediately the darkness was made permanent by the clapping on of the hatch.

Three minutes later two men had made a groping circuit of the practically empty forehold, and had collided violently in the dark over a stoppered earthenware jug.

"After you," said Glendish thickly, and he would not drink until his fellow prisoner had broken his long water fast. Afterward, when they had eaten sparingly of the ship's biscuit which they found beside the water jug, the ex-clerk freed his mind, not without a certain cynical bitterness in his tone.

"Livingston, if you think you're working off any of the old scores by getting yourself chucked in here with me, you're off your base," was the way he began.

"Oh, let up, won't you!" growled the shoulder hitter, who was feeling better, and, by consequence, more nearly human, now that he had eaten and drunk. "Haven't we got grief enough without your lugging in the other thing at every second breath? What under the heavens is this crazy pirate of a captain trying to do to us? That's what interests me most, just now."

"It's your guess," retorted Glendish briefly.

"I can't guess. If he had put us both back in the crew and worked heart and soul out of us, it would be reasonable to suppose that he nipped us in Frisco because he was short-handed. But to sail for God only knows where with a couple of idle prisoners under hatches —— Suffering Scott! It's enough to drive a man mad."

"Look out," warned the cooler one, and this time the bitterness in his tone was minimized. "You say it's enough to drive a man mad, and, if you keep on saying that often enough and long enough, you'll get there in dead earnest. We've probably got a good many days and nights of this ahead of us, and if so——"

"But the reason, Glendish—the reason!" Livingston broke out, in an access of exasperation. "This is the twentieth century, and we're living in it—or we supposed we were up to three days ago!"

"Lamb has his reasons, and they are probably quite sound ones, from his point of view. He's as good as told you why he kidnaped you; he wanted a mining engineer, and didn't know how else to get one. As for me, I was merely a butt-in, and, now that he's found out that I'm likely to tell a story that will be listened to, he doesn't dare to turn me loose."

"All right," said Livingston, stretching himself wearily upon one of the packing cases which formed part of the *Colleen Bawn's* scanty cargo; "I suppose there's nothing to do but wait. But I shall go mad, Glendish, if this thing keeps up very long. Think what I've got at stake."

"Philippa, you mean?"

"Yes; Philippa."

"If I should think much about that, I shouldn't care how soon you went off your nut," was the surly rejoinder. But later, when Livingston was asleep and dreaming that his prison mate had killed him and was preparing to bury him in one of the hardware cases, it was only that Glendish had found a roll of outworn sailcloth and was stuffing it under the sleeper to keep him from slipping off upon the floor.

Also, during the loathsome period of imprisonment to which this first night in the ill-ventilated forehold was the introduction, it was the ex-clerk who

preserved the norm of sanity, not only for himself, but for his cellmate. After the first twenty-four hours, during which it was made evident that the hatch was to be lifted only for the renewal of the water and provisions, and now and again for some attempt at ventilation by means of an extemporized wind sail; that at the pleasure of the skipper they were to be immured in darkness and bad air, possibly for the entire voyage; Livingston lost his grip, and there was need for help.

Glendish gave the help unstintingly and entirely, so he declared, without prejudice to the major quarrel. By turns brutal, sardonic, and kindly, he set himself doggedly at the task of brother keeping, giving Livingston free rein when he would talk, and lashing him with abuse when the sullen fits came on.

And once, in the earlier frenzies, when Livingston had stealthily possessed himself of the clasp knife—which Glendish had cleverly managed to conceal when they were overhauled in the launch—there was a struggle, and the half-crazed shoulder hitter was saved from whatever mad thing he meant to do only at the cost of a pretty badly gashed hand on the part of the rescuer.

Meanwhile, through all the days which were indistinguishable from the nights, the *Colleen Bawn* thrashed along on her mysterious course, always under a huge press of sail, as they could determine by the lift and plunge, and more often than not under sail and the auxiliary power. For weather there was everything, from the steadily blowing trades to a fierce hurricane, in which the schooner lost some of her top-hamper, and Glendish—this time with Livingston turned comforter—had a hideous return of the dumb seasickness.

It was after the hurricane, and far beyond the time when they had lost all count of the days and weeks, that the two prisoners reached what Livingston, borrowing from his engineering profession, called "the periodic moment of combined stresses;" a moment past which the endurance of inaction doggedly refused to go.

"We've got to do something, Glendish, if it's nothing more than to carve ourselves out of this with that knife of yours," was Livingston's summing up of the stresses one evening after they had eaten the third of the meals which were their only means of distinguishing one-half of the twenty-four hours from the other. "I know what you will say; that it's no use so long as Lamb can drive us back again at the point of a pistol. You've done your best, both to save me from going mad, and to hold yourself level-headed. But I know, just as well as if I could see inside of you, that you are about as near the edge as I am. Another day or two will make gibbering idiots of both of us. Don't you believe it?"

"I don't want to believe it," was the slow rejoinder. "I've been fighting for my reason, too, Livingston; perhaps harder than you know. And the motive was the same as it was in the kick boat—I've been saying that I would outlast you."

"Guff!" snorted the one who had been saved from himself. "You can tell that to the marines, Glendish. A brother of my own blood couldn't have been more to me than you have been."

"That's so, too," said the voice in the darkness evenly. And then half brokenly: "I can't understand it, Livingston. God knows, I hate you bitterly enough—or I thought I did. And I've got cause; the old primeval, stone-age cause that has made men hate and fight since the beginning of time. You've robbed me of the woman I love, the woman who, if you hadn't turned up, might have loved me back again. That spells hatred and retaliation in every tongue of man or beast, doesn't it?"

"Yes, I suppose it does—when the male thing is daffy enough to look at it that way," agreed the other lover of the woman.

"Let it go at that, and tell me, if you can, why I can't be consistent. I know we're supposed to be civilized, and civilized people don't ordinarily cut each other's throats in the dark. But I haven't got to do anything but let you alone, Livingston. Why haven't I been able to do that?"

"I'll tell you, Miles; it is because you are not half the spiteful devil that you try to make yourself believe you are. Down under all the vindictiveness that you have been so carefully cultivating, there is something that tells you that Philippa has a right to choose for herself, and that her choice is binding, no less upon you than upon me."

"No, there isn't; there is merely a weak streak—a yellow streak."

"Call it that, if you like; it doesn't change anything. But the big fact remains. If we can't break the monotony of this thing before long, it's going to be strait-jackets and coffee for two. Why, man! do you realize that it's been ten thousand years since we've seen more than the glimpse of a human face we get when they lift the hatch to let the Chinaman pass the grub and water to us?"

"I realize all that you do. But what's the answer? I take it that Lamb will let us out of this hole sooner or later. He's got to do it some time."

"Lamb—yes. Say, Glendish; we've got to square accounts with that fellow somehow, haven't we?"—this with a touch of the vindictiveness he had just been deprecating. "We owe it to ourselves and to the world."

"Sure!"

"Well, he's playing for a big stake of some kind. That's clear, isn't it?"

"A big stake and a crooked one. Go on."

"The way to hit him hardest is to block his game, and to block it we've got to find out what it is. Bring that knife of yours, and let's do a little whittling."

Like that of most light-tonnage cargo coasters, the fore hold of the *Colleen Bawn* included the greater part of the space between the cabin and the forecastle. Forward and aft, it ended in water-tight bulkheads extending from frame to frame across the ship. It was the after bulkhead that they attacked, taking turns with the knife until they had bored a peephole through the thick planking and the cabin sheathing covering it on the farther side.

It took a long time, and after the hole was made they found that it came out directly in line with the mainmast, which cut off all view of the cabin at large. Finding the hard work a blessed relief after so long a period of enforced idleness, they chose another place by the sense of touch, and optimistically began again, and, before the morning stir on deck warned them to stop, a second spy hole had been opened.

During the day thus ushered in, they took turns sleeping, and the waking one whittled silently and industriously, cutting away the bulkhead around the peephole so that the small slit in the cabin sheathing served all the purposes of a wide-angled lens.

Their first discovery, if it could be called a discovery, was made that evening, after Lamb had eaten his supper in solitary state, and Ting Foo had cleared the cabin table. From one of the double-locked sea chests the captain produced a thick roll of papers, spreading them out upon the table and poring over them studiously for a long time. As nearly as the watchers could determine, the papers were charts or maps of some kind; from time to time Lamb busied himself with scales and dividers, as if he were measuring and computing.

It was deep in the night when the captain returned the roll to the chest

and went on deck. All through the day the schooner had been proceeding under sail alone, but shortly after Lamb's disappearance the power went on.

"What do you make of it?" queried Glendish, when Livingston finally took his eye from the peephole.

"You were right; they were maps of some sort—overlapping and crisscrossing mineral claims, for a guess."

"That's where you've got me bested," admitted the ex-clerk. "If they'd been passenger tariffs or something of that sort, I might have caught on. But mineral maps; that fits Alaska, doesn't it?"

"Yes; and I more than half believe we are in the Alaskan inland waters. There hasn't been any swell to speak of for two or three days. We might be sailing in a mill pond right now."

Glendish was thoughtful for a moment.

"Livingston, I've got a hunch that we're coming to the nib of it," he broke out, at length. "Listen!"

The power had gone off, and after a minute or two the *Colleen Bawn's* anchor cable ran out with a hoarse roar. Following quickly came the creaking of blocks and tackle, the splash of something falling into the water, and then a diminuendo drumming of the launch's gasoline motor.

"That means land, at last, and somebody's getting ashore," said Livingston. "Your hunch was right, and there'll be more to follow when that launch comes back."

Once again they stood watch and watch, with the off man sleeping, and it was Glendish who heard, some hour or so later, the drumming return of the schooner's tender. Livingston roused himself immediately at Glendish's touch and whispered call, and put his eye to the peephole. Once more the sea chest with the double locks stood open, and the roll of papers was spread out on the cabin table. But this time there were two to pore over the crisscrossed map lines: Lamb and another.

The stranger was a big man, clean shaven, and well set up. His graying hair was cut rather long, and he had a habit of throwing back his heavy forelock from time to time with a gesture that quickly reminded Livingston of a well-known and prominent senator in the far-away capitol on the Potomac. In his dress, also, the stranger might have passed for an American business man who had just stepped out of his club or his office; the hat thrown aside upon one of the chests was a modish gray felt, and the cut of the fresh-looking business suit was citified and well fitting.

When the stranger sat back in his chair and proceeded to clip the end of a cigar which he took from a gold-monogrammed pocket case, Livingston had a fair sight of his massive face with the teasing forelock falling over the broad forehead.

"Great cats!" he ejaculated, under his breath, and when he dropped to a seat upon the nearest of the carge boxes beside the government man, he was shaking as if he had been suddenly stricken with an ague fit.

CHAPTER X.

THE BIG BOSS.

When Glendish reached out in the darkness to grip his arm, Livingston could feel that his prison mate was chuckling silently.

"You recognized him, too, did you?" said Glendish, in a low whisper. "I thought maybe you would. What in the name of all the money gods does it mean?"

"I'll never tell you, Miles. If we were anchored off the clubhouse at Newport or Marblehead, he might have come aboard from the *Nautiska*, and there would be nothing wonderful about it. But here—wherever 'here' is

—Glendish, we've got to listen in, disgraceful as it may be. Get your ear to one of the lookouts, and I'll take the other. Then we can compare notes afterward."

When Livingston looked again, the gentleman with the teasing forelock, a gentleman whose name was familiar to every newspaper reader in the nation as that of the chief of the malefactors of great wealth, had lighted his cigar, and was sitting on one of the sea chests, with his back to a bulkhead and his shapely hands locked over one knee.

"You've managed it capitally, Lamb," he was saying. "Nobody has yet been able to account for the way in which the papers disappeared, though, as you predicted, there was a pretty shrewd search made before the regular steamer left Seattle. I have it on good authority that private detectives went through every piece of luggage and everybody's belongings—on the dead quiet, of course."

Lamb nodded.

"I had the devil of a time getting hold of them," he acquiesced. "And I knew that all the regular sailings would be watched and searched. That's why I suggested this schooner and clearance papers taken out for a voyage to the Pribilofs. Besides, we had to have some way of getting the laborers on the ground."

"And the man to do the figuring?"

"I've got him," said Lamb briefly.

"Good! There's trouble in the air, and the door is going to be shut and locked before many more weeks or months. The country is more stirred over this thing than it has been over anything since the war. Our friends in Washington have made a good fight, but it's a losing fight. The president is as stubborn as ever, and he isn't going to go back on his judgment. But in the end the bottom will fall out, and Washington will yield to public opinion—it's got to yield."

"That is the way I had it figured out three months ago," agreed the skipper of the *Colleen Bawn*. And then: "The *Nauliska* came around the Horn all right?"

"Like a bird. She was waiting for us when we reached Victoria. I brought a party along, and it's a pleasure trip so far as any of the others know."

"Have you been waiting here long?"

"No; we got into the Sound yesterday, and have been standing off and on, taking in the scenery. I hardly expected you would make your date so closely."

"We've had good weather, and we've been burning gasoline pretty freely," said Lamb.

The man on the lid of the sea chest leaned his head back, and blew a leisurely series of smoke rings toward the dingy ceiling of the cabin.

"You don't anticipate any trouble with your crew, I take it?"

"No; I've got a couple of beautiful bullies for mates, and we've had just trouble enough on the way up to show the pick-and-shovel men what to expect if they turn rusty at the pinch. They'll come under."

"And the figuring man—where is he?"

Lamb laughed silently.

"I've had the devil's own time with him, too. I thought once I might have to kill him off, in the interests of peace and quietness. The second night out he jumped me at the supper table, knocked me cold before I had time to shoot him, and he and another fellow fought their way to the schooner's launch, heaved it over the side, and made off. Luckily they didn't have much gasoline, and we picked them up the next day—within eight or ten miles of Punta Arenas."

"And since?"

"Since we've kept both of them under hatches—in the forehold. I would have given the engineer better liberty, if he would have passed me his word

to be decent. But he wouldn't do it; elected to share the jail sentence with the other fellow, though I understand they are anything but friends."

"H'm!" said the visitor thoughtfully. "You may find some difficulty with this man when you're on the ground, don't you think? You can hardly put the thing through without him, can you?"

"We could, in a way, but I'm anxious not to leave the smallest possible legal loophole. There'll be a yell long enough to reach from Seattle to Washington when the thing comes out, and, if the reform cranks can get the smallest possible toe hold, they'll pry us loose."

"But if this young man proves obstinate? He surely won't bear you any great amount of good will if you've kept him under hatches all the way up."

"I don't ask for his good will. As for whether he will do his work or not when the time comes, there will be no two ways about it. He is engaged to be married, and he doesn't particularly want to be snuffed out."

The visitor laughed smoothly.

"You are a great villain, Lamb; a capital villain. I was telling Humphreys just the other day when we were speaking of you that you were born a couple of centuries too late. You would have made Morgan and Bluebeard and the other black-flag fellows turn green with envy. I believe you would really be abandoned enough to shoot this young man if he should refuse to knuckle under to you."

"I certainly should—and shall," said the handsome skipper coolly; "shoot him and take the chances of doing the work myself."

Again the visitor laughed.

"Of course, I was only joking. You know your business, no one ever knew it better, and we're banking on you." Then, after another reflective moment of smoke-ring blowing: "When can you send over to the *Nauliska* for the sacked salt?"

"To-morrow. We'll get at it early in the morning. How about your party people? Won't they ask a lot of curious questions?"

"We'll take the big launch and go glacier hunting. How will that do?"

"It will be better. How much of the stuff is there?"

"Ten sacks in all. And it is really mixed with salt—to give the bulk to fit the weight." The visitor smoked thoughtfully for a little while, and then added half musingly: "Ten thousand dollars' worth of salt; that's a pretty high price to pay for so common a commodity, isn't it, Lamb? I don't wonder that you didn't want to ship it in this schooner at Frisco."

"No," said the captain. "It would have been an unnecessary risk."

The visitor rose, and reached for the modish felt hat.

"I must be getting back to the yacht," he announced. And then: "By the way, we brought 'our friend, the enemy,' along."

"Who is that?" asked Lamb, as one who would not be found lacking in deferential interest.

"A fine old lawyer who is, I suspect, an emissary of the interior department —though he is wise enough to keep his own counsel about his own affairs. He and his daughter were trying to make one of the regular steamers from Seattle, and they miscalculated in some way and got left. Humphreys knows them, and he asked me to tender the hospitality of the *Nauliska*. The girl is a little beauty, and as bright as they make 'em."

"A lawyer, eh?" said the captain, ignoring the reference to the lawyer's daughter. "With any authority to act, do you think?"

"I don't know. But you needn't worry. He is my guest, and, if necessary, the *Nauliska's* engines can break

down, or something of the sort. I'll keep him out of your way."

By this time the two in the cabin were moving toward the companion, and Lamb's further comment, if he made any, was lost upon the two eavesdroppers behind the bulkhead. But one of them, at least, had a sharp attack of emotional insanity at the mention of the *Nauliska's* eleventh-hour additions to her passenger list. Glendish was sitting on one of the hardware cases with his head in his hands when Livingston joined him. They were both silent until the spluttering explosions of the schooner's launch had died away.

"Well," said Livingston, at the end of the thought milling; "what do you make of it?"

"I don't know much more now than I knew before I knew so little as I know now," replied the ex-clerk cryptically. "What kind of a deal is it that has got the big boss of all the Wall Street spellbinders for its head pusher?"

"It's far enough beyond me, Miles, but I guess you've got your wish. It's crooked."

"Crooked as a dog's hind leg!" Glendish exulted. "We can't get the big one—we can't climb high enough. But we'll get Lamb; we'll break him first and shove him over the road afterward!"

Livingston fell into a muse again, and Glendish was glad. It gave him time to dwell upon the nearness of Philippa Goodwin.

Looking back over the countless ages which had elapsed since he had seen her swinging in the hammock at the cottage on the brink of Platte Cañon, it seemed blankly incredible that she was only a few hundred yards away, the guest of a multimillionaire in a cruising yacht party.

The evil part of him rejoiced maliciously when he remembered that Livingston must be still thinking of her as waiting, wild-eyed and sorrowful, in Denver; waiting and watching for the lover who had disappeared as if the earth had opened and swallowed him. It was too good a joke to keep, but it was also too good to give away—to present company.

When Livingston came to the surface again, it was to comment upon the most inexplicable of all the mysteries. "Salt—ten thousand dollars' worth of salt," he mused, in speculative perplexity. "What do you make of that, Glendish?"

"I don't know; I'm a driveling idiot, and I don't know anything any more, Livingston," said the government man. And a moment later: "Listen; that's the launch coming back."

It was, and, shortly afterward, Glendish, with his eye to the peephole, whispered that Lamb was once more sitting at the cabin table, which was bare of everything save a bottle, a whisky glass, and a quick-firing pistol.

Before Livingston could climb up to see for himself, there was a stir overhead, the hatch was lifted, and the gruff voice of the Swedish mate projected itself into the forehold.

"You big fella, da skipper he say you coom vit mae on da cabin. He vantin' tal you somet'ing poorty qvick, *ja!* Coom oonder da hatch, and Hae bane goin' to yerk you oop vit vone hand."

Livingston felt in the darkness, and found and gripped Glendish's cold fingers.

"Good-by, old man," he whispered. "If Lamb gets me, I'm going to die believing that you'll even things up—for me and for Philippa."

CHAPTER XI.

THE THUMBSCREW.

After his long immurement in the myopic gloom of the forehold, Livingston was thankful that the summons had come in the night. In spite of the favoring circumstance, however, he

found the mild half twilight of the far-northern summer midnight sufficiently trying, and the full blaze of the cabin lamp, when he stumbled down the companion stair, was painfully blinding.

It was in a dumb fit of rage—the rage that strikes in and paralyzes because of its utter impotence—that he stood before Lamb, blinking and well-nigh helpless, and with his eyes aching as if they would burst. And it did not help matters when the poignantly returning sight showed him the pistol ostentatiously displayed on the table with its butt toward the captain's hand.

"Sit down, Mr. Livingston," was Lamb's curt command, and the poor prisoner of the darkness had to grope foolishly to find the chest so lately occupied by the malefactor of great wealth.

There was no trace of his former affability in Lamb's tone or manner when he began again:

"You've had your lesson, and I hope you've profited by it, Livingston. I told you in the beginning that I was master aboard this hooker, and I meant it. You've had plenty of time to think things over. Are you willing to listen to reason?"

A few weeks earlier Livingston would have cursed the autocratic skipper like a man and let it go at that. But now he was mindful of the anxious eyes and the listening ears just beyond the forward bulkhead.

"What's your proposition?" he demanded shrewdly.

"It is this: We are needing the services of a mining engineer with enough knowledge of surveying to locate landmarks and establish boundaries. You have the equipment, as I happen to know."

"How do you know?" asked Livingston.

"Because, though you probably don't remember me, I chanced to be among those present at the commencement in the great university when you were graduated. That is why I was so willing to take you off Adam Gregory's hands that night in San Francisco."

"Go on with your proposal," said Livingston brusquely.

"You are to go ashore with us at the designated landing place in the capacity I have indicated—that of engineer. You will be supplied with tools and instruments. Under my direction, you will run certain boundary lines and make certain tests, keeping an accurate and faithful record of all the facts; a record which you will be required to subscribe and swear to. For this service, I am prepared to pay liberally, either in the preferred stock of a company whose securities are already far above par, or in cash."

"And if I refuse?"

"You are not going to refuse. I might turn you over to the courts as a mutineer who has attempted to kill me—in which case you'd get a sentence that would turn you out of a Federal prison after your hair has grown gray, and this in spite of your family and all the influence it could bring to bear. But I'll be frank with you, Livingston; I don't propose to turn you over to the courts; I shall make the more direct appeal. If you are obstinate, the girl will become a widow before she has had a chance to become a wife; that's all."

"In other words, you'd murder me?"

"'Murder' is a harsh word. But we shall presently go ashore in a region where a man's life doesn't count for much, and where most men go armed. If you are sufficiently obstinate, you'll quarrel with me, and I shall have to shoot you. The few who may see it or hear of it will question neither the necessity nor the justice of it."

There were rats in the *Colleen Bawn;* of that fact Livingston had had hideous and disgusting evidence in the long weeks of confinement. When Lamb paused for his answer, there was a

faint scratching noise behind the forward bulkhead. Livingston heard and understood. Glendish was trying to signal to him.

"You have said nothing about the other man—the man who has been locked up with me," he said, glancing up quickly. "What will you do with him?"

"That will depend largely upon your own attitude. He has merely been in the way since the first. We can remove him, and, notwithstanding his large threats, I fancy he won't be greatly missed."

"But if I don't make it needful for you to 'remove' either of us?"

"Then we shall simply hold your no-friend until it is safe to release him."

Again Livingston tried to give the impression that he was taking time to think about it, and while he paused the faint scratching came again. This time it took a curiously regular-irregular form. Livingston knew the Morse code, and by listening closely he was able to spell out the words that Glendish was patiently vocalizing in the simulated rat gnawings: "Go to it—go to it—go to it."

"I shall make you no promises, Captain Lamb," was the quiet ultimatum which was finally delivered. "But if you compel me to go with you and to do all these things you have been outlining, I don't see how I am to prevent it."

Lamb poured himself a stiff drink of the red liquor from the table bottle, and swallowed it at a gulp.

"That is the most reasonable thing I've heard you say since our acquaintance began, Livingston, and, if you play the game out and play it fair, you won't lose anything. For the remainder of this one night, I shall have to send you back to the forehold, but, after that, you shall have just as much liberty as you are willing to use judiciously."

"And Glendish?" queried Livingston.

"Your no-friend shall be put upon the same footing, though I shall hold you accountable for him and his acts. Perhaps you'll be able to use him in the surveying, as chain man or stake driver, or something of that sort. That's all for to-night. Larscom will see that you don't stumble overboard on your way back to the main hatch. That's all."

The big Swede was waiting at the head of the companion steps when Livingston stumbled up.

"Feerst you coom oop, and den you bane gone down," he said, in grim facetiousness, and the captive's eyesight was still too uncertain to give him the courage of his fighting convictions. None the less, he could see well enough to get a fair glimpse of the *Colleen Bawn's* anchorage before he was reconsigned to the malodorous den between decks.

"We're lying in what appears to be a landlocked bay," he told Glendish, when he had felt his way to the ex-clerk's side. "There are big cliffs and a glacier, and at the foot of the glacier I got a glimpse of the yacht's riding lights." Then: "You heard what was said?"

"All of it," snapped the other.

"You wired me to give in, and I did it—with as many mental reservations as I pleased." And after a longish pause: "I don't see why you did it, Miles."

"Why I did what?"

"Why you told me to save my neck."

Glendish's laugh was as harsh as it was guarded.

"It was the yellow streak again—the soft spot—the rotten spot, you might call it. I was afraid you'd buck up to him and get the liver shot out of you, right there and then. Why don't I take some of these good chances and let you go under, Livingston? Why in the devil don't I?"

"I've been figuring on that a little," said Livingston thoughtfully. "It isn't because you don't hate me spitefully

enough; it's because, deep down inside of you, you're not quite sure it wouldn't break Philippa's heart, after all."

"Rats!" scoffed the unbeliever morosely, and he rolled over in the sailcloth blanketings and went to sleep.

CHAPTER XII.

TERRA INCOGNITA.

Early the next morning the two prisoners in the forehold of the *Colleen Bawn* were awakened by the overhead noises, which betokened a resumption of the cruising activities. The clank of the power winch announced the heaving short of the anchor chain, and the interrupted sputterings of the launch motor told that some one was trying to tune the small engine—not altogether successfully.

"They're going after the ten-thousand-dollar 'salt' cargo," said Livingston, when the launch finally got away. "I wonder if they'll stow it down here?"

"Not while we're here; you can bet on that," was Glendish's reply.

"No, I guess not—which brings on more talk. Lamb said we were to be given some better sort of jail liberty today. I wonder when it's to begin."

"Not until after the freight transfer, and not while the *Vaudiska* is in sight," Glendish hazarded. "The game has been worked out too carefully to admit of any bad breaks at this stage of it."

As it transpired, the government man's prophecy was at that moment fairly on the way to its fulfillment, though the factor of delay was to be eliminated. As he spoke, the hatch was lifted, and three of the *Colleen Bawn's* "able seamen," headed by the English second mate, dropped into the hold.

"Cap'n's orders," said the Cornishman, with brittle brutality. "Yer to 'ave the blinkers on an' get hout o' this."

The blindfolding was a rough-and-ready process, and quite possibly—though this was incidental—a merciful one for the two pairs of eyes so long unaccustomed to the glare of daylight. When it was accomplished, the two prisoners were hauled out of the pit of immurement, rushed aft to the cabin companion, and thrust rudely into the stateroom which, for some few hours of the first day out of San Francisco, had been Livingston's. And when they had removed the blindfoldings, they found the door locked upon them; found, also, that a bit of sailcloth had been hung over the side from the deck above to cut off the view through the locked portlight.

A little while afterward there were more tramplings on the companion steps, and Ting Foo, backed by the English mate and his squad of three, came with the breakfast. The meal was no longer the prison fare they had been getting in the forehold. It was better, and there was hot coffee to go with it.

"We're coming up in the scale of civilization—a little at a time and often," laughed Livingston over the better breakfast, but the brave attempt at hilarity fell flat. The weeks of close confinement had told upon both, and each had the other's face for a criterion of his own. And with the prison pallor and the emaciation went a certain grim ghastliness that made them both, each for himself, eat silently and with his half-blinded eyes in his plate.

It was after Ting Foo, again escorted by his formidable bodyguard, had removed the breakfast things, and the two strangely assorted cellmates had stretched themselves luxuriously on the blanketed bunk beds, that Livingston broke the long silence to say:

"If Lamb had only gone a bit farther, and included the tobacco! I wonder if he knows what it means to cut a man out of his one luxury like that—in the hollow half of a minute? Hold on, by Jove!"

His coat, the light topcoat he had been wearing on the night of the shanghaiings, was still lying where he had left it after the first-day bath and change. Feverishly rummaging in the pockets, he found a single cigar, together with a book of the little safety matches given away by the tobacconists. With the clasp knife, which Glendish had again managed to conceal, the cigar was carefully divided into halves.

"Light up and enjoy yourself, old man," said the wealthy Dives, passing one of the halves to the poor Lazarus, who was looking on hungrily.

Glendish sat up suddenly as if the bunk blankets had been prickingly electrified.

"Confound you!" he raged weakly, taking the gift, and then: "I warn you, Livingston! We're out of that black hole up forward, and, perhaps, in a few days, we'll be on earth again. I've got a hunch that the soft spot—the rotten spot—it going to heal. If it does, you want to look out for yourself."

Livingston had lighted his sharing of the precious tobacco, and was drawing long and luxurious whiffs.

"You'll have plenty of chances, Miles," he said half musingly, "and the Fates are with you. I haven't a ghost of an idea what time of the year or the month it is—only I know it must be getting along toward the time—the time that——"

"The time that was set for your wedding," Glendish finished for him, adding: "Well, what of it?"

"Philippa is waiting, and by now she has given up hope. I know what she is thinking, Miles; she's thinking that she is a widow. She's settled that for herself long ago. She knows me, and she will say that nothing short of the grave could have blotted me out so suddenly and so effectively. When I think of what she has gone through in these few black weeks—— Glendish, isn't it enough to drive a man stark staring crazy? Think of it!"

If Livingston had been the skilled reader of faces that he sometimes boasted he was, he might have read the story of a still sharper agony, the agony of a fierce soul struggle, in the face of the man in the opposite berth. He, and he alone, knew that Philippa Goodwin was not eating her heart out in disconsolate misery in far-away Colorado; that she was at hand, almost within call, and was probably enjoying the pleasant summer voyage with her father as she had never expected to enjoy it.

Doubtless she had written to Livingston's St. Paul address—not once, but many times; and doubtless, again, she was borrowing no trouble because she had not heard from him. The irresponsible movements of the multimillionaire's yacht would easily account for the missing of the mails.

Glendish sat chewing his half of the cigar in keen bitterness of spirit. A single sentence of a half dozen words would have changed the stars in their courses for the man who, though he had figured as a hated rival, had proved himself big enough and loyal enough to earn even a rival's tolerance and compassion. The few words of explanation would have lifted the cruel load of wretchedness, and yet Glendish could not bring himself to say them.

"You shouldn't expect me to sympathize with you there," was what he forced himself to say, but, after that, the tobacco gift was bitter in his mouth, and the change from the unspeakable prison to the comforts of the little stateroom were as nothing.

A little way beyond this came the sounds of the launch's return, and the two who had gone silent heard the noises betokening the unloading and stowing of her mysterious cargo. Shortly afterward came the clanking of the winch to let them know that the

anchor was being broken out, and other sounds gave warning that the schooner was getting under way. Just as the power went on, the mellow chime of a steamer's siren tooting the farewell came to the listeners in the cramped little cabin.

"What was that?" demanded Livingston, bounding to his feet.

"It was a steam whistle, for a guess," said Glendish coolly. "It's the *Nauliska,* telling us good-by."

"Of course," said Livingston, dropping down again. And then: "Great heavens, Miles, it's unbelievable. To think that a bunch of people—our own kind of people—are just over yonder somewhere, and we can't get word to them!"

"There are more wonderful things than that in this mix-up," Glendish offered, with grim cynicism. But beyond this he did not go.

All day, and far into the half twilight of the subarctic night, the *Colleen Bawn* forged ahead, part of the time in the open water, as the wave motion indicated, and part of the time, as the two captives guessed, in landlocked stretches where the smart breeze came in knock-down flaws, and the noise of the schooner's auxiliary engine —which was being driven at racing speed—came back as echoes to hint at the nearness of the land heights.

During the day there were some little amelioratings of their condition. One at a time they were taken, under careful guard, to the luxuriously fitted little bathroom adjoining the captain's cabin, and clean clothes were given them. Also, with the late dinner which they ate in clean and appetizing comfort, there was a box of cigars. But throughout the day they saw nothing of Lamb, and had no word from him.

The looked-for landing came in the early hours of the following morning, and it was Lamb himself who gave them their debarking orders. When they went on deck, it was with the freedom of passage-paid travelers. The *Colleen Bawn* was at anchor in a small bay with mud-flat shores backed by abrupt mountains. Overside, the water was yellow, as if from the silting of a great stream, and on the nearest of the mud flats a camp fire was burning.

As they soon saw, the debarkation had been practically a fact accomplished before they were summoned. The schooner's top-hamper had all been sent down, the main boom was lashed amidships, and the canvas was furled and stoppered under weather housings. One curious detail of the stripping and housing Livingston remarked as they stood waiting for their turn to descend to the launch: the ship's name, which had been painted conspicuously on the wheel, had been carefully erased. Also, there was a smell of fresh paint under the counter, to hint at other erasures.

The beach camp, as they found upon stepping ashore, was merely a rendezvous. In addition to the schooner's absurdly numerous crew, there was a group of flat-faced, thick-lipped Indians; beasts of burden these, with the viking mate portioning out their loads. On the flat beside the fire was the *Colleen Bawn's* scanty lading. The boxes were open, and their contents proved to be exactly what the markings had indicated — hardware, picks, shovels, knocked-down wheelbarrows, drills, crowbars, dynamite and fuse, and a modest array of camping utensils. And in one of the boxes, carefully packed and swathed in many wrappings, was a set of engineer's instruments, a fine transit with all the accessories.

"Your kit, Mr. Livingston," said Lamb briefly, pointing to the field outfit. "Make it your especial care, bearing in mind the fact that the nearest repair shop is something worse than two thousand miles away."

After much less confusion than the magnitude of the undertaking would

have excused, the march inland was begun, and by the time the early-rising summer sun was slanting its rays over the backgrounding mountains, the bay and the mud flats had been left behind, and the human pack train was winding its devious way through mountain defiles and over ridges where the old snow was still visible in spots.

Everywhere, as the two unwilling pioneers noted, there was the desolation of a completely uninhabited region, and to Livingston, who was shrewdly gnawing at the puzzle as the toilsome day wore on, it became evident that Lamb, who acted as the pack train's file leader, was purposely choosing a route which should offer neither the chance of observation nor that of possible desertions.

Another curious thing that Livingston noted was the complete disappearance of the sacked "salt," which had been transshipped the day before from the multimillionaire's yacht. At the noon halt, he had a word with Glendish about this, and the conclusion became obvious. The mysterious cargo had doubtless been divided into small quantities, and distributed in the Indians' packs.

The night camp, the pitching of which was delayed far beyond the limits of the long day, was in a precipitous hill country in the heart of a low mountain range. From the care which Lamb took in the selection of the site, it was obvious that the halt was to be permanent; a prefiguring which was presently clinched by the disappearance of the Indian carriers.

With the two mates acting as his lieutenants, Lamb quickly brought order out of chaos. A clearing was made in the thin foresting, tents were pitched, a camp stove was set up for Ting Foo, and the first full meal of the day was speedily served. Afterward, when the pipes were lighted, the skipper told his late between-decks prisoners that one of the tents was theirs.

"That was his way of showing his contempt for any conspiring that we might do as bunkies," said Glendish, when they had gone to roll themselves in the blankets under their own bit of shelter. "He knows he's got us as safe here in these God-forsaken hills as he had when we were in the schooner's forehold."

"You mean that it would be useless to try to run away in an uninhabited country? Listen, Miles; I'm not so sure that it is uninhabited."

"What! After to-day's tramp? It's a howling desert, and I don't believe anybody but the natives ever saw it before. Where were your eyes?"

"I have been neither blind—nor deaf," said Livingston. "Lamb has been purposely keeping away from the beaten trails. I suspected it when we left the shore. And all day long I've been trying to get my bearings. We've been paralleling a big valley all the way from tidewater; a valley that would have given us much easier marching than we had. At one of the high ridge crossings, I got a glimpse into the valley. You'll say I'm crazy, but, Glendish, I'll swear I saw a bit of railroad grade and something that looked mightily like an up-to-date steel track bridge."

"You dreamed it," scoffed the government man.

"No, I didn't. Neither did I dream, a few miles farther along, that the far-away rumbling noise that rose out of the big valley on the right was thunder. It was a dynamite shot—or rather a bunch of them—in pretty hard rock."

Glendish twisted his head until he could see the camp fire, and made sure that Lamb was still sitting beside it.

"We're in Alaska; you've settled that much in your own mind, haven't you?" he asked.

"Yes; in Alaska, and on the mainland."

"All right. There are five railroads in

Alaska, but there are only two that I know anything about: the White Pass and one other—and that other was delayed in construction. Am I hot or cold?"

"You've guessed it. The general direction of the day's hike fits in, and so does the landscape."

"Humph!" said the ex-clerk. "What do you know about the landscape?"

"It just happens," Livingston explained. "The railroad we have in mind is something of an engineering stunt, and there have been pictures in all the technical magazines."

"All of which is good—bully good," said the doubter. "But again and yet again, what's the answer, Livingston? What are we doing up here, lying hidden, dodging the inhabitants, and toting a wagon load of picks and shovels?"

"That is something that we shall probably find out bright and early tomorrow morning," said the optimist. "And to be ready for it, I think we'd better corral us a few lines of sleep."

CHAPTER XIII.

KING SOLOMON CONSOLIDATED.

As Livingston had predicted, the camp in the hills was stirring early on the morning after the tent-pitching on the chosen plateau, and immediately after breakfast Lamb sent for his newly appointed engineer.

Livingston found the chief of the expedition in his tent, alone and once more poring over the roll of maps. As if the night had bridged all the quarrelsome gaps intermediate, Lamb took up the business in hand briskly, with a complete return of his former affability and a resetting of the genial smile.

"Good morning, Mr. Livingston. I hope you rested well after the long hike. I'm sorry to have to turn you out so early, but time presses. Draw up a camp stool, and let us have a bit of man-to-man talk."

Livingston obeyed, though not without a determination to let the other man do most of the talking, and Lamb went on:

"You will bear me witness that I promised you should know all you needed to know when the proper time should arrive. The time has arrived. We are here on the ground, ready to strike the first blow in an undertaking that will make every other mining venture in the world look like child's play. Are you prepared to believe that?"

"I'm listening," was the noncommittal reply.

"All right, then; I'll heave ahead, as a sailor would say. We are in the Alaska mountains, as I suppose you have guessed. You know something about the wonderful paradoxes, in a mineral way, that this region has turned out, and you won't be too greatly surprised when I tell you that we are at this moment camping in the middle of the most incredible paradox of them all. As a mining engineer, you have probably had your eyes opened from the time we landed. Have you seen anything to indicate that we are in the center of a marvelously rich gold region?"

Livingston looked up sharply. "Nothing at all." And then: "It's impossible, from a geological point of view, Captain Lamb. You might as well expect to find gold in the Pennsylvania anthracite."

"There it is, you see," cut in the autocrat pleasantly. "You are a technically trained man, and, theoretically, your verdict ought to be conclusive. But it isn't. I'm going to prove to you, beyond question of doubt, that it isn't. These hills are simply so many vast placers, Mr. Livingston, and more wealth will be dug out of them in the next decade than has been taken out of any mining district that the world has ever seen."

Livingston was shaking his head incredulously. "You'll have to show me," he asserted.

"I am going to show you. I might dip into history a little, and tell you how the discoveries were made, but that would be hardly worth while. The present standing of the enterprise will be of greater interest to you. Realizing their inability to develop their big find without adequate backing and capital, the discoverers were careful not to advertise the region and raise the hue and cry which would have brought another Nome rush in upon them. They took samples, established their landmarks, and quietly went back to the States to capitalize the thing."

Livingston was listening intently and trying to fit the explanation as he could with the overheard conference in the *Colleen Bawn's* cabin.

"They have succeeded?" he said.

"Naturally. There is money enough behind the venture now to capitalize another Steel Trust. The next thing in order is to perfect the titles legally, and that is what we are here for, Mr. Livingston. Does that clear up all the little mysteries?"

"No," said the shoulder hitter, who was too honest to be even judiciously crafty. "It doesn't explain the secrecy —or the violence."

"The secrecy was the most vital part of the thing. One whispered word, with the titles unperfected and no assessment work done, would have spelled disaster, total and complete. Surely you can understand that?"

"Possibly. But the violence. Why should you find it necessary to shanghai your engineer, Captain Lamb?"

"Thereby hangs a tale, Mr. Livingston. I had a man engaged, and because I wouldn't tell him all the things I've just told you, he went back on us. We were up against it. Everything had been timed to a day, and we simply couldn't wait. I don't deny that your appearance on the scene was in the nature of a windfall, but when I found out who you were, I made up my mind to make your fortune for you—forcibly, if I had to. Does that satisfy you?"

Livingston did not say whether it did or not. He was too busy trying to hold clear-sighted reason and calm judgment aloof, to the end that the plausible explanation which fitted so cleverly with the known facts should not blind him to whatever other facts the future might develop.

"I can't forget that I am still your prisoner, Captain Lamb," he returned, "or that you made a slave ship of the *Colleen Bawn* on the voyage out. Whatever I do for you will be done without prejudice to my own opinions, without prejudice to a very natural determination to make you pay for the shanghai business when I can get you within reach of United States law."

The captain waved the disclaimer aside as a matter entirely incidental.

"We'll get to work, if you're ready," he said, rising. "My job will be to show you the landmarks left by the lucky discoverers; yours will be to survey the claims and to make the necessary notebook records for the patenting of them. Get out your instruments, and call your assistant, and we'll get busy."

Then and there began the most mysterious of all the mysteries surrounding and befogging the cruise of the *Colleen Bawn*. From point to point in the hills, the captain led the way, designating each stopping place quite at haphazard, at it seemed to Livingston, and waiting patiently at each halt until the full-sized gold-mining claim had been laid off and the stakes driven.

Curiously enough, as Livingston and his silent helper both observed, the narrow strips they were surveying soon began to zigzag in a roughly described circle inclosing a considerable area, but more curious still was the fact that in not one of the many locations was there

the slightest indication or outcropping to point to any possible gold-bearing strata beneath the surface. On the contrary there was every evidence that the region was not auriferous; that it belonged most unmistakably to the carboniferous period.

Doing his work conscientiously and faithfully, and maintaining a judicious silence throughout the greater part of it, Livingston could not help commenting on the stubbornly persisting barrenness of the field.

"If you find any gold here, every mining engineer in the known world will have to relearn his trade, Captain Lamb," he commented, when they were laying off one of the most unpromising of the barren strips.

Lamb smiled leniently, and pointed down the hill to where the *Colleen Bawn's* pick-up crew, divided into two shoveling gangs, each under the leadership of one of the mates, was making the dirt fly in the opening excavations.

"To-morrow we shall follow up the trail of those men, who are doing the necessary allotment of assessment work on each claim. You shall see for yourself, Mr. Livingston, and the seeing will be believing."

In such apparently thankless toil the long Alaskan summer day wore itself away, and after supper, with Glendish to help, the notebook records were carefully worked out and verified. For his own information, Livingston made a roughly plotted map of the ground gone over, working it up from the transit compass readings, and thus verifying his conviction that the criss-crossing locations were gradually assuming the form of an inclosing circle.

"Putting a fence around it, eh?" commented the ex-clerk, who had been an interested onlooker in the map sketching.

"It looks that way, doesn't it? But we are also covering the interior region pretty thoroughly, as well. It won't be worth while for anybody else to come in here after we're through, you'd say."

Glendish was sucking reflectively at a clay pipe which he had begged from one of the men. There was a box of Lamb's cigars on the rudely constructed drawing table, but the pipe was stronger.

"I tell you we're not at the bottom of this thing, by a thousand miles, Livingston!" he protested earnestly. "It's a colossal graft of some kind, just as sure as you live!"

"Lamb has promised us that we shall be convinced to-morrow. If we are, I shall never get over being thankful that I threw up engineering and took to the more exact science of freight soliciting," chuckled the railroad man.

"You still think it's impossible?" queried the helper.

"As baldly impossible as the hope of finding gold in the street sweepings of Chicago."

Glendish's pipe had gone out, and he began to arrange his blankets for the night.

"We'll see—to-morrow," he said, and before Livingston could carefully destroy and scatter the bits of the telltale map, the government man was asleep and dreaming.

As Lamb had promised, the proof conclusive was offered on the following day, and it was as convincing as a blow on the head from a policeman's nightstick. Equipping himself with an ordinary camp skillet and a shovel, the captain led the way to the first of the excavations made by the shovelers and dynamiters the day before. The narrow drift into the side of the hill was deserted, the men having gone on to the claims staked out above.

"I want to convince you both fairly," Lamb began, in the friendliest manner, "and the best way to do it is to let you make your own tests. Pitch out, Mr. Livingston, and show us how you high-priced experts go at it. Take any-

thing you like from the bottom of the drift."

Livingston climbed down into the narrow, gravelike hole, and got his samples, digging them here and there to secure a fair average. From these samples a shovelful of the marly, barren-looking earth was taken at random, and in the rivulet at the foot of the hill Livingston washed this final shovelful, a handful at a time, in the camp skillet, with Lamb and Glendish looking on.

When the last of the clay and silt had been dexterously dissolved and flooded out over the edge of the pan, there remained a few shining particles of flake gold and two tiny nuggets.

"Well?" inquired Lamb, with a short laugh. "Are you convinced?"

"Not yet," Livingston denied, and he went back to the opening on the hillside and took another sample, averaging it still more carefully than he had the first. At the test the result was practically the same. There were no nuggets this time, but there was a greater quantity of the finer gold.

"How about it now?" demanded the captain, good naturedly triumphant.

Livingston looked up with a puzzled frown. "You win, Captain Lamb—or, at least, you seem to. Everything that we have learned in geology and mineralogy is against you, but the fact appears to remain. Your marl claims, which have never been nearer the earth's great smelting fires than they are at this minute, seem to be fairly rich in at least one product of the smelting fires; or at all events this first one is. What next?"

"More of the same," said the captain shortly. "But first make a notebook record of this. Of course, without an assayer's outfit, you can do nothing more than to guess at the values. Make you estimate as conservative as you like. All we want is a mining engineer's certificate to the effect that we have a real gold proposition here that is worth working. You can safely say that, can't you?"

"I can state the facts as I find them."

"That is sufficient. To ease your conscience, I can assure you that no attempt will be made to sell stock in the King Solomon Consolidated on the strength of your certificates. For that matter, there isn't a single share of it for sale—and there won't be. Shall we try the next opening?"

Livingston tried the next, and a goodly number of others. The results varied considerably. Some of the claims appeared to be exceedingly rich. Others revealed only traces of the precious metal, a few "colors" to the pan. But in none of them was the gold entirely lacking.

When the morning's testings were completed, the three of them took to the field again with the transit and surveyor's chain, and again the captain made his selections of the sites apparently offhand. But, as before, both Livingston and the stake driver observed that the sightings and chainings were tending more and more to the inclosing of a many-acred tract, or rather to the crisscrossing of the tract, so that practically the whole of it could be claimed and patented under the United States mining laws.

"Speaking of hogs," said Glendish, when they were once more collaborating over the field notes under the twittering lights of the candles in their tent, which they had to keep closed to shut out the mosquitoes, "our captain has them all beaten to a finish. When the rush comes, the new people won't be able to get in edgewise; what?"

"It looks that way," said Livingston, out of the depths of a mathematical calculation.

There was a silence for a little time, broken only by the slurring of the pencils. Then Glendish began again.

"You're going on in good faith?—

just the same as if you were a hired engineer?"

Livingston looked up with an absent scowl.

"I'm digging to try to get at the bottom of it, Miles, and so are you. If I could only get my troubles out of my head so that I could put my mind to it——"

"Still harping on that string, are you?" said the ex-clerk unsympathetically. "Why can't you let sleeping dogs lie?"

"The dog in my case isn't asleep; he is very much awake, as you know. And every added day makes it worse."

Glendish's eyes were half closed, and he was chewing absently at the end of his pencil.

"I'm wondering if you'd think less hard of me in the end, when I do you up, if I should give you a grain or two of comfort right now," he said, abstractedly speculative.

"Try me," said Livingston eagerly. "You saw Philippa after I left her. And as for the grouch, Glendish, I shall never live long enough to forget what you did for me in that pitch-black hell on board the *Colleen Bawn*—that and the knife scar on your hand."

"Drop it!" said the other sourly. And then: "I'm selfish about this present mix-up—as usual. You may be able to forgive and forget, but *I'm* going to play even. As it stands, you're no good to scheme; no good on earth; your head's too full of other things."

"Empty it, Glendish! For God's sake, empty it, if you can!" pleaded the wretched lover.

"Well, then, listen: Philippa isn't worrying about you. She doesn't even suspect that you have disappeared. Does that help out any?"

"Glendish, do you mean that? But how, *how* can it be?"

"I'm not going to tell you the 'how.' But it's God's own truth, Livingston. You may know it is, because I've been saying all along that I'd die before I'd tell you."

Livingston put his head in his hands, and sat for five full minutes staring at the flickering candles. At the end, he said: "I can't figure it out; I can't begin to figure it out. You're sure, Miles? You wouldn't put the knife into me like this unless you were sure?"

"I am sure. It will figure out as the simplest thing in the world when you come to know about it. But I'll tell you again: I'm not going to throw away a single one of my poor chances by telling you the details. Get what comfort you can out of the fact; trust your luck for the future; and then put your brains at work on this puzzle of ours. Will you do it?"

"I've been doing it all along; you may be sure I shan't do it any less pointedly for what you've just told me."

"You're convinced that it's a fake of some kind?"

"I was, at first. But this day's experience has shaken me. This is a land of wonders, Miles. Of course, it looks like a fairy tale on the face of it. Yet both of us have seen and handled the stuff."

"Still, I tell you it's a fake!" insisted the pessimist. "I don't pretend to know anything about your geological impossibilities, and all that, but I do pretend to know a faker when I see one. I tell you, it's a put-up job, and somebody is going to get cinched to beat the band!"

"I can't imagine where it's going to branch off into the faking part," said Livingston. "So far, everything is as straight as a string; we are locating the claims, we are proving that they are *bona-fide* placers, and we are doing a liberal amount of assessment developing. I see no reason why Lamb can't go ahead and get his patents and establish his rights. I'm like you; I'd like to be able to prove that it's a fake. But you've got to get a wedge started before you can drive it."

"I'll start the wedge, and I'll drive it, too—if it's the last thing I ever do!" promised the ex-clerk spitefully.

But in what manner chance, the final arbiter in so many human perplexities, was presently going to open the preliminary rift, neither the spiteful one nor his no-less belligerent tentmate could by any means foresee as they resumed their work on the field records.

CHAPTER XIV.

A BULLET AND A BRIBE.

For a strenuous fortnight after the firing of the first dynamite blast in the long string of placer claims, the work was pushed at top speed, the two bullying mates, who were serving as foremen, driving the wretched crew mercilessly. Though Lamb said nothing to the two were were in the rush but not of it, it was evident that cruel haste was the watchword, and it was Glendish's guess that the speeding-up process was due quite as much to pressure from without as to Lamb's own irritable impatience.

By the end of the fortnight, the surveying was completed, and there remained only the final reworking of the field notes and the writing up of the record of tests. Under Lamb's supervision, the pan washings had gone on from day to day, and each in its turn had added something to disprove the "geological impossibility." Beyond all manner of doubt, the King Solomon Consolidated claims were in rich placer ground; so rich that the daily testings became monotonous, and the veil of mystery grew so opaque that it began to figure as a solid background of fact for the two doubters.

As it so often happens in the critical tilting of the scale beam of chance, it was the smallest of incidents that suddenly reopened the entire problem for the two who were baffled. On the day following the final test taking, Livingston and Glendish were working in their tent. With the exception of the ship's Chinese cook, the camp was deserted; and from far around to the westward came the sharp detonations of the dynamite as the excavators drove their job. Glendish, weary with the pen pushing on the records, got up, and stepped to the open tent flap. A moment later he came back with the skillet in his hand; the "pan" they had been using for the test washings.

"Livingston," he broke in abruptly, "what makes this frying pan always rust white?"

Livingston put his pencil down, and paid attention.

"If we were in the Nevada desert, I should call it alkali. It's something in the soil, I suppose."

Glendish transferred a bit of the white deposit to the tip of a forefinger, and tasted it. "It isn't alkali; it's—say, by Jove, it's salt!" he declared, and Livingston nodded.

"That isn't singular. Many of the marl soils carry salt in them. Have you never seen the cows licking a clay-bank?"

"Yes; and also, about two weeks ago, I heard one man tell another that ten thousand dollars' worth of something which they had both been calling 'salt' had been mixed with real salt to give it bulk according to its weight."

Livingston bounded to his feet as if one of the faintly heard dynamite blasts had gone off directly under him.

"Suffering Moses!" he ejaculated. And then: "Glendish, I ought to hire somebody to kick me all the way back to the coast. Heavens and earth! Lamb's job has been as easy as taking the pennies out of a blind man's hat! I certainly had the right kind of a hunch when I got out of the engineering business, didn't I? Why, the biggest lunkhead that ever ponied through the labs would have caught on before this!"

"You mean that Lamb has been 'salting' these holes, both ways, all along?"

"Of course he has! And it never entered my head! Come running, and bring that pan!"

Together they slipped out of the rear of the tent, and hurried down to the first of the excavations, the one nearest the rivulet in the gulch. There was no one in sight, and hurriedly, almost feverishly, they put the discovery to the proof. The fraud was quickly made plain. Earth taken from the bottom of the drift yielded gold "colors" and even one small nugget, and it was unmistakably salty to the taste. Earth taken from the sides and ends of the cutting yielded nothing.

"Now what?" queried Glendish, squatting on his heels at the water's edge after the final test had been made.

Livingston was sitting on the bank of the rivulet, absently prying little landslides of the soft tufa soil into the stream with the handle of the frying pan. Suddenly he stooped, and picked up a small black object like a bit of the marly shale that had been dipped in ink. An instant later he was digging frantically under the overhanging bank, using the frying pan for a shovel. When the soil had been scraped away, he grabbed Glendish and shoved his face into the small excavation.

"What do you see?" he demanded excitedly.

"Nothing but a ledge of black rock that you've partly uncovered. No, hold on! By George, it's—*coal!*"

Livingston was grinning fiercely.

"Are you on? Have you got your eye on the sights so you can see the nigger in this biggest of all the woodpiles?"

It was Glendish's turn to leap to his feet with his narrow black eyes ablaze.

"The pirates! The robbers! The buccaneers!" he shrilled. "Don't you see what they're doing? This is a part of the disputed coal land, and they've got a sure tip that the whole business is going to be withdrawn from entry—I heard about it when I was in Washington the last time! And they're hedging; hedging by covering the coal claims with a lot of bogus gold mines! Livingston, it's up to you and me to put the dynamite to this thing and blow it to——" He stopped short, with the hot eyes blazing and his jaw hanging loosely. On the bank above them stood the chief of the buccaneers, with his hands in the pockets of his khaki shooting jacket and his strong, even teeth bared in a mirthless smile of complete comprehension.

"I suppose you know where you stand, both of you," he said slowly, after the pause had grown heartbreaking. And then to Livingston: "Don't try the jujutsu this time; you can't jump this far, and, besides, I've got you both covered."

Livingston threw up his head defiantly. The fortnight of hard work in the open had made a man of him again, and he looked, and felt, fighting fit.

"The game's up," he said tersely. "Shoot, and be done with it. If you don't get us, we'll get you!"

"All in good time," was the significant answer, and it was followed by a curt command. "Climb out of there, both of you, and go up to camp—ahead of me."

They obeyed soberly, because there was nothing else to do, climbing the slight acclivity out of the rivulet ravine silently side by side, with Lamb keeping even step a few paces in the rear. Just before they came in sight of the tents and Ting Foo's cooking fire, the captain called a halt, and when they turned to face him he flashed out at Glendish.

"You've been a spy and a backcapper from the first, and you may as well quit here and now!" he said, in curt decision. And with catlike quickness he

whipped a pistol from the pocket of the khaki coat, and coldly shot the ex-clerk as he stood.

For the instant which cost him his chance to fling himself, barehanded upon the murderer, Livingston stood frozen with the incredible, unspeakable horror of the thing. Glendish had fallen as one falls from the impact of a body blow, doubled and contorted, and with a queer look of shocked wonder in the beady little eyes. Then there was a single convulsive shudder, and the eyes closed.

"You cold-blooded devil!" yelled Livingston, crouching for the spring. But his moment was gone. Lamb had stepped back, and the pistol was at his hip.

"Go on up to the camp!" he commanded sharply, and with a mighty effort Livingston made himself obey. His life had suddenly grown precious; it must not be wasted now until justice should be done.

The quick march in single file paused, by Lamb's command, at the entrance to Livingston's tent. Livingston stole a quick glance at the deserted camp. The men were all out, and there was only the blank-faced Chinaman pottering at the fire.

Lamb summoned the cook, and said a few words to him in his own tongue. When the Chinaman had shuffled off over the shoulder of the hill, the two, captor and captive, were alone in the circle of tents.

"Turn in!" snapped the man with the weapon, and once more Livingston took counsel of prudence and obeyed. At the step inside, Lamb pushed him rudely to a seat on one of the pole-built bunks.

"There are two kinds of fools, Livingston," he said, with brutal crispness; "those who know too little, and those who know too much. Your no-friend has just paid the penalty which usually falls, sooner or later, upon the latter class. Where do you stand?"

"I stand precisely where the man you have just killed was standing when you shot him down."

"Which means that you have become one of the fools who know too much. Livingston, I'm going to give you about five minutes in which to change your mind. You had your warning long ago, and it's your own fault if you did not pass it on to that snapping little cur out yonder. Where is your report?"

Livingston nodded toward the rough-hewn drawing table. Lamb glanced over the report, turning the leaves with his left hand and keeping the weapon in his right pointed at Livingston's stomach. At the end he shoved the paper across the table.

"Sign it," he directly briefly.

"Not in a thousand years, you grafter!" was the explosive refusal.

"Then you'd rather die—and break the girl's heart? Listen a minute; you are young, with a fair prospect of life and happiness before you, and the happiness of the one woman to consider as well. Lay hold of your common sense, and look the thing fairly in the face. Ask yourself if it is worth while. I know what you've found out, and I'll tell you more. A bunch of wild-eyed conservation fanatics in the States have made up their minds that they're going to have the coal fields of this country locked up indefinitely. We are merely trying to put one across on them—it's as good as done at the present moment, and you can't stop it."

He waited for a reply, and when there was none forthcoming, he went on:

"I don't care anything about your signature on that paper. We can file on the gold claims without it—or I could forge it, if needful. But your mouth must be closed, one way or another. I'll close it painlessly if you'll say the word. It is worth one hundred thou-

sand dollars to you, to be placed to your credit in any New York bank you name, and no questions asked, if you'll agree to keep still. Think a minute of what that means—say three or four times your late railroad salary as an assured income."

Livingston lifted his head with a jerk.

"Why don't you shoot and have it over with?" he rasped. "You know you can't afford to let me get out of Alaska with this information that I have stumbled upon."

"You may go to-morrow," said Lamb definitely, "and I'll ask nothing more than your word—and your signature on that paper."

"Ah! I thought so. You would certainly be safe enough if you could make me an accomplice in your dirty scheme! You can't do it, Captain Lamb. Neither can you kill me in cold blood, as you'd like to. *You haven't got the nerve!*" and he fixed Lamb's eyes with a defiant stare that was like a triumphant wrestler's lock hold.

The captain backed away, and half raised the pistol. Just then Ting Foo's expressionless face appeared in the slit of the tent flap.

"I dlag him down an' belly him in one, two, tlee hole, allee samee top side Melican man undeltakee," he sing-songed. And Lamb, apparently changing his mind, gave another brief order in the Quang-Tung dialect. The Chinaman vanished, but he returned almost immediately, jingling a pair of handcuffs with the accompanying leg irons.

"Clamp him," was Lamb's command, and he made resistance impossible, or at least futile, with the pointed pistol.

When the Chinese deputy had done his office and had gone back to his cooking fire, Lamb turned away.

"Don't think you have won out with a brash word or two," he said, turning on his heel in the tent opening. "The clean fact of the matter is that I don't want to kill you, Livingston, if I can avoid it. You ought to know why—you're a full-grown man, which is more than could be said for the bit of carrion we left behind on the other side of the hill. Take a few hours to consider. Your word and your signature, and you are footloose, with a hundred thousand dollars of your own to spend on your wedding, if you choose. Think it over, remembering that if you refuse you're only a common housefly trying to block the way for a steam road-roller. Send me word by Ting Foo when he brings your supper, and make it the word of ordinary prudence and common sense."

And with that he was gone.

CHAPTER XV.

CHAOS AND OLD NIGHT.

It was between three and four o'clock in the afternoon of the day of illuminating discoveries and tragic happenings when Livingston was given his conditional reprieve; a respite which he knew would be only a short one if he should remain obstinate. None the less, there was time for the reflective weighing of all the arguments, pro and con, and he strove to do it calmly.

The choice between the two alternatives was not so easy to make as it had seemed to be in the first flush of retaliatory rage. Unquestionably Lamb and the potential coal barons who were behind him were buccaneers, deserving the execration of all honest men; public enemies toward whose overthrow and defeat the efforts of all good citizens should be directed. But these were abstract considerations. The concrete reality fined itself down to this: Was he, Sidney Livingston, called upon to defend the abstract principle at the price of his life and of the happiness of one whose welfare was dearer to him than even life itself?

There could be no doubt of Lamb's necessity, or of the sincerity of his threat. Self-preservation is the primal law, and, while there remained a single living witness to the colossal fraud, that witness must be either bribed effectively or silenced otherwise.

Livingston tried to get above the mere personalities and to look the broad facts fairly in the face, but the effort was only partly successful. What he was asked to do was scarcely more criminal than some of the lawless things he had been practically ordered to do in the railroad service. Even in a democracy, capital has some rights that a sovereign people may be bound to respect, and it was quite credible that Lamb's backers were trying to hold what they might plausibly assert was their own.

It is nothing to Livingston's discredit to say that the argumentative battle was desperately prolonged; that for a long time decision hung in the balance. Nor should he be judged too harshly if it be admitted that at the end of the ends the personal equation figured more potently than did the purely ethical question of abstract right and wrong.

Again and again he came back to the sharp apex of the thing—he had been kidnaped and bullied and driven at the muzzle of a gun to serve the purpose of the buccaneers; and Glendish, at the worst only a compulsory onlooker, had been shot down in cold blood. Lamb was the pitiless aggressor, and he must be made to pay. Livingston strained at his manacles, and swore a great oath. Though he should never see Philippa again, while he lived he would strive and fight for the squaring of the long account with the captain of the *Colleen Bawn*.

Just what was to be done in a retaliatory way was not so evident. With a pair of modern handcuffs snapped upon his wrists, and a pair of heavy leg irons clamped around his ankles, even the strongest of young Samsons may recognize his handicap and be hampered by it. But while there was life, there was hope, and after the militant decision was reached he awaited the coming of the Chinaman with his supper with a firmer degree of courage and with every faculty alert and on the defensive.

For a reason which was presently made manifest, to the ear, at least, the supper bringing was delayed. At the quitting hour, Livingston heard the men come into camp, not in the sullen silence of toilers who had been driven like galley slaves in the ditches, but uproariously and more like a pay-day mob of drunken grade laborers.

Instantly, if one might judge from the clamor, there were half a dozen fights in progress around the camp fire, and Livingston could hear above the din the biting profanity of the two bullying mates as they strove to bring order out of the suddenly precipitated chaos.

After a few minutes of the clamor, there was a lull, as if the mates, with their pick-handle clubs, had succeeded in quelling the belligerents. Then the rioting broke out again more furiously than before, with a crackling of pistol shots and the heavy *dunch* of body blows mingled with fierce yells, which translated themselves into a mob's war cry of curses and mad shoutings for vengeance to be wreaked upon somebody.

Livingston edged along on the bunk to reach with his fettered hands for the closed tent flap. In the act the Chinese ship's cook came headlong through the slit in the canvas, his face cut and bleeding and his slanting eyes saucerlike in their terror.

"Me come fo' liting papers!" he gasped. "Bucko cap'n say you givee me liting papers!" And without waiting to be helped or hindered, he swept the reports and records of the fraudulent gold entries from the table into the

ample folds of his shirtlike upper garment, and darted out again.

Livingston fell back, raging at his own impotent helplessness. The long, high-latitude summer day was still only in its early evening, but the surrounding wood cut off the level rays of the slanting sun, and the shadows were already gathering under the canvas. As if the battleground were shifting, the medley of discordant yells and gun cracklings grew fainter, and presently died away altogether, and a silence profound and ominous settled down upon the deserted clearing.

Livingston got a purchase on the short chain uniting his manacles, and twisted until the pain blinded him. When sight returned, he made sure that he was losing his hold upon sanity. Crouching at the foot of the opposite bunk, as if it had just floated noiselessly through the tent wall, was the ghost of Miles Glendish.

"Miles!" he gasped, and at that one side of the parchmentlike face of the ghost wrinkled in a horrible grin.

"It's half of me," whispered the apparition; "the half that's alive bringing along the other half that's dead. I've come back to get you to help me to kill Lamb. Where is he?"

"But you're dead, Glendish!" shuddered the one who was at least constructively alive, covering his eyes with his hands. "Good heavens! Didn't I stand by and see you die?"

"You saw half of me die," said the ghost, and the words came out of one side of its mouth with twistings and face contortions frightful to behold. "The bloody devil shot straight enough; but my watch happened to be in the way. Look at that!"—it was the mere wreck of a heavy silver watch, smashed as if by a hammer blow, that lay in the palm of the one live hand—"I guess I was all dead until the little chink came to drag me off down the hill," he went on. "Then one side of me came alive enough to scare him. He dropped me, and took to the timber. Now, I've come back to kill the man who did it. Where is he?"

"I don't know. There has been a horrible scrap of some kind. The whole show fought itself out of hearing just before you—just before I looked up and saw you."

Glendish wagged his head feebly. "A scrap?" he echoed.

"Yes. The men came in at quitting time, yelling like a lot of drunken savages. From what I could hear, I gathered that Larscom and Selden waded in with their pick handles. They got it under for a minute or two, and then it broke out again worse than before. I've got a notion that the worm has turned and the men are trying to square things with Lamb and his bucko mates."

Glendish was no longer paying attention. He was rummaging in a knotted handkerchief bundle which contained the few extra bits of clothing he had contrived to bring with him from the schooner. Out of the dunnage he fished a tiny pocket mirror, vanity's sole holdover from the days of the accurately matched hatbands and clocked hosiery. He held the mirror up to the fading light, and peered into it. One glimpse of the distorted face was enough. With a wild-beast cry, he flung the bit of silvered glass down, and set the living heel upon it to grind it into the earth. Then he laughed, and the laugh was hideous, both to sight and sound.

"You w-win, Livingston," he gurgled. "No woman will ever look twice at me again."

"No, you are wrong," was the grave rejoinder. "We both lose," and in a few brief sentences he recounted the happenings of the afternoon. "Lamb will get away," he predicted, in conclusion. "He has the papers, and he will forge my name to them, if he needs

to—he said he would. But before he goes back to the coast he will make sure that we are both dead. You can't run away, and neither can I."

"I'm dead enough now," grinned the paralytic, "but I've got the knife left, and one hand to hold it. When he comes back to massacre you, I'll get him, if it's the last thing I ever do in this world."

"If I could only get these clamps off!" groaned the athlete.

Glendish crept to the front of the tent, and cautiously drew the flap.

"Nobody has come back yet," he announced. "I'm going to crawl over to the blacksmith's shed and see if I can't find a file."

Livingston held the tent flap open, and watched Glendish's slow progress across the clearing. It was pitiful. As he had said, the shock of the bullet had left him paralyzed on one side; his left arm and leg were merely dragging hindrances. Yet he would not give up, and after a time Livingston saw him come clawing back with the file between his teeth.

They fell to work at once, or rather Livingston did, though Glendish made shift to hold the file with one end in a crack of the slab table top, while Livingston sawed his fetters back and forth across its edge. It was a slow task, and, before the first of the fetters was cut through, the men were coming back to the camp by twos and threes, and replenishing the fire and raiding the commissary.

What attitude the mutineers would assume toward them, neither Livingston nor Glendish could guess, but as a precautionary measure they dropped the tent flap and toiled on in the gathering gloom. It was a race against time, and they both knew it. If Lamb and the bucko mates had not been overtaken and slain, there would be a reckoning, and it would not tarry.

By the time the firelight without showed them the reassembled rioters, or a goodly number of them, gorging themselves around the fire, Livingston had his hands free and was attacking the leg irons. Now that he could use the file as a hand implement and put his strength to it, there were better results; moreover, Glendish was free to crawl to the tent flap and keep watch.

"They didn't get Lamb or the mates," was the first bit of information passed back to the sweating file sawyer. "They've got pickets out, and they're looking to be jumped at any minute. The silly fools! Lamb and his buckos have the guns, and the first notice they'll get will be a gun-play notice to quit."

The words were hardly out of his mouth when a jet of red fire spurted from the nearest of the placer driftings, and one of the mutineers lurched forward and fell with his face in the hot ashes of the camp fire. Instantly pandemonium leaped alive again with a wild panic to urge it on. The "gutter rats" of the San Francisco water front were game. As one man they rushed the makeshift breastwork fiercely, deploying as they ran to thin their ranks and dodge the fire spurtings.

Glendish dropped the canvas flap, and rolled over to grope for a handhold on the leg of the tent table.

"Hurry!" he gasped. "Lamb's got help! There are more than three of them pumping lead over that pile of dirt yonder! Hurry—hurry!"

CHAPTER XVI.

THE HIKE.

The battle at the breastwork was still raging hotly when Livingston got the second of the leg fetters cut and sprang up a free man.

"This is our time to fade away!" he cried out, and then he remembered Glendish's helplessness. "Can you walk if I give you a shoulder?"

"Not on one leg," gritted the ex-clerk.

And then: "Pitch out for yourself, Sidney. I'm only a has-been."

"What do you take me for?" was the gruff retort, and, laying hold of the cripple, Livingston dragged him bodily under the canvas on the side away from the fighting.

Once in the open, the obstacles in the way of escape rose up on every side. The camp and the clearing, to say nothing of the flying bullets, cut them off from the downhill flight. Their best chance, as Livingston saw it, was to make for the great valley where he had seen the railroad. But to get at the downhill trail a wide circuit in the rear of the placer ditchings must be made. Livingston did not hesitate. Gathering the cripple in his arms, he made the dash, hoping that they might not be seen.

The hope was a vain one. When they were halfway to the nearest cover, one of the three men in the makeshift breastwork — there were only three, after all—rolled over and opened fire on them with a short-barreled repeating rifle. Twice Livingston felt the sting of the lead, one of the missiles scorched his shoulder in passing, and the other left a smarting score on his right hand. When he staggered into the welcome cover of the wood, it was as the blind carrying the blind.

"Just a minute, old man—until I can get my second wind!" he panted, putting Glendish down tenderly, and he was relieved to hear the helpless one burst out in a babblement of curses.

"Leave me! Leave me, I tell you!" raved the cripple. "Ten thousand devils! Haven't you got a lick of sense left? Lamb will pick those fellows off, one at a time, and then he'll trail us. Don't you see that he *can't* let either one of us reach the coast alive? Drop me and outrun him, Sidney. For the love of God, get out of this while you can!"

"Not without you, Miles; that's settled once for all. Hold your grip a minute while I dodge around behind this scrimmage and raid the commissary." And propping Glendish on the safe side of a tree, Livingston made a quick detour to the rear of the yelling, stone-hurling mob charging the breastwork.

He was back in a few minutes, with a sailor's dunnage bag slung over his shoulder.

"It's plenty hot back there, and I had to take what I could get," he gasped. "I stumbled over the Chinaman as I was breaking in. He's dead, and I've got the papers that he swiped for Lamb. It seems that he didn't live long enough to finish the errand."

"That's one more reason why Lamb can't afford to let you get away alive!" snapped the ex-clerk. "If you weren't the biggest fool that ever breathed——"

Livingston cut the protest short. The crackling shots were coming at longer intervals, and the minutes were precious. Stooping to get the lifting hold, he swung the dead weight of the paralytic to his back, and the flight was begun.

Because the twilight arctic night was hazy and the stars were obscured, and also because it was sharply necessary to choose the easier trails, Livingston soon lost his sense of direction; lost it partly while the sound of the dropping shots could still be heard, and completely after the huge silence of the hills had shut down upon them.

Though Glendish was small and light, and Livingston, rising to his full stature of a man and an athlete, put forth his strength like a young giant, the handicap promised soon to make the retreat a toiling, slow march, and the covering of the first few miles, even with rest intervals thickly interspersed, proved that their best hope lay rather in evading than in running. It became evident that many hours must elapse before they could hope to break out of the uninhabited wilderness, and at the

midnight halt, while they ate sparingly from the scanty provision bag, Glendish renewed his importunities to be left behind.

"You're crazy, Livingston," he protested. "It would be different if there were the least living chance of my ever being a whole man again. But there isn't; you know there isn't, and I know it. So what's the use?"

"Put yourself in my shoes, Miles, and you'll see."

"I'd quit you in a minute!" was the rasping rejoinder.

"Yes," said the athlete; "that is just what you've been doing all along—quitting me—isn't it? It's what you did when I went mad in the schooner's hold, and it's also what you did a few hours ago when you put off dying long enough to crawl into camp to see what had become of me. You can rest easy, old man. If Lamb gets one of us, he'll get both."

"Blast you!" sobbed the quitter, with another of the dreadful face twistings, "why can't I hate you the way I ought to! Man, man! If it wasn't for the love of a girl—— Sidney, promise me one thing. If by some crooked miracle you should happen to get me out alive, don't let her see me. It would kill me to see the look in her eyes, and torment me in hell afterward!"

Livingston's grin was merely a mask for the upheaval of mingled emotions that sent the tears to his eyes.

"Shut up!" he commanded, with a break in his voice that he could not control; and then, the simple meal being dispatched, he set up as an amateur physician, stripping Glendish to the waist and turning him upon his face to give the paralyzed nerve branchings a vigorous massaging. "Tell me if I hurt you," he said, but it was not until after he had lost all hope that Glendish began to wince.

"Ouch!" said the patient. "Don't forget that I've got some feeling left in one side of me."

Livingston's sigh of relief was almost a sob. Propping his patient with his back to a tree, he began to chafe the useless arm roughly, and again Glendish winced.

"If I didn't know that that side is as dead as Pharaoh——" he began. And then: "Oh, suffering humanity! How it hurts!"

"You're sure of that, are you?" queried the amateur, redoubling the roughnesses.

"Sure? Good blazes! It's like a million needles! Let up, man; let up, I say! You're murdering me!"

"Hit me," said Livingston triumphantly. "Double up your fist and give me a good one."

Glendish tried it, and the fingers of the dead hand obeyed jerkily, though the flexors and extensors of the upper arm would not. "Oh, God" he whispered, in ecstatic happiness, and again: "Oh, my God!"

For a long time after Livingston had desisted through sheer weariness, the wounded man lay with his back to the tree bole, crooking and straightening the halting fingers and staring amazedly at them in the misty twilight of the Alaskan dawn.

"It's creeping down," he averred at length. "It's in my toes now, stabbing like a hundred thousand little knives." And then abruptly: "Livingston, do you believe in God?"

"Of course," said the shoulder hitter. "Everybody does."

Glendish shook his head slowly. "No, not everybody; I didn't—not until a few minutes ago. I've been saying—it doesn't matter much what I've been saying, only it wasn't true, any of it. And now I've been to hell, and I'm coming back. I know what you'll say—that the bullet shock knocked some nerve center out of commission temporarily, and all that; but *I* know a

bigger thing than that, and—and, Sidney, it breaks my heart!"

Livingston was sitting up and staring at the slowly reddening sky in the northeast.

"That's our compass point, and, if Lamb got out of last night's scrap alive, we'd better be moving along," he said. "Do you want to try that leg? Or shall I give you a lift again?"

Glendish got up, with the proffered help, but to go with the returning sensibility there were excruciating pains.

"I'm paying all the back debts now," he gasped weakly. "I think there is a broken rib where the watch dug into me. Just the same, we'll go on, if you'll give me a shoulder," and in such manner the flight was resumed.

Now that he had his bearings, Livingston faced about, and headed in the direction of the great valley where the railroad was; this though the changed course would, he feared, take them back over much of the distance so painfully gained in the night, and might take them perilously near to the camp of the bloody shambles. But to undertake the long march to the coast, or even to make a long detour, would be beyond Glendish's slowly returning strength, and safety lay in reaching civilization by the shortest route.

Once in communication with the world, they would have nothing to fear, and Lamb would become the outlaw. But so long as the secret of the bogus gold claims remained a secret kept, Lamb, if he were still alive, could be trusted to stick at nothing in the fight for its preservation and for the recovery of the papers upon which the securing of the claims under the mining law depended. So Livingston argued, and Glendish agreed as to the fact, though the direct push for the railroad was against his judgment.

"We're not fooling him any—unless he's dead," was the way the ex-clerk put it. "And if he's alive enough to scheme, he'll have the arms and the ammunition, and he'll try to head us off from the railroad. But we can feel our way—we can't do much more than that, anyhow, until I get a better leg under me."

It was late in the afternoon of this first day when they came out of the ridges and could see in the nearer distance the breaking away of the land toward the great drainage valley. But the glimpse was all they had. From far down the slopes ahead of them, two dustlike little clouds sprang up, and they heard the whine of the bullets before the distance-flattened reports of the guns came to them.

"Duck!" said Livingston shortly, and when they reached the first sheltering ravine they changed their plans.

"It's the coast or nothing," was Livingston's summing up of the new hazard. "Failing to pot us from some safe place in the trail, they'll be careful to keep between us and the railroad. Let's be moving. One or another of them will be piking out this way to see if either of the shots made a bull's-eye."

Once more the weary line of march was resumed, this time at right angles to the former course and with a bearing, as nearly as they could judge from the position of the sun, to the southward. Since the *Colleen Bawn's* party had covered the entire distance from shore to camp in a single long day, they argued that two days would suffice for their return, even at the slow pace made necessary by Glendish's condition, and the detours they might have to make to dodge their pursuers. For the present, a safe place in which to camp was the one thing needful, and they found it finally in a thicket of spruces deep in the heart of a great coulee, though even here they did not dare to make a fire.

"Pretty well tuckered?" was Livingston's sympathetic asking, when they had munched a dry portion of the rapidly diminishing food store, and the

one who was able had broken a few of the spruce boughs for a bed.

"I'm all right," Glendish asserted, but in the fading light his face was ashen with weariness and drawn with pain.

"And the broken rib?"

"It isn't as bad as being paralyzed."

"But you've set your heart on sticking it out? There's a lot in that, you know."

Glendish's smile was a mere teeth-baring of fatigue.

"One time you thought I might not be game, Sidney. You're not worrying any about that now, are you?"

"Great Scott—no! Miles, if I'm ever happy enough to see Philippa again, I'll take back everything that I've ever said about you, and tell her the truth—that you're the better man."

"Like fits you will!" said the ex-clerk, but this time there was no bitterness in the scoffing.

After that they spoke of other things; of the probable distance to the sea, and of what they should find in the way of succor when they should reach the coast. Thrashing this out, Livingston half humorously lamented his ignorance of geography.

"If I didn't dream that I saw that railroad embankment and bridge on the way in, we ought to know about where we are; we would know if we had brains enough between us to keep us from being sent to a home for incurable idiots!" he said.

Glendish nodded gravely.

"Valdez is the town, isn't it? But that would be on the other side of the river and the railroad. And Lamb will see to it that we don't get a chance to take any short cuts."

"Lamb will live to take the kinks out of a piece of new rope—if he doesn't come to his end in some more respectable way while the rope is getting itself twisted," growled the athlete, and then they composed themselves to sleep.

On the morning of the second day they were astir early, and Glendish would not admit that the pain of the broken rib had kept him awake most of the night. But before the day's work was fairly begun, he was fighting for breath, and was once more urging Livingston to go on and leave him.

"That part of it was settled long ago," said the one who had settled it. "If you stop, I stop. Take my shoulder, and bear down as hard as you like. I'm feeling like a fighting man this morning."

Hour after hour the slow march went on, with the way made more difficult by the necessity, or the fancied necessity, of keeping to the hills and the spruces. At intervals that grew hourly shorter, Glendish had to stop and rest, and by the middle of the afternoon Livingston understood that the plucky little man who was stumbling and reeling drunkenly with a grip on his shoulder was keeping up only by the sheerest effort of will; that, lacking rest and skillful attention, he could not last through another day. None the less, there was hope ahead. By all the signs they knew, they must be nearing the coast. The smell of the salt water was in the glacial air, and once they saw a flock of sea birds.

As it chanced, they were nearer than they thought they were, and their first sight of the longed-for goal came upon them unawares. They were slowly making their way down an old moraine where the spruces grew thin, and the side slopes, polished and worn smooth by the ancient ice plane, rose in bare cliffs on either hand, when the vista suddenly opened out upon a dead level of mud flats and the bight of a small bay. At anchor in the bay lay a clipper-built schooner, with her sails clewed down and stoppered in their weather housings and her topmasts lowered. By some mysterious leading, they had retraced, in its seaward por-

tion, at least, the blind trail to the interior over which Lamb had piloted his human pack train on the march to the coal fields.

"The *Colleen Bawn!*" said Glendish faintly, and even as he spoke a bullet from the right-hand cliff bit the earth at their feet, and another from the left glanced from a smooth bowlder beside them. Instantly Livingston swept the sick man into his arms, and dashed back to the cover of the trees. With the goal in sight, they were not to be permitted to reach it.

Glendish was the first to speak after they had regained the shelter of the wood.

"I told you so," he said wearily. "Lamb isn't specially trying to pot us; he's merely herding us. He knew we couldn't get anywhere without breaking cover, and he also knows that we'll starve to death in a little while if he keeps us rounded up in this barren wilderness. He's betting on a sure thing, Sidney, and he's held all the face cards from start to finish. Let's not go back. This is as good a place to die in as any we'll find in a day's hike. And I don't believe—I could make—the—hike."

CHAPTER XVII.

THE MUTINEERS.

For an hour or more they lay under the sheltering overhanging of a great bowlder, while Lamb and his two bucko mates took random shots from above the thin cover of the moraine bottom. Why the three men, with weapons in their hands, did not come down to flush the game and make an end, they did not know, but that this would come, sooner or later, neither of them doubted.

"Say, Sidney, this is the wind-up, don't you think?' queried the sick man, in one of the longer intervals between the shots.

Livingston shook his head. "Never say die till you're dead. But I'll admit that it looks pretty bad."

"So bad that we might as well close the books and strike the balance. Before we pass out, I've got a hard thing to say—hard, because it'll make you think I've turned yellow at the last. I—I don't hate you any more, Sidney; if by crawling out there in the sunshine and letting Lamb plug me, I could give you back alive and well to Philippa, I'd do it."

"God bless you, old man; don't I know it?" said Livingston, in generous warmth.

"But in the back-time days I did hate you, and I tried my level best to do you up. When I heard of your engagement, I said I'd be the dog in the manger, and I have been—a dirty dog, Livingston. Philippa has never intentionally given you away to me, but I've schemed and set traps for her and led her to tell me a lot of things about your railroad business that she wouldn't have told if I hadn't been her cousin. I want to square things if I can. I've been little and mean, and I'd like to die a few inches bigger, if I could."

Livingston reached down, and gripped the hand that bore the knife scar.

"It's square and more than square, old man; it has taken this stripped plunge of ours into the raw things to make us know each other; that's all. If Philippa were here, she should have another go at it, and I'd tell her what I said I would, Miles—that you're the better man."

Glendish wagged his head impatiently.

"That's nonsense," he said. "I've never stood a ghost of a show, and I knew it all along. But even a dog can be stubborn and vindictive."

"Drop it," said Livingston, in gruff good nature. "That's past and gone, and here goes another thing," and he took the file of field notes and reports

from his pocket and was going to destroy them.

"Hold on, don't do that," interposed the one whose blood ran cooler. "That's the evidence against the buccaneers, the best evidence that could be found! Don't——" He stopped short, and then began again in a hoarse whisper: "What is that white thing coming in across the bay? It's—it's—look quick, Livingston; it's the *Nauliska!* She's been lagging behind to give Lamb his chance, and to keep Goodwin—— Oh, good Lord! That's another thing that I'd forgotten you didn't know. Philippa's on that yacht, Sidney, or she was a couple of weeks ago—Philippa and her father. John Goodwin got a wire appointment from the interior department to come up here and look the coal-field matter over on the ground and take evidence. They left the day after you started for Frisco, and that's why I was able to tell you that Philippa wasn't worrying about you!"

Livingston was staring at the upcoming yacht like a man in a trance, and it took another spatting shot from the cliffs above to shock him alive.

"Philippa?" he gasped—"and her father? Stay where you are, Miles; I'm going to signal that yacht!"

It was his last ounce of strength that Glendish put into the clinging grip that saved the shoulder hitter from committing quick suicide.

"Hold up!" he panted; "don't do that! Something may happen——"

Something was happening simultaneously, as it seemed, on both of the cliff-edge lips of the old moraine. To the listeners below it sounded like a sudden renewal of the evening battle in the camp of the bogus gold claims. Shots were spattering, and hurled stones came smashing into the ravine. Then the gunfire stopped short, and a knot of men, clutching and striking out savagely, came into view on the right-hand brink. Out of the knot, shot over the brink as if by the blow of a battering-ram, came first the body of the big Swedish mate, and then that of the Cornishman. A yell of triumph went up, and it was answered from the opposing cliff.

"They've got Lamb!" panted the sick man, still clinging to Livingston. "Don't show yourself!"

The warning came none too soon. As Livingston drew back, another body was whirled into the air, this time from the left-hand cliff, and it dropped, a crushed and mangled thing, within a few feet of their hiding place. Livingston parted the spruce boughs for one horrified glance. It was Lamb.

"Heavens! What savages!" he exclaimed, and then: "What are they doing now?"

The mutineers, or rather the fighting remnant of them, were answering the query for themselves by rushing down to the mud-flat level and the sea brink and signaling frantically to the schooner. Almost immediately the launch put off and took them aboard. Followed a swift ripping of the weather housings from the furled sails, and the hoarse drumming of the gasoline auxiliary. The mutineers had dropped the anchor cable overboard, and were getting away.

There was need for haste, as the two cramped fugitives could see when they made their way out of the moraine of death and got the wider outlook. The big yacht was feeling her way across the bay with the sounding lead going, and she was signaling to the schooner. Livingston stripped his coat, and ran out to wave it despairingly. It seemed foolish to hope that they would see him from the decks of the *Nauliska.*

"They've seen us!" panted Glendish, coming up at the hopeless moment. "They're lowering a boat!"

It was a smart motor tender that was dropped from the starboard davits of the yacht and came shooting ashore. To the natty young officer in command,

Livingston made no explanations. With succor in sight and assured, Glendish toppled over, and was out of it for the time being.

"You've got a doctor?" snapped Livingston to the launch officer. "Then get us aboard quickly. It's a matter of life and death, I'm afraid."

During the swift dart and return of the launch, the yacht had kept on at half speed, and the signals were still flying for the schooner, which was edging seaward. When the launch came alongside, the davit falls were hooked on, and a minute later Livingston was turning Glendish over to a portly gentleman with kindly eyes and a professional air that went oddly with his white flannels and a jaunty yachting cap.

"It's a gunshot wound," Livingston explained hurriedly, while the members of the yacht party crowded around in sympathetic curiosity. "It's two days old, and the bullet struck his watch; for a time he was paralyzed on one side. Don't let him die!"

"It seems to be only a swoon," said the kindly eyed member of the yacht's party who was acting as ship's doctor. "We'll get him up, all right, I guess."

Livingston looked around while they were carrying Glendish down to the sick bay. "Where's your captain?" he asked hurriedly, and a bearded man who looked as if he might be the commander of an Atlantic liner came down from the bridge.

"You belong to that schooner?" he asked brusquely, without waiting for Livingston to begin. "What is her name? It seems to have been painted out."

"She is the *Colleen Bawn,* cleared from San Francisco for the Pribilofs. Her crew has mutinied and killed the captain and the two mates. Their bodies are lying over there in that moraine."

It was at this juncture that the *Nauliska's* owner came up.

"What is that?" he asked "Is Lamb dead? Was that the meaning of the shots we heard?"

"It was."

"And you? Who are you?" inquired the money king.

Livingston looked the great man fairly in the eye.

"A fortnight or so ago, in a talk with Captain Lamb, you referred to me as 'the figuring man,'" he said coolly.

The yacht owner turned to his sailing master. "Put on the speed and run those fellows down," he ordered. "If they won't heave to and surrender, cut them in two and sink them."

Without knowing what the chase meant, the yacht's party began to gather forward on the promenade deck to look on. Livingston drew aside, and waited, while the multimillionaire conferred briefly with his sailing master. Then an order was passed to the foredeck, and the little gun which was used for firing salutes was swiftly charged with a blank cartridge and made to speak.

The effect of the blank shot upon the fleeing mutineers was wholly unlooked for. At the eastern headland of the narrow bay, the entrance was contracted by a rocky promontory, which was presently seen to be an island cut off from the mainland by a narrow strait, through which the ebbing tide was boiling like a torrent. At the gun signal to heave to, the mutineers put the schooner short about, and made for the narrow tide rip with all the speed they could get out of their gasoline auxiliary. The sailing master of the *Nauliska* threw up his hand.

"There are charted ledges at the entrance to that gut!" he said, and then the climax came. With a crash that sounded like an explosion, the schooner struck, rebounded, crashed forward again, and began to fill. The cruise of the *Colleen Bawn* was ended.

Livingston turned, and walked slowly aft when the yacht's engines were

slowed, and the order was passed to lower away the two power tenders for the picking up of the survivors. Before he had gone ten steps, the *Nauliska's* owner was at his elbow. "Come down to my stateroom with me," said the great man, and Livingston followed, with the muscles of his big jaw setting themselves in hard lines of defiance.

"You have it all now, I think," Livingston said quietly, at the end of his circumstantial story of the inland expedition. "Lamb made two mistakes; one of them was the very capital one of underrating the temper of his scoundrelly crew."

"And the other?" queried the great man, who had listened silently to the narration.

"The other was in assuming that my comrade and I could be frightened and bought."

At this point the stateroom telephone buzzed, and the great man answered the inquiring call briefly: "You picked up five, you say? All right; place them under guard, and put back to Valdez." Then again to Livingston: "You are a young man, Mr. Livingston, and I have learned, from a charming young woman whom we met ashore with her father at Valdez a week ago, that you are about to be married. What are your financial prospects, if I may ask?"

Livingston rose, and cut the prospective negotiation short in two brittle sentences, which entirely ignored the tentative query.

"We are speaking of Captain Lamb and his attempt to perpetrate a great fraud upon the people of the United States," he said evenly. "One of two things will happen—the attempt to claim the coal lands under bogus gold-mining patents will be abandoned, or Mr. Glendish and I will go before the proper authorities in Valdez and tell what we know."

"With only your unsupported word? You are both strangers in a land of strangers, Mr. Livingston, and your tale is almost incredible, even to me."

Livingston struck back smartly.

"But it will not be to Mr. John Goodwin, when I lay these day-to-day reports before him"—taking the papers from his pocket—"and make affidavit to their accuracy."

"Ah," said the listener, with a grave smile, "that was why Lamb was chasing you, was it?" Then he took defeat as only the mighty ones of earth know how to take it. "Keep your papers, Mr. Livingston. They may serve as an interesting souvenir to show your grandchildren some day when you tell them the tale of the cruise of the *Colleen Bawn.*"

They were married a week later in the little mission church in Valdez, Livington and Philippa Goodwin, and Glendish, with a queer, twisted smile wrinkling at the corners of his beady black eyes, was Livingston's best man. Also, a fortnight later, it was Glendish, resolutely refusing the multimillionaire's invitation and stubbornly insisting that he really wanted to wait for the regular steamer, who saw the bride and groom aboard the *Nauliska* and cheerfully wished them a safe voyage home.

It was at the very moment of the yacht's departure that the best man, still wearing the twisted smile, pressed a cablegram into the bridegroom's hand.

"I've been doing a little wiring," he said, "just to keep up my reputation as a butt-in. I happened to remember our multimillionaire friend here owns the biggest part of your railroad, and thinking perhaps a word from him to your boss might help things out a bit, I got him to cable. Good-by, and God bless you both!"

When the *Nauliska* was fairly under way, Livingston smoothed out the

crumpled cablegram, and read it, with Philippa looking on with him. It was dated from his railroad headquarters in the far-away Middle West, and it said:

Didn't understand that you went West to be married. Cut wedding trip short and come home. Holding Denver general agency for you at good increase. Wire me from Seattle. ROMER.

"There!" said the bride. "Haven't I always told you that Cousin Miles had the kindest heart in the world when you could get him to stop puzzling over his ties and hatbands?"

"Your cousin is the noblest fellow that ever stood in shoe leather, Philly dear—a much better man than I can ever hope to be." And then with young-husband solicitude: "Shall we go below? This breeze will soon get too chilly for you without your coat."

THE CULTIVATION OF PEARLS

IN perfecting a method for the cultivation of pearls by artificially stimulating their production in oysters, Japan has opened the door to a new industry, one that gives promise of being very successful.

Thus far in his scientific investigations, M. Boutan reports to the French Academy of Science that the only difference which has been found between the real and the Japanese pearl is in the larger core of the latter. This is only detected by holding the pearls to the light to judge the size of the core.

The real pearl is an accident; it is a deposit with which the oyster immediately surrounds any foreign body within its shell in self-protection. The Japanese method consists in placing a small object in the oyster, thereby stimulating the deposit of pearl about the object which becomes the core. The reason for this larger core in the cultivated pearl is the need to hasten the process in order that it may be profitable.

TEMPERATURE MEASUREMENTS AFFECT EFFICIENCY OF FOG HORN

A RATHER interesting fact which has been learned in connection with some experiments for a new type of fog horn is that temperature measurements determine, to a great extent, the efficiency of fog horns. A resistance thermometer was placed so as to measure the temperature of the air under pressure before it entered the horn; another was arranged to measure the temperature in the throat of the horn after the air had been released and had reached atmospheric pressure. It was observed that the greater the drop in temperature the greater the efficiency of the fog horn.

Some experiments were also made on "diaphones," a type of fog horn used in Canadian waters, from which it was learned that the smaller sizes are much more efficient than the larger ones. The efficiency of the larger units was estimated to be about eight per cent, while that of the smaller units was estimated to be about twenty per cent. This would indicate that the best results for producing powerful signals would be obained from a device composed of a number of smaller units. In the construction of such a device it would, of course, be necessary for the vibrations in each unit to be controlled exactly, so that they would occur in exactly the same frequency as all of the others, and for each one to be arranged in proper step with its neighbor. If this were not carefully studied, the strength of the sound would be very greatly diminished and the advantage of this particular form of construction lost.

The "YELLOW" STREAK

By R. de S. HORN

Who said he wanted a navy story? A number of our readers did! Well, here is a story written by a man who is on navy duty in the United States Navy at present. If you do not like this story, if you do not feel the heave of old mother ocean in one of her angriest moods, write and tell us what is the matter with the story.

IN his stuffy stateroom aboard the U. S. S. *Alaska,* Ensign Blake fumbled irresolutely with an official-looking paper. The brass-bound port of the stateroom was dogged tightly down, but through the inch-thick glass Blake could see the yeasty froth of the crested seas as they hurried past. At times, they even swirled over the port, blotting out the light with their green bodies and then passing on, leaving the glass streaming with brine. By the light that trickled in through the water-washed port, Ensign Blake signed the paper—his resignation from the naval service of the United States of America.

He had fought the reason for years; had told himself that it was all a state of mind that he could overcome if he would. In some things luck had been with him: his midshipman cruises, for instance, had all been coast cruises, with no rough water and scant boat duty. But now, just after graduation and within three days of reporting aboard, he had come up against it fair.

The sea had stolen his nerve! He—Ensign Blake, U. S. N.—son of one admiral and grandson of another—knew he was marked with a *yellow streak!* He was afraid of deep water!

It had all begun back on a certain afternoon of his grammar-school days. He could remember it yet: the four of them "playing hooky" from school, the swimming hole in the dark river—the sudden feeling of nothing beneath his feet—the terrific struggle to get breath, the awful horror of not getting it. When he finally came to, they had crept silently back to town. But the memory had been with him ever since.

Annapolis had come with merciless inevitability; the family traditions had to be kept up. He had told no one of the inward struggle. For worse even than the fear of deep water, was the dread of some one finding out that he was afraid.

Now there was no avoiding it. It was all around him; not the smooth-surfaced bay or river, but *deep water*—the wild sweep of limitless ocean assailed by winds of irresistible force.

Well, one thing—he could at least hand in his resignation and take himself ashore before his "streak" could

show; before he could shame the memories of two seafaring generations.

Thump! Thump!

There was a pounding at the door, and then a muffled voice:

"Commander wants to see you on the quarter-deck, right away, sir!"

With the precipitate obedience of the new officer, Blake hesitated only long enough to pigeonhole the papers and grab up his cap before following the messenger up the "steerage" ladder. As he emerged from the protecting hatchway, he halted with a quick glance around.

The *Alaska* was creaking and snapping and snarling, beset by the wind and a rising sea. Halyards slapped and stormcloths chattered. Turret paint glistened with driven spray. Lynnhaven Roads had become a rolling-ground for ugly, frothy combers that raced in from the dark horizon beyond the capes. And from that horizon likewise were sweeping great, jagged cloud-masses with underhanging wisps of lighter hue.

But the messenger had turned toward the lee gangway. There Blake perceived the commander, square-shouldered and sturdy, his cap pulled down over his eyes, his head thrust forward as he shouted something into the ordnance officer's ear. As Blake approached, the commander received him with jerky, impatient sentences.

"Right, Mr. Blake! Take target-umpire's place—go over—repair the target-raft. We've got to fire, soon as storm lifts! Your boat's at the gangway now——"

Blake felt an icy chill sweep over him. He knew where the *Alaska's* target-raft was. It was over near the surf-pounded beach, almost a mile away. A mile of surging, wind-driven waters! And the boat that pounded at the gangway below, manned by a huddled dozen of oil-skinned seamen, was only an open forty-foot motor *kicker!*

He turned to the *Alaska's* executive officer; he sought for words to tell him that it was impossible—that he couldn't —*couldn't*—take that tiny eggshell out into that sea. But the square-jawed commander saw only the young officer's hesitating expression and his glance toward the hatch leading below. He bellowed his impatience:

"Never mind your oilskins—the cox'n'll give you one out of the boat! Now hurry—can't have boat banging 'self to pieces 'gainst gangway all day!"

How he found his way down the slippery gangway, Blake never knew; he only knew that he had to! Else they'd find him out—him, with an admiral for a father and another for a grandfather. Somehow he managed to land with a jolt in the heaving craft as it surged upward to meet him.

Then the cox'n was grabbing his shoulder and trying to shout something in his ear about "—rough water—don't know—magneto don't seem to——" But Blake was unheeding. The *kicker* was knocking and banging against the gangway in a manner that threatened to capsize it or stave in its side at any moment. And from above the commander, with red, distorted face, was trying to roar something above the noise of the pounding.

Blake turned to the cox'n desperately. "Shove off!" he yelled.

And, with a last plunge and crash, the *kicker* caught the next surge on her outturned bow and was breasted bodily away from the dangerous gangway.

In the comparative stillness after the gangway struggle and before they were completely out of the dreadnaught's lee, Blake found out what it was the cox'n had tried to tell him. He had wanted to report to the commander that something seemed wrong with the magneto; that the engine was not running smoothly.

Blake wanted to curse himself for not listening. The boat would have been hoisted in for repairs; the regular target-umpire would probably have been

ready by the time another boat was lowered. But now *he* would have to stick it out, to keep them from finding out—*if he could!*

Bang!

The *kicker* was out of the lee and a huge crester had caught her square amidships, tossing her sickeningly. A smother of spray and a rush of green water came over the side. *Thump! Bang!* Another—and another! More spray!

Blake gasped. And one of the crew reached inside a small locker underneath a thwart, and drew out a dirty, wrinkled oilskin. With the help of two seamen Blake managed to wriggle into it. The boat was lurching and pitching drunkenly before the quartering seas and he had to cling to a thwart to keep from losing his feet. Then he noted with a queer sensation that even the cox'n and engineer were gazing concernedly at the water that had entered the boat. The crew were already busy bailing, but the amount seemed undiminishing. It was well over the bottom-boards, and the flywheel was whirling it upward in a constant spatter.

The cox'n leaned over and shouted, "'Fraid o' that magneto! Get wet and she'll short-circuit!"

Then Blake understood. It wasn't the miles of ocean outside nor the inches of water inside that they feared; it was the half-cupful that would be sufficient to soak the magneto coils. Yet the tiny spatter seemed so insignificant compared to the mighty combers around——

He became conscious that the cox'n was watching him; staring at him hard.

"Sick?"

There seemed a tinge of sarcasm in the query. In imagination, Blake could see a scornful group gathered that night in the crew-space, listening to the cox'n's sneering, "Yep; skeered stiff. White in th' face! Almos' shakin'. An' him an officer!"

Tense, he waited for the cox'n's next words. They came, cutting through the gale:

"Yep; I knew it by yer face. You're almos' green! Lots of 'em gets sick, though—first time they're out in real weather."

Blake drew a deep breath. They were not sneering, but grinning. They thought he was *seasick!* It tickled their seagoing souls to see an officer green in the face.

He felt relieved. Let them keep on thinking he was seasick—if they only would!

By this time they were running down past the vessels of the "train," anchored well inshore of the dreadnaughts. At the inner end of the line, with her high freeboard, single stack and bluff bows giving her the appearance of an ocean tramp, the repair-ship *Titan* worried at anchor. A mile or so beyond her ran the gray-white line that marked the combers crashing on the beach. Halfway between ship and shore, but considerably to windward, lay the *Alaska's* target-raft, distinguishable only by the masts showing above the crests. Toward those masts the *kicker's* bow was headed.

Suddenly the engine halted in its steady vibration—gasped—and then took up its beat again. Once more it stopped and gasped and started.

The cox'n, straightening up from the engine-pit where the engineer was tinkering with the engine, met Blake's questioning glance with a shake of the head.

"Magneto's getting soaked through! Can't run much longer!"

"Can't run! Then what——" Blake did not finish the question. The answer, he knew, lay in the wind and the sea and the gray-white line inshore. Possibly, just possibly, another ship's boat might see them and take them off in time. Otherwise——

With a calmness that surprised himself, he turned to the cox'n.

"Make for the *Titan!* And give every man a life preserver!"

With a quick "Aye-aye," the cox'n jammed the helm over. The *kicker's* bow swung off toward the *Titan*, but her progress seemed snaillike, the distance infinite. The motor's gasps became more frequent. Finally it sputtered and died altogether. Losing headway, the *kicker* fell slowly off into the trough, directly in the path of the sweeping seas.

Relinquishing the useless tiller, the cox'n reached nonchalantly for a life preserver. But Blake grabbed him and yelled a question into his ear. The cox'n grinned, nodded, and scrambled forward. A moment later and he was standing up in the bow waving his arms frantically, while two seamen clung to his legs to keep him from pitching overboard.

It was a question of time and drift. If the *kicker* drifted close enough, and if the lookouts on the *Titan* comprehended the situation in time, it might be possible to catch a heaving-line from the ship as they drifted past. If not, it would mean a lowering of a rescue boat and a race with wind and sea—and a very fair probability of the life preservers coming into use after all.

But the *Titan's* lookouts proved to be wide awake. As the *kicker* neared the repair-ship Blake could see the men clustered at the weather rail. Rolling and wallowing the boat drifted down. It was evident that she would pass within a dozen yards. But it was a dozen yards directly into the wind, and the first heaving-line, thrown from the *Titan's* poop, was caught and hurled back by a terrific gust. A second, from the waist, likewise fell short. Then a third, heavily weighted, shot out and fell across the *kicker's* bow where the cox'n and two seamen instantly fell upon it.

As the *kicker's* crew hauled aboard the end of a stout manila, the men on the *Titan* were racing down the rail with their end, passing it outboard and aft. Any attempt to hoist the launch in on the weather side would only have resulted in a splintering crash against unyielding steel, so the boat was allowed to drift well astern before a strain was taken on the line: then the *kicker* was snubbed in under the lee quarter. Five minutes later the *Alaska's* party was safe on deck, the port cargo boom was swinging the *kicker* up to the boat deck, and Ensign Blake was reporting to the *Titan's* commander:

"Came to repair our target-raft, sir, and had a breakdown. We'd like to stay aboard till we can fix the break. May I send a signal, sir?"

The signal, semaphored to the *Alaska*, merely reported that he was on the *Titan* with a broken-down engine that might take several hours to repair. Twenty minutes later he had his answer:

"Work on engine all night if necessary, but finish target job to-morrow. Imperative have raft ready soon as possible.

"Executive Officer."

It did not take all the night, but it did take a good part of it to repair the boat. The magneto had to be removed and taken below for a thorough drying. But it was in the circulating-cooling system that the real trouble was found. There was a clean break at one of the outlet pipe joints through which water had literally poured into the boat. It had been this, rather than the over-side seas, that had caused the magneto short-circuit. At eleven o'clock all damages had been repaired and Blake turned in with instructions to be ready for a start at daybreak.

It seemed to him that he had hardly slept a moment, when there came a pounding at the door. As he pulled his shoes on sleepily, he became aware that the deck beneath his feet was lurching crazily. The air seemed unusually stuffy and stale. Then recollection came swiftly. Another day had arrived, and the job not half done. Would he be able

to get back to the *Alaska* without betraying his yellow streak? Would he?

He grabbed his oilskins and hastened up the ladder. At the top, the canvas hood was closely drawn. As he started to push aside the flap, the officer of the deck thrust a spray-beaded face inside.

"I've had your crew turned out and fed, accordin' to orders. And your own breakfast's ready in the wardroom. But say—it's reg'lar weather outside, to-day!"

"Is it? Then I'll be up in a second!" And turning to the wardroom Blake set his teeth and promised himself that he'd be *d——d* if he'd let any one on the *Titan*, at least, see his streak! Ignoring the toast, he gulped down two cupfuls of strong, hot coffee and made for the deck again.

Overhead, there seemed no single thing that could be called a cloud. And yet the heavens were dull gray and the sun nowhere to be seen. Cordage hummed, and stinging spray tore across the deck. Near the lee rail were huddled a dozen men—his own—gazing out over the turbulent Roads. And the water below, even close in the lee, was tossing and seething.

"Well, sir—it looks purty rough out there. And for people with weak stummicks——"

It was the cox'n who spoke, and to Blake there seemed to be something hesitating, insinuating in the man's voice. He turned sharply on the speaker:

"Is the boat all ready?"

"Yes, sir. But as I was sayin'——"

"Then stand by to shove off immediately!" Out of the corner of his eye Blake saw that the others were watching and he made his reply unusually curt.

Gray-eyed and red-faced, the *Titan's* officer of the deck came up. "The Morning Order Book said I was to find out from you what you wanted to do this morning." His eyes fixed on Blake questioningly.

"Then will you swing my boat out right away?" Blake spoke respectfully but sharply. "My orders say for me to get back to the *Alaska* to-day."

"Very well, sir." The officer of the deck turned on his heel.

Five minutes later, after a harrowing embarkation, the *kicker* was fighting her way once more through the terrific seas. The raft was almost directly to windward and every sea was a head sea. Shuddering, pitching, and tossing, the *kicker* fought her way to the target.

At first they could see nothing more than the bare target masts, some of them already snapped and splintered. Then as the raft rose sluggishly on a crest they caught sight of half her underwater hull, black and slimy, as the racing comber dropped from beneath it. The next moment, before it could recover from its soggy plunge, another comber had buried it six feet beneath the gray-green surface.

"Go alongside!" yelled Blake in the cox'n's ear.

"She'll tear herself t' pieces 'gainst that baby!" howled back the cox'n protestingly.

"Then put her alongside—for a moment! I'll take half a dozen men on the raft. You drop back to the end of your painter—and keep her kickin'—and hold her there!"

With a wave of the hand to show that he understood and a slight shake of the head to show he still disapproved, the cox'n did as directed. For a bare second he held the *kicker's* nose close to the plunging black hulk. And in that second Blake with half a dozen sailors had scrambled onto the narrow raft-deck. Almost immediately a towering mass of water swept down upon them. Instinctively each man grabbed the nearest mast. Past them and over them swept the giant comber, tearing and wrenching at their desperately-resisting bodies. Then it plunged on, leaving them gasping and blowing behind.

Twenty feet away, the *kicker* lurched

and plunged, her engine running at half-speed and her two bowmen standing with life preservers all ready to throw. Astern, at the engine and tiller, the engineer and cox'n stood, holding the *kicker* up in the sea and keeping close watch for signals from the raft.

After a few more combers had swept over and his men were becoming more accustomed to the engulfing green water, Blake signaled for the boat to come up again. Then, in quieter moments between surges, tools were passed across, and some few scantlings. But almost immediately the scantlings were torn away by a taunting sea. In that rush of water it was impossible to handle the timbers; practically impossible to do anything, except hang on for bare life. And Blake was forced to admit it. After a few minor repairs, such as securing storm-loosened planks and cutting away shredded ropes, he reluctantly gave the signal to reëmbark.

Compared with the wild work on the raft, the buoyant *kicker,* in spite of its plunging, seemed almost as steady as a dreadnaught. Snarling crests still lashed at her bows and shot licking tongues of spray and solid water back over the crew, but there was no longer the roaring rush of green water overhead. In that much there was relief. Blake almost forgot that it was *deep water,* driving in from the ocean outside, that surged and roared and hissed around him. It was all lost in a new depression that had seized his soul. The executive had ordered him to repair the raft without fail; had told him that it was imperative that it be ready for the coming practice—and he had failed.

Was it his own "streak," his own misgivings, that had persuaded him the task was impossible? Had the *yellow* showed in spite of his repression, and was the executive going to find it out, now? Blake's mind was sorely troubled as they neared the *Alaska.*

Here, out near the entrance, there was little or no lee to be detected. On each side the combers seemed to race equally high and close. The cox'n anxiously waited for some signal as to which side to approach.

Suddenly a figure appeared at the *Alaska's* taffrail. An upraised arm waved and then dropped horizontally to indicate the port side.

With an answering wave the cox'n put the tiller over.

The port crane was already swung out in readiness. In toward the side the *kicker* swung, caught bow and stern lines from the deck above, and then at a dexterous twist of the tiller straightened out alongside, not a foot from the armor belt. The engineer slowed the engine, and half a dozen men of the repair-party, at Blake's order, leaped and caught the swinging sea-ladder and crawled up it to the rail above.

But the *kicker,* hanging at its lines below, was receiving frightful punishment. Rising and dropping twenty feet from crest to trough she scraped and banged and pounded her wooden sides against the merciless steel. Huge splinters began to appear along her gunwale as it rasped up and down against the armor belt.

At the rail above, the *Alaska's* executive officer was bending down, bellowing something that the gale drowned out. But the sweep of his arm was eloquent.

The engineer threw the throttle open full, and the *kicker* jerked ahead. From the crane the dangling hook dropped down to meet her like a huge spider at the end of its thread.

Now came the test of seamanship.

While part of the crew, with boat-hooks, vainly strove to keep the boat away and steady, Blake and the cox'n and the rest lifted the iron ring of the boat's hoisting slings. It was cumbersome and unwieldy, and the *kicker's* plunging and pitching threw the men around from gunwale to gunwale as they endeavored to snare the hook above

them. One moment it was twenty feet overhead as the boat wallowed in the trough; the next moment, as the boat shot upward on a crest, the hook was plunging down among them, thrashing and lashing at the end of its steel lines. Vigilance was the price of life; one blow from that weighty pendulum might easily batter a man's head to pieces, or knock him stunned into the depths.

Blake, leaping back to avoid a vicious swing, tripped and fell heavily over a thwart, but was up again in a moment, unconscious of the blood that trickled from a cut on his chin. The stern struggle went furiously on. Then with a sudden lucky cast the ring slipped into the mouth of the hook. And immediately the watchful hoistman had thrown in his motor to take up on the cable.

Slipping down the side of a wave, the *kicker* suddenly brought up short with a tremendous jolt as the hook took the weight. Then as another surge rose under her and tossed her skyward the hoisting cables went perilously slack. For a second there was imminent danger that the ring might slip from the hook. But the water dropped from beneath again and left the boat hanging to the humming cable. The hoist motor reeled in at maximum speed. There was another surge, another crash, another sickening jolt. And then at the third wave the *kicker* was out of the water and clear, although the succeeding crest swept hissing only a few inches underneath, lashing hungrily upward as it passed.

On the deck near the *kicker* chocks the commander was waiting, his big jaws champing savagely at an unlighted cigar in the corner of his mouth.

Leaping out of the boat as it swung into its skids, Blake approached his superior and saluted. His heart was thumping wildly.

"I report my return, sir. And I—I—we tried, but we couldn't repair the raft, sir! It was too——"

The executive growled a last order at a boatswain's-mate and spun around.

"What's that? What the hell—— You—you ought to be court-martialed, sir!"

Blake turned white. The commander's eyes were snapping.

"—Yep; court-martialed! If 'twasn't for your father I'd do it! Pull a stunt like this!"

"But, sir," protested Blake feebly; "it was too rough—we couldn't hardly hang on, even. And——"

"Rough?" The executive interrupted furiously. "Should say so! Not another boat out o' chocks in the whole fleet even! And you go out to repair a target-raft! Ain't you got any sense—take a boat out in this weather? Ought to be court-martialed for recklessness, damn it!"

Recklessness!

The deck spun around queerly under Blake's gaze. He opened his mouth and gasped weakly. But the commander was turning away with a final roar:

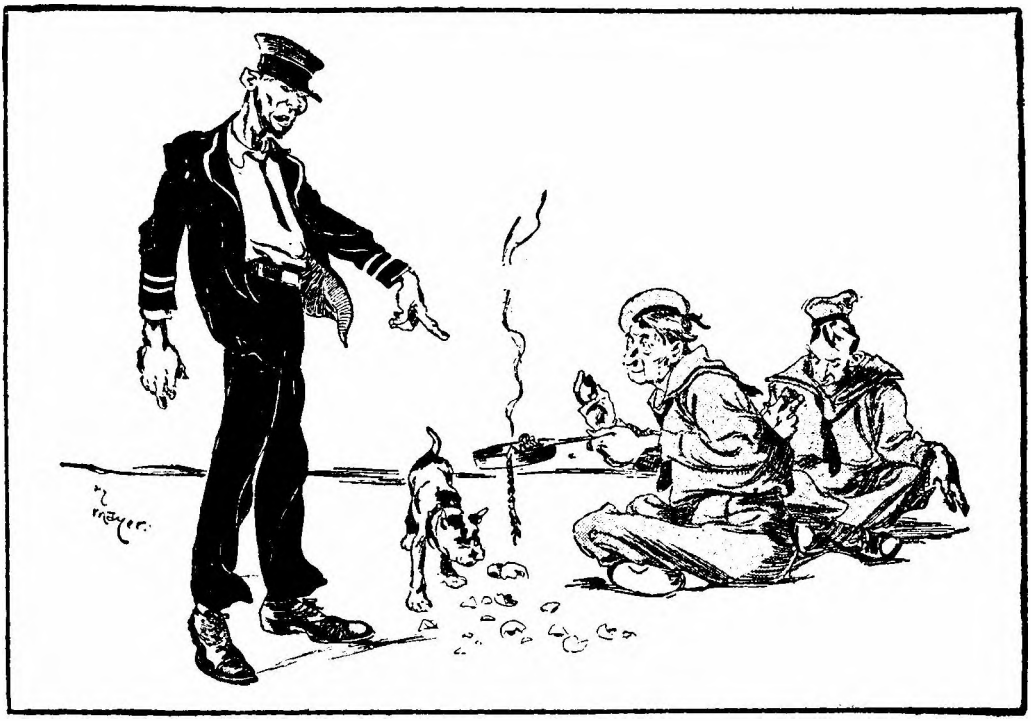
"That's all! You can go below, sir!"

Blake went; weak, amazed, and more than a little scared. He did not know that the commander was chuckling to himself as he turned toward the cabin.

"Reg'lar chip off the old block! All the fleet with their boats swung in, and him out trying to repair a target-raft! *Damn!* Just wait till I see Terry of the *Dakota;* won't I rub it in, though, about that *Dakota* repair-party he's always bragging about——"

But down below in his stateroom, Ensign Blake was very busy tearing up a sheet of paper into tiny white strips. These he dropped carefully into his wastebasket when he had finished.

"Deep water?" He intoned the words contemplatively. "Oh-h-h, I dunno—*knee deep*——"



Economy

By Wallace Irwin

ILLUSTRATED BY HY. MAYER

Of all the marineers what sail
From Nome to Yucatan,
If I'm a judge,
Old Capting Scrudge
Was sure the meanest man.

He saved on food, he saved on coal,
He fed us milk, blue-thinned.
On stormy days
Full sail he'd raise
So's not to waste the wind.

He never wasted words—in fact,
It scared him half to death
For fear some day,
In a careless way,
He'd waste an ounce o' breath.

He never painted of our ship,
Though she was rotting nigh.
On greasy decks
We risked our necks,
'Cause scouring soap came high.

Though once he fed us ham and eggs,
On which we dined like swells,
Soon came a pause
On eggs—because
We wouldn't eat the shells.

So goes me tale from bad to worse—
One day off Kill van Kull
An awful sea
Bumped into we,
And stove our gallant hull.

"We're goin' down!" the sailors cried
  In frightened tones abrup.
Says the capting: "Ho!
If down we go,
  Expenses won't go up!"

The carpenteer he brought some nails,
  And got a plank of oak.
"Oh, carpenteer,
See here, see here!"
  The cautious capting spoke.

"Since lumber's very high this fall,
  Waste not that plank, I pray.
You hole fill in
With rags and tin
  And clothing cast away."

We brought him rags to mend the leak,
  We brought him scraps of wood.
The cap cried: "Nay,
Don't throw away.
  That stuff so nearly good!

"Go fetch some less expensive rags."
  But at these words profound,
The sea went *plunk!*
Our good ship sunk,
  And all of us was drowned.

And as I gasped me dying gasp
  I thunk: "We owe this dip
To a capting rank,
Who saved a plank,
  But couldn't save a ship."

The TREASURE HUNT

by RADCLIFFE MARTIN

Chief Engineer Sellers interviews the general manager of his steamship, *Cyprian*, whom he describes as a haw-haw kind of a Johnny, who wore kid gloves and gold eyeglasses. Some picture! What happened after he is told to save four days on the next voyage, forces him to the conclusion that ships' captains should never be married. Read it, and see why.

SHIPS' captains should never be married. When a man's married, he can't do his duty by his ship. That's how my trouble began. Old Smith was a good sort for a Britisher. When I'd made the old *Cyprian* cut her record two days between London and Sydney he was as pleased as pie, made a little speech to me, and gave me a box of cigars. I make no account of cigars—specially his cigars—but it showed a proper feeling toward a chief engineer.

So when, a week before we left Sydney for the trip back to London, there came a message for me to go to the captain's cabin to see the company's Australian manager. I felt that the company was going to thank me for my record trip, and I stepped across pretty lively. I saw the captain's eye as I entered, and it told me something was wrong. The manager was a haw-haw kind of Johnny, who wore kid gloves and gold eyeglasses. He was looking through the ship's papers, and pretended not to see me.

"This is Mr. Sellers, my chief engineer," said the old man politely.

The thing looked slowly up from the papers and stared at me as if it was wondering what sort of a hobo had blown into the cabin.

"Aw, Sellers," he says, "I have been acquainting Captain Smith, with the company's decision. The time of the return trip to London will be cut four days. You understand?"

The thing riled me. "Can't be done." I snapped quick.

"That's the company's decision," repeats the object.

"See," I said, "with luck and good weather I cut the record two days coming out. There ain't another engineer 'cept Cyrus Hoskin, and he's dead, who could have done it. Now, with the cyclone season due and Australian coal in the bunkers, you want me to cut the time to London double. It ain't possible."

"If you can't do it, my man, the company must get a man who can. The *Cyprian* is already advertised to cut the

time by four days, and the company keeps faith with the public."

"Don't you call me your man. I'm not in your vest pocket. I run to advertised time, and I'll lay ten thousand dollars it can't be done."

"If you can't hustle, my man——" began the thing.

That was too much for me. Hadn't I hustled on the passage out! Hadn't I done everything short of manslaughter, for to my mind it ain't reasonable quite to kill a stoker, to get every blessed ounce of power out of his rotten old engines? I just reached across the table and gave him the left fair on his gold eyeglasses. He dropped plumb on the floor, and appeared as if he reckoned to stay there.

"Come out of it," says the old man, gripping me by the arm and rushing me out of the cabin.

"You," I said, "calling yourself a ship's captain, and letting a thing like that wipe its boots on you."

"Sellers," said the old man to me, "there's four good reasons for my putting up with that high and mighty beast —a wife and three kids. Why didn't you agree with him? We could have had engine trouble that delayed us."

"Cap," I said, "I'll have you understand this: My engines don't have trouble. I run to advertised time. And when a skunk like that wants me to lie to the public I put him in his place."

"Under the table," said the old man, with a chuckle. "He's there yet, I judge. Well, my boy, we've got along well together, and now we'll have to part. But mind, if I'd not been married you'd have had no chance of putting that beast under the table, because I'd have done it myself first. But being married——"

"There's excuses for you, cap," I says straightforwardly.

"Well, I must go back and help him to mop up the blood. And he'll want yours, too. I hope he won't want mine just because I saw it done. Now, you take your chest out of this ship. I shall have to go back to him and tell him that I discharged you instantly. Meet me at Cooney's Bar to-night, and I'll bring your money."

"Go on, cap," I said. "I'm the sacrificed victim. You're the right stuff, if it wasn't for your domestic misfortunes. Tell it that you drove me out with blasphemings and cursings."

Old Captain Smith shook me by the hand. "Best chief I ever had," he said. "We never had a word, Sellers, principally because I knew you'd never stand one. But I'll give you a bit of advice: Next time you go for an owner or his agent don't stop at one on the nose. Knock the stuffing out of the beast. This'd be a happy day for me if I hadn't to order you off the ship for gross insubordination. And the best chief I ever had, at that."

I liked the old man, because he could appreciate a good chief when he got him, and I made allowance for his domestic difficulties. So I decided to go, quiet, without going down and improving the thing's countenance some more.

I went off with my chest to a boarding house, near the harbor, and I met the captain in Cooney's Bar that night. He was very happy in one way and very sad in another. He paid me three months' wages, and I'm ready to lay a dollar that he'd planked down one month's of it himself.

"That beast is going to prosecute you, Sellers," he began, "and I've got to go and give evidence against you. So I've got to ask a favor of you."

"Out with it, cap!"

"You'll let me pay that fine. I've got to give evidence against you. If I wasn't married, I'd swear you'd never touched him. But being married——"

"That's the reason you'll pay no fine of mine. Keep your dollars. You'll need them."

Well, he stuck out and I stuck out, and we mixed the drinks so, arguing the points, that I had to take the cap aboard at two in the morning, and he mistook me then for the company's manager, and tried hard to lay me out.

Next day a sort of policeman serves me with a summons charging me with causing grievous bodily harm, which was a blamed lie, for I hit him straight on the nose. Anyhow, I went to the court. The magistrate, or judge, or whatever they call him, wasn't a bad sort. He let me tell my tale right out, and I saw the reporter boys were busy. It made me happy to think that next day the city'd know that the *Cyprian* couldn't make her advertised time. The old captain gave evidence very solemn and severe against me. Well, when I'd got out my yarn about being an honest man and not a dishonest steamship owner trying to get passengers by promising things no engines could ever do—not even if I was running them—the judge looks at me and says: "Your professional enthusiasm is highly creditable to you, Mr. Sellers, but that is no excuse for assault. However, as it is not an aggravated assault, and the manners of the prosecutor were decidedly provocative, I think that the justice of the case would be met by a fine of twenty shillings."

"Five dollars!" I says. "It's cheap. I'll have another five dollars' worth."

"Silence," says the judge; "and let me tell you, Mr. Sellers, that any further pursuit of this professional vendetta will be severely punished."

Still, the old boy's eyes twinkled behind his spectacles as he said it, and, on the whole, he'd given me a square deal. I've paid twenty dollars for less in Frisco. Well, when I went to pay my fine I found that old Captain Smith had already done it, and bolted. There was the makings of a good man about the old cap, if he hadn't been matrimonially involved.

Anyhow, the report in the papers made me popular. There was precious few captains and no chief engineers who didn't want to put up the drinks for me. They'd come and walk round me in the bar sorter admiring the man who'd laid out a company's agent. Some of 'em when drunk blamed me for not killing the thing; still, in a general way, I was popular. Only the worst of all this was that it didn't help me to a ship. The thing I'd laid out was a big bug among the underwriters, and when you're up against underwriters it's a bad job. Captain after captain made me tell them precise how I caught the thing on the nose, and then they'd almost cry because they daren't ship me. They all advised me to go to some other port where I wasn't so conspicuous for my valiant deeds. But I said to them all: "I'm a sticker, from Stickersville. Ship from Sydney I will in spite of all the gold eyeglasses and spats in creation." There was one American captain who wanted to ship me bad. He said that there'd been no one like me since George Washington, and that T. Roosevelt, of Oyster Bay, warn't fit to shine my boots, but he, too, poor critter, was married. And his chief engineer was his own brother-in-law. There he was, struggling between his love for his countryman who'd laid out the haughty and eyeglassed British lion, and his fear of some one called Sadie, way back in Maine. Sadie won.

Well, after a month my money was getting low. If I hadn't announced so public that I proposed to stick it out in Sydney, I'd have skipped. Still, unlimited free drinks won't pay board bills, and my residence was No. 1, the shady side of Queer Street.

At last, one night, when I was in Cooney's Bar, Cooney beckoned me across. I liked Cooney. If he was from Tipperary, he was a true American citizen, and if the Frisco cops hadn't

wanted him badly he'd never have left his adopted native land.

"Ye'll be wanthing a ship?" said Cooney to me.

"For once in your life, Cooney," I said, "you're speaking the copper-bottomed, A 1 at Lloyd's truth."

He bends forward and whispers to me: "Mr. Manners is upstairs."

"Who's he?"

"He might give ye a ship, but don't thry any games wid him. He's not the ordinary owner."

"Take me to him, Cooney," I says.

We went upstairs to a little private room. I saw sitting in the best chair a great, stout, fine-looking man. He seemed to be about sixty, and, judging by the way he was playing poker, it seemed to me as if he'd been practicing that noble game about fifty-eight years. I felt sorry for the ships' captains he was playing with. There never was such a poker face. He'd one big, kindly smile all the time, whether he'd a fool hand or a royal flush. We sat watching them half an hour, till the captains retired to repair damages.

Then Cooney said very respectful: "This is Chief Engineer Sellers, Mr. Manners. Ye mentioned that ye wanthed a chief engineer."

Mr. Manners turned round to me with his big, amiable smile.

"Delighted to see you, Mr. Sellers. You can send some drinks up, Cooney."

Cooney crept out of the room, seeing that he wasn't wanted.

"I've heard of your little exploit, Mr. Sellers," says the stout man, smiling. "I compliment you on it, even though I own a small steamer myself. You see that I have no fear that you will knock me down."

He looked at me pleasantly enough, but I had a sort of feeling that he was a man to be left alone.

"So you're up against the underwriters, Cooney tells me?"

I began to tell him my particular troubles.

"Right, right, Mr. Sellers! Now, I am also up against the underwriters. I have a little business to suggest to you, but before doing so I may remark that I expect my observations to be treated as confidential. Unless you are prepared to do that, I wish you good evening."

"I'm with you," I said.

"Let me caution you that I'm an awkward person to quarrel with. Now, I wish to put five thousand pounds in your way."

"If it's scuttling——" I began.

"My dear sir, I would not ask you to do anything so unprofessional. Let me explain to you: The news came this morning that the *Levita's* piled up on the Barrier Reef, and that the crew and passengers are all saved. I've talked with one of the officers. The wreck lies in six fathoms of water, and there's forty thousand pounds in bullion aboard."

"The underwriters will be after it to-morrow," I said.

"No, not to-morrow. The Sydney Salvage Company has two steamers available. One is occupied with a wreck off Newcastle. The machinery of the other will break down in two days when it's well on its way to the wreck."

"How do you know that?" I said.

"I'm no engineer, Mr. Sellers, but I understand that the presence of gold in the engine room will cause any engines to break down."

"He's a low skunk, that engineer!" I said. "My engines would break down for no man's dollars."

"Exactly so. Now, I have a small steamer in the harbor. The captain and a Chinese crew are already aboard. The two best divers in Sydney are locked in a cabin, drunk. I need an engineer who'll take entire charge and be content with Chinese help. It will be almost day-and-night work for three

weeks. You will have no white assistance. And your share will be one-eighth of the gold recovered from the wreck. If we are fortunate, you will get twenty-five thousand dollars for a three weeks' trip."

"But there'll be the hell of a jimbaroo when the salvage steamer gets there."

"Oh, no; the wreck lies on the very edge of the reef. A few dynamite cartridges, and she'll drop off into fifty fathoms. Who is to tell, then, that your friends, the underwriters, had been forestalled?"

"You've got me," I said. "When shall I come aboard?"

He lifted himself slowly from his chair and took my arm. "Now, Mr. Sellers," he remarked quietly. "I don't wish you to be telling your friends in the bars that you have got a ship. This little trip of ours needs no advertising. You'll come with me now."

"But my chest?"

"That can stay. We can easily fix you up on board. Come, it is not often you have the chance of earning twenty-five thousand dollars for three weeks' work."

That settled it. To take twenty-five thousand dollars from the underwriter sharks I'd have gone a far longer voyage than to the Barrier Reef.

So we walked down to the harbor together without a word to anybody. We found a boat waiting and two chinks in it. Mr. Manners stepped in and seated himself in the stern sheets. He never gave an order, and the chinks seemingly did not need one. They rowed us straight away to a small steamer lying about a mile from the wharf. Mr. Manners sprang up the steamer side with a nimbleness that surprised me, considering he must have weighed two hundred pounds. A dark-looking man stood on the deck.

"Ah, Captain Lawrence," said Mr. Manners, "this is Mr. Sellers, our engineer. Those men all right in their cabin?"

"They was fighting drunk a bit since, but they're sleeping it off now," said the captain.

"Then I can't introduce you to the balance of the ship's company," said Mr. Manners, "seeing that our friends, McNab and Higgins, are asleep. The rest are all Chinamen."

"I never make much account of chinks," I said.

"Mine are devoted to me," said Mr. Manners. "You will have no fault to find with your stokers and greasers except perhaps that they are ignorant. Show them what to do, and they'll do it. A Chinaman understands obedience. Now, I'll show you the cabin you'll share with the captain."

"I'll see the engines first," I said.

"The professional instinct, of course. By all means, go down to the engine room."

It was a small place enough for me who'd been used to ten-thousand-ton steamers, but in five minutes I saw that, small as the engines were, they were all right. If anything, the little steamer was a bit overengined. Given luck, I saw that I could make twelve knots, and that's not bad for a coasting steamer not much bigger than a tug.

I went on deck for a smoke before turning in, and found the captain leaning on the rail. He looked at me sad-like, and went on smoking. I judged the old man thought himself too much up a tree to associate with chief engineers, especially when they was only engineers. But, after a minute, he took his pipe out of his mouth and made as if to speak, but the words didn't seem to be able to come at first.

Then he whispered: "Can he hang you?" pointing to Manners' cabin.

"No; I'm here on shares of the dollars," I said.

The captain spat in the water, and whispers: "He can hang me!"

With that, he seemed to have finished his conversation, so, after waiting a few minutes, I turns in, thinking that in the interests of sociability old Manners would have done well to hang the cap.

I was roused in the morning by a yellow-faced, smiling chink looking in and saying: "Blekfast, sar." I turned out, and found Mr. Manners and the captain waiting for me in the cabin. The food was all right, and Mr. Manners sort of presided over things like a duke. He could put on an awful lot of style, or I guess I should say he had an awful lot of style. It came natural to him.

He talked very pleasant to me, all about ports and steamers, and took about as much notice of the captain as he would have done of a dog. I liked his conversation. He seemed to have been everywhere and seen everything.

"If it's a fair question," I asked him, "are you an American or a British citizen, Mr. Manners?"

He smiled his big smile. "I am a citizen of the world, Mr. Sellers," he says, with a polite bow.

I saw that he wanted no questions.

Soon he started on about the engines, and asked me if they were satisfactory.

"Yes," I said; "they looks like watch insides after what I've been used to, but for what they are I allow they're all right. With a bit of booting, I can get fourteen knots out of them, and that's more'n any other living man can do."

He smiled again. "No booting, Mr. Sellers, if you please. This ship will be run on humane lines. If any of the Chinese shirk or are insubordinate, report them to me."

"But how am I to get fourteen knots with chink stokers and no booting?"

"How am I to get along if my valued engineer has a knife in his back or poison in his food? That's my problem. Leave the Chinamen to me, Mr. Sellers, if you please."

I didn't like the idea, for I'd always stuck out for discipline in my engine room, but old Manners had the way with him. I'd have stood up to any ship's captain I ever met, but this quiet old gentleman was too much for me.

"When are we off?" I asked.

"The salvage company's steamer is getting steam up. She'll be off this morning. She'll break down to-morrow night. If we leave to-morrow it will be time enough. Perhaps people might smell a rat if we left before her. I'm known here, I'm afraid, as a man of enterprise."

Well, that morning I went and overhauled my engines. It took me two or three hours, for when you're in sole charge you don't want breakdowns at sea. After that, I came on deck ready for a smoke or a yarn. Old Manners was sitting in a deck chair reading a novel by a man called France. Curious enough, it was in the French language, too."

"Well," he said, "have you oiled the last bearing?"

"They're as fit as I can make 'em," I answers, "and that's fitter than any man 'cept Buck Macfarlane could make 'em."

"Then perhaps you will favor me with a game of dominoes?" he said.

"I'd sooner play dominoes with you than poker," I said, smiling.

"Ah, you watched that little game. Well, a man who had lived intelligently ought always to play poker well. After all, success in life comes to the man who can make a big bluff."

I thought that I could play dominoes, but old Manners was past grand master.

He'd look at his bones at the start, and tell me, offhand, how many pips he'd win by, or how many I ought to win by if I'd a good lot.

Soon I said: "You're way up, Mr.

Manners. You play too deep a game for me."

"Well, shall we go and see those drunken divers? Perhaps they may have slept off their debauch by now."

We went below and stirred them up. They looked sick. Seemed to me they might have dived in what they'd drunk.

"Mr. McNab and Mr. Higgins," said Mr. Manners, introducing them as if they were princes instead of two very sick men, "two more shareholders in our little gold hunt."

Higgins was a lanky Londoner, who hadn't a thought outside the inside of a whisky bottle, but I liked little McNab, though he talked such broad Scotch that he nearly wanted a translator. He took to me, too, and we yarned all the day about wrecks, and engines, and the perils of strong drink—McNab was great on that. Then he explained to me careful just how he was going to spend his share of the dollars. There was to be so much for his old parents, and so much for a crippled sister, and with the rest he was going to buy a sheep farm in Scotland a hundred miles from the sea.

"I've been sic a wanderer, Mr. Sellers," he says, "that I judge it best tae avoid the proxeemity of the ocean."

And then I told him precise how I was going to start spending mine in painting Frisco a bit redder. Little McNab bursts out all of a sudden: "Stap, stap, Mr. Sellers! It hurts me tae think o' sae mickle siller being wasted. Mon, I fear ye're a prodigal."

"I'll lay a dollar some of yours goes in whisky, Mac," I says.

"Juist a bottle for hospitality," he answers. "No more."

The next morning I set the Chinese stokers to work to get up steam, and in the afternoon the steamer *Bonadventure* left Sydney in ballast for Newcastle. But when we were once clear from sight of the lighthouse on the Heads our course was altered, and we steered south. The engines ran like a dream, and I saw that when she'd settled to her work she'd easily do fourteen knots. The chinks worked well enough, though my fists ached to put a bit of grit into them. Still, I had not a hard time. McNab had been third engineer on a Clyde steamer before he took to the diving, so he could take charge temporary when I wanted to turn in or to feed.

He came down just before dusk on the second day we were out.

"Up on deck wi' ye, mon. There's a sight o' considerable interest."

I left him in charge, and skipped up the ladder.

Mr. Manners was standing on deck, glass in hand. He handed me the glass, with a polite bow.

"A steamer making distress signals," he said. "Are we to be inhuman enough to leave her?"

I got the glass on the ship and made her out to be the salvage company's steamer.

"I guess we've got to be inhuman," I said.

"She'll be lucky if she gets some one to tow her to-night. Then it'll be two days' tow to Sydney, perhaps three. Then they'll have to charter another steamer. That's not done in ten minutes. Say another couple of days. And now we are most of two days on our way. I make out that we shall have at the least a week to explore the *Levita*. That ought to give us ample time. But drive her—drive her, Mr. Sellers. We don't want to run things fine."

I went down below and did my best to get another knot out of her. Then I found one chink who was inclined to shirk. I could have settled him with a shovel in half a minute, but I judged it best not to cross Mr. Manners. So I stepped up on deck and reported matters.

"Send him here," says Mr. Manners, scarcely looking up from his novel.

I called down for Ah Lee, and he comes up looking more green than yellow.

Mr. Manners looks up casual from his book, slips a revolver out of his pocket, and shoots him down like a dog.

"You might be good enough to ask one of the crew to throw that overboard and swab the deck, Mr. Sellers," said Mr. Manners, already deep in his book. "I think you'll have no more trouble with your stokers."

Now, I make no account of chinks live or dead, but Manners' quick way with them gave me the shakes for a minute.

Little McNab steals up to me and whispers: "Mon, he's nae regard whatever for human life."

"Well, don't cross him, Mac," I said, "or he'll have nae regard for yours."

But after that the chink stokers worked like tigers. I'd no need to drive them. They drove themselves. Many a time I wished I'd had such stokers on the *Cyprian*. I'd have cut that record another day.

Well, after ten days we were pretty near the point we wanted, and the *Bonadventure* had to run along the line of the reef hunting for the wreck. Lucky for us, there was no wind and not much swell, else that salvage steamer would have found two wrecks in place of one. We were lucky enough to locate the wreck of the *Levita* pretty quick, and we managed to anchor the *Bonadventure* quite close, yet without fouling the wreck.

Then little McNab showed what he was made of. He worked like a little demon fixing spars projecting over the ship's side and getting a windlass rigged up. All I had to do was to see that a full head of steam was kept up, so that in case any interfering steamer poked her nose in, the *Bonadventure* could show her a clean pair of heels.

"The gold is in a specially constructed chamber under the captain's cabin," said Mr. Manners. "Now, gentlemen, the rest is with you."

He settled down in his chair, reading, as if it was no concern of his at all. Captain Lawrence stood supervising the chinks who worked the windlass and the air pumps. I was anxious lest we should be interrupted, so I spent my time between looking at the pressure gauge and keeping an eye on the horizon. It seemed a deadly long day. Every now and then one of the divers was hauled up for rest or to get some special tools. It wasn't till four in the afternoon that there came the signal to haul up. I sprang to the windlass, and even the chinks looked interested when an iron-clamped case came up.

"There should be three or more of them," said Mr. Manners, looking up from his book. "Fifty thousand dollars' worth of bullion in each case. Treasure hunting looks like proving lucrative, Mr. Sellers."

It wasn't till all the treasure was safe on deck that he seemed interested. Then came the point of blowing up the ship and he roused at once.

"We must make sure that the wreck shifts into deep water," he said. "She seems almost balanced on the edge of the reef. Now, Mr. McNab, we don't want any awkward inquiries after you have bought your sheep farm. Can you guarantee to move the wreck?"

"Ye may trust me to distribute the dynamite," said McNab.

There was a battery fixed on deck to fire the detonators. Mr. Manners took charge of this. Down went the divers, and I leaned over the ship's side watching them.

"Just see that your engines are right, Mr. Sellers," said Manners. "We must be well away from this reef before night falls."

I went down below to the engine room. Everything seemed straightforward. I judged that we should be making twelve knots a quarter of an hour

after the anchor was up. I was just looking at the pressure gauge, when the steamer heeled almost over. A great wave swept over the ship, and tons of water poured down the hatchway.

"What in hell's the matter?" I cried, springing up the ladder. "Here's half my fires put out."

"The charges exploded prematurely," said Mr. Manners. "Those poor fellows have gone."

"My God!" I said, jumping to the rail. The wreck had vanished. It had slid from the reef into fifty fathoms of water.

"How did it happen? Poor little McNab!" I cried.

"My hand must have slipped. Most unfortunate business. They had just given the signal to be hauled up. Dear me, dear me, you don't happen to know if they've any families?"

"McNab had," I answered. "He came from somewhere near Peebles, in Scotland. He had old parents, and a crippled sister. We'll hunt them up and see that they get the dollars."

"That will be a consolation to me and to them, but how can I forgive myself for that fatal mistake? Still, it's no use staying here. The concussion must have killed them before they were drowned. Captain Lawrence, will you please get the anchor up at once?"

I went below, feeling sick and queer. It wasn't that I minded about Higgins, who had never got quite sober, in my knowledge of him, but I had liked little McNab. Somehow, it seemed to me that this was to be an unlucky voyage. Still, there was twenty-five thousand dollars for McNab's folk—that was a comfort.

It wasn't till late that night that I went on deck for a breath of air.

Captain Lawrence was there, and for once he was smiling.

"I'm coming in with you now," he said. "I'm going to be a shareholder."

"Weren't you before?" I asked.

"Not me. He knew enough to hang me, and now I know enough to hang him."

"They'd never hang any one for a chink. Mind it startled me, but, after all, it was maintaining discipline. Suppose I'd laid him out with a shovel, you'd never have thought of hanging me for it."

"What's a chink got to do with it? I meant McNab. He fired that charge deliberately. I saw him signal the chink to cut the windlass ropes. I'll talk to him now. You and me'll stand in together. It'll be a third each, or I'll split. Anyhow, I only killed one, and a third officer, at that."

I felt sick. This voyage was too much for me.

"We'll stick together, and bleed him," said the captain. "He's worth millions of dollars, they say. A third each! We'll have the lot between us before we've done with him. Looks as if there's a bit of sea getting up. We're running right into it, I fancy. Don't talk now. Those chinks tell him everything."

I saw the engines were right, and turned in for an hour. Then I felt that a sea was getting up, and I'd no chance of leaving the engine room till daylight. With the day, the wind seemed to drop, and I went on deck for a look at the weather. I saw Mr. Manners walking up and down looking very upset.

"A most unfortunate voyage," he said, when he saw me. "Poor Captain Lawrence!"

"What?" I cried.

"Swept overboard an hour since. A terrible loss. It's a good thing that I'm a fair amateur navigator."

"Swept overboard!" I exclaimed.

"Yes; I'd just come on deck to see if I could relieve him a bit, when the ship broached to. I caught a rail, but when the deck was clear the captain had gone."

He spoke so straightforwardly that I hardly doubted him.

"It'll be a tough job to get her back to Sydney," I said.

"Oh, no; I'm, as I told you, a fair navigator. The Chinese are excellent seamen, and we have, I am glad to say, an expert engineer."

I leaned over the rail and thought of the bad luck that had attended this voyage. I wondered whether Lawrence had made up his story about the premature explosion in order to induce me to join him in blackmailing Mr. Manners. And then I saw a little patch of color on the rail. I touched it, and found it was still damp. It was a thumb mark in blood, and I guessed that the end of Captain Lawrence was a sight more picturesque than Mr. Manners said.

"Two shareholders gone," I thought. "The man who wanted to be a shareholder gone. It's a gaudy lookout for Samuel B. Sellers, the only surviving shareholder."

I went down to my cabin and felt in my bunk for my revolver. It was gone, and I knew that kindly Mr. Manners meant having no mistakes.

From that moment I fancied that I was watched all the time. There seemed to be a chink about wherever I went. Mr. Manners could gabble to them in what the chinks presumed to be their language, and for all I knew the orders he was giving them might have reference to me. However, he was as polite and high bred as ever. He called me up from the engine room specially to show me the salvage company's steamer making for the wreck. I looked at him often, speculating whether it would be well to grip him by the neck and throttle him, but when he turned that big, calm smile of his on me, my heart fell into my boots. I'm not reckoned to be a coward, but Manners was too big a proposition for me to tackle.

As we neared Sydney, the chinks grew more and more polite and smiling. A chink can be real polished when he's calculating between which of your ribs he'll stick his knife in. And the more polite they got the lower sank my spirits. I guessed if they got rid of me there'd be no inquiries. No one except Cooney knew that I had any idea of shipping on the *Bonadventure,* and Cooney would be in Manners' pocket. But I could do nothing. My revolver had gone and a knife was no good against twenty yellow devils and a big white devil who could knock the pips off cards with revolver shots at twenty paces.

At last one night we sighted the light on Sydney Heads. Mr. Manners pointed it out to me, and says pleasantlike: "Our successful voyage is nearly over, Mr. Sellers. I compliment you on the speed you have got out of your engines. I never wish to know a better engineer."

Even as he spoke to me I saw him look at the head man of his Chinese crew. He didn't say anything, but I guessed the Chinese understood. It seemed to me that I shouldn't see another sunrise, and that's a sad reflection for a chief engineer who's broken more records than any one, bar Cyrus Hoskin. I went down to my engines for an hour. I judged that I wanted a bit of company, and they were running as sweet as rye whisky down a pilot's throat. Then I thought I'd go on deck and face it out. The chinks looked at me curious, but it seemed to me as if they'd no orders to begin the trouble yet. I guessed the artful old devil wanted the *Bonadventure* inside the Heads before the trouble began. I walked up and down the deck twice, wondering whether I should jump for it, but a six-mile swim's a big proposition for a man who's good for a quarter mile, and no more, and ain't desirous of sharks' company.

Just then I saw the lights of a big steamer, and I saw a chance. I judged

her to be a big Frisco liner, and she was making all of sixteen knots, and would pass near us, but well to starboard. I edged nearer and nearer to the man at the wheel as the steamer came near to us. Then, at the right second, I jumps at him like a wild cat, gives him the left under the chin, and spins the wheel round.

The *Bonadventure* sheered right across the big steamer's bows. One of the chinks screamed for Manners, and I heard him leap on deck. The ship was towering over the *Bonadventure* like a wall. I jumped for the rail and dived deep, knowing what propellers were. Something cracked as I went overboard, and then I heard the crash as the big ship cut the *Bonadventure* down.

It seemed a month before I came up to the surface again. In a minute I saw that the steamer was lowering a boat. I gave one yell, and swam toward it. They pulled me in just as I was sinking.

"Any more saved?" I gasped.

"None," says the sailor who'd pulled me in; "her boilers blew up when we ran her down."

Luckily for me, it was an American steamer, bound for Frisco. They acted very straight to me. The old man explained elaborate to me that you couldn't expect decent seamanship from an Australian steamer, and wrote up in his log:

Ran down *Bonadventure* steamer in ballast from Newcastle to Sydney. One survivor. Sellers, engineer.

That ended his duty. The doctor patched up a queer place on my head where the hair had been cut away, and said that if he hadn't known it to be done by striking a bit of wreckage he'd have sworn it was the graze of a revolver bullet. He knew something, did that doc. But he didn't know that old Manners' last shot was a great one. It wasn't my business to talk about the *Bonadventure*. Not being desirous of more trouble from underwriters, I didn't think it necessary to explain that she was ballasted with two hundred thousand dollars' worth of bullion. It's lying there, two hundred fathoms deep, off Sydney Heads, and whenever I think how useful them dollars would be to me, I've one consolation: At any rate, old man Manners keeps them company.

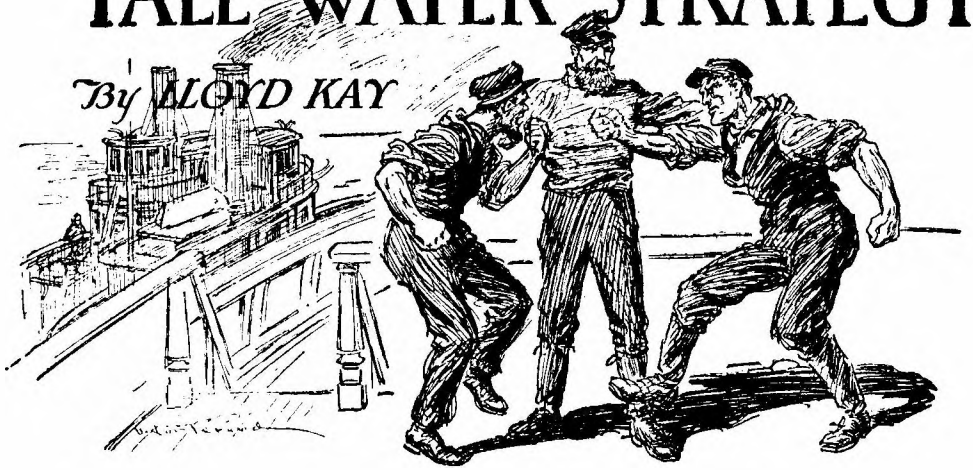
GERMAN SECRET SIGNALS DISCLOSED

SCIENTIFIC treatises which have recently been published show that at the close of the war the Germans were making laboratory experiments on secret signal lights of unusual originality. The plan was to perfect a system of signal lights which would disclose nothing at all to the ordinary observer, but which would be readily understood by the person equipped to view the signals with the special optical device constructed for the purpose.

There were several different principles employed for the working out of the plans. In one of them polarized light was to be sent out by the signal and its character changed in accordance with the dots and dashes of the code. When viewed through properly equipped binoculars the color would alternate between red and green instead of remaining white. Another method employed a glass screen containing compounds of that rare element, didymium, the screen being arranged so as to alternate in the beam of light with another screen of suitable shade. When viewed through binoculars equipped with prisms the resulting light would show a black line in the yellow region of the spectrum, formed whenever the didymium glass was interposed. In this way the signals could be read.

TALL WATER STRATEGY

By LLOYD KAY



The author knows the sea. He knows ships and men, and, as a result, has produced a story which is extremely interesting, and true to life. There is no lady in the story but the ship herself, and you will admit that she is *"Some Girl!"* after you read of her trip.

JAMES GRIERSON, designer, builder, and master of the beautiful clipper bark *Iowaka*, strode to the forward end of her spotless poop, and stood watching with keen appreciation, Lanyard, his six-foot-six mate prepare the bark for the night and the rapidly approaching storm.

Grierson's mighty shoulders were squared, his massive jaws clamped like vises, but his wide-spread, steel-gray eyes were twinkling. Lanyard was drilling a new crew into shape, and his tactics were as different as the men with whom he contended. Yes, Lanyard was a mate of mates. By the same token, Lanyard swore that Grierson was the "best skipper that ever bucked a ship around Cape Stiff or juggled a 'hog-yoke.' "

An hour later, the mate yelled: "Smoke-oh!" to his tamed crew, then slid aft and joined the master on the poop. After closely scrutinizing the threatening sky, he rumbled: "Reckon we're in for a spell of weather, sir. We might get a tugboat to pull us inside the harbor. Barry Roads ain't the safest in the Bristol Channel durin' a gale, 'specially if it blows from the south'ard."

Grierson shot a sidelong glance up at the mate, but Lanyard was intensely interested in the low and rapidly flying scud.

"No, my lofty-minded friend and highly esteemed shipmate," purred the old man, "we shall have no tugboats. If your soul yearns for such expensive luxuries, you had better take your meridian-shaped form to some other ship. Tugboats! Bah! Infernal parasites, all of 'em. Mr. Lanyard, there's one swine of a tugboat hostler on the Atlantic seaboard that I must get square with before I peg out."

The mate deliberately winked at a passing gull, and his tongue made two revolutions around his port cheek. Like all sailing-ship masters, Grierson had no earthly use for tugboats or their skippers, but one in particular he hated with an undying hatred. Lanyard, knowing this, delighted to give him an occasional dig on the subject.

"I see the bottom has dropped out of the glass, sir," said the mate, changing the subject, as he disliked being chipped

about his length. "Methinks this gentle summer heifer'll soon be with us. Let 'er come! We're ready for anything they can sling at us, if the anchors'll only hold."

"Yes, Mr. Lanyard, you've got her in fine condition. Glad she's braced up, sharp aport. Port anchor down, eh? Thirty fathoms of chain out? Good! Don't give her any more till we see what is going to happen. We'll probably have to let the other hook go shortly, as they're predicting the worst northerly in years, but I think there'll be a lot of easterly in it. If I was sure of the easterly, or even northeast, I'd yank up that anchor and square away for Philadelphia. If it does come northerly, we're better off here. Anyhow, I hope it strikes while the ebb tide is running, so she'll meet it head on, or nearly so. Once, when I was in the old—— Here she comes, wind, snow, hail, spray, everything! Get for'ard, Mr. Lanyard, an' let go your starboard anchor."

Lanyard was already halfway forward, yelling: "All hands on deck! Stand by for squalls! One hand aft to the wheel!"

The storm broke with terrific force from the north-northeast and the starboard anchor was immediately let go, then sixty fathoms of chain gradually and evenly paid out on each anchor. Thus the chains stood an equal strain. The squall lasted about ten minutes, then dropped to a moderate breeze. The strain on the chains being eased, they naturally slacked down, and this catenation was fatal, because no time was given to heave in the slack chain before the next squall struck. This one was from the northeast and struck with even greater violence than the other. The bark was driven astern like a cork. The rapid paying out of the chains could not prevent them from tightening with a grinding jerk—a jerk that snapped them both like reeds.

The *Iowaka* being now anchorless, her only salvation was to proceed to sea and remain there till good weather returned. Even then it would be suicide to try to get into any port without the assistance of a tugboat, and helpless ships are what tugboats wax fat on.

Captain Grierson, even before seeing Lanyard's gesture of despair, sensed what had happened, and his orders were immediately heard above the hellish howling of the storm. In less than ten minutes he had the bark around and running with slightly checked yards almost dead before the wind.

The wind roared, howled, screamed, shrieked, and whistled, and the laws of gravitation rapidly deserted the sea. Night thickened, so did the atmosphere, and everything fell from the heavens that could fall; but the noble *Iowaka* tore through it all under bare poles, logging her fourteen knots.

Two hours after passing Nash Point the mate struggled aft, and glancing at the compass, roared to the skipper; "Shall I get a little sail on her, sir?"

"Wait a bit, Mr. Lanyard. No canvas could stand another of those squalls. It'll steady up as we get offshore. In the meantime keep a sharp lookout for Lundy Island, we should pass well to the north'ard of it, but one can never be sure of the tides in this locality. This is one of the worst places—— How's her head?" he suddenly barked, to the man at the wheel.

"West b' north, sir."

Grierson sprang to and peered at the compass, then a grim smile stole over his mahogany-colored features. The wind was east. He could get clear of the land under bare poles, if necessary. He went below and looked at the barometer. A slight rise. Hurrying on deck he called the mate and said: "I think we're quite safe now, Mr. Lanyard, send the boys aft to splice the main brace, then we'll put a little sail on her. The wind will be steady now."

Blowing forward to the break of the poop Lanyard bellowed, "Grog-oh!"

The men needed no second invitation to that—they came running. After this interesting ceremony had been carried out, the fore and main lower-topsails were set, sb were the watches, and all was well for the night.

Next morning the wind had eased a little and backed into the northeast. When the watch came on deck at eight bells the upper topsails and the foresail were set.

"G-e-e!" rumbled Lanyard to the second mate, when this job was done; "but the skipper's more'n drivin' the old lady this passage. But, Lord, son! if she should broach to an' let one of these little old Western Ocean gray-backs flop aboard we'll all be in Davy's locker."

In the second dogwatch that night, Grierson and the mate had a long gabfest. They were in fine fettle, even if both bowers were gone and the spare anchor useless; the way the *Iowaka* was leaving the knots astern would make any sailorman happy.

"If," said the old man, solemnly eying a cockroach that was thoughtfully waving its feelers from under the pantry door, "if I was as long as the moral law and as thin as a drink of water on a Saturday night, I'd knock off going to sea. I'd do well on the stage, I'd make a dandy *Little John,* or maybe a *Mrs. Wiggs.* Yep. No more of the wild, free life on the ocean wave for me."

"Sure you would," snapped Lanyard. "You'd quit right now; wade ashore, buy a hen ranch, an' get a dinky little tugboat that you could set up on your front lawn for an incubator."

"Tugboat!" Grierson exploded. "Mr. Lanyard, if I could only get to windward of one tugboat, I'd die happy. They're all alike, no matter what part of the world you find 'em in. They'll stand by and let a ship pile up on the rocks and lose all hands if they don't get their price. For ten years I've been hoping to get back at that infernal cur that deliberately nosed me into the breakers when I was in the old *Scud.* The sea was quite smooth at the time so this lad poked his boat's stem under the *Scud's* quarter and slowly pushed her into shallow water. The fog was so thick at the time that I couldn't see that his propeller was moving. I wondered why he stayed there so long—yapping about nothing—and was just about to order him away when I heard the breakers. I knew then what he'd been doing, but, instead of killing the swine I had to pay him two thousand to pull me out, and into Portland.

"Well, that stunt was too good for the infernal pirate to keep. He blatted." Pausing, Grierson inspected his empty glass, then continued, "The night before we sailed they took him to the hospital. It seems somebody had abused the poor creature."

Mr. Lanyard buried his face in his hands, his sympathy was so poignant he could offer no reply.

"Now," went on the skipper, "the money part of the debt has been canceled, but the awful jolt that stunt gave my reputation must be paid, and paid with interest. Any tugboat will do, if I can't get that particular one. I suppose these darned Philadelphia sharks will know that we were blown away from Barry, and they may also opine that we were in too great a hurry to take our anchors along. They'll be waiting for us, Mr. Lanyard, as sure as you're a foot high, with their tongues hanging out like the wolves they are."

" 'Pears to me, sir," said the mate, helpfully, "that I've heard some tall yarns about one Bill Spicer. Every tugboat owner from Calais, Maine, to Key West wants his services. They seem to think that James Lucifer Squarefoot himself couldn't get to windward of that spicy shark. Just now he's out of Philly, I believe."

"Spicer, eh? Out of Philly.

Um-m-m," Grierson vacantly remarked, then suddenly cracked the table with a fist like a main-brace block, and, leaning forward impressively, imparted the fact that he had a great idea for getting ahead of the tugboat sharks, if it would work out.

"That's what's wrong with most ideas, sir, they won't work out."

"Listen to this one, Lanyard, then tell me what you think. We're blessed with one of the best carpenters that ever happened. He can make anything from a hatch-wedge to an inlaid billiard cue."

"Yes, Chips is one of the best, but what has he to do with the great idea?"

"Listen. Let me orate the tale." Captain Grierson then detailed his idea. Long before he had finished Lanyard's eyes began to dance, and when he had heard it all he tapped the table with the ends of his stubby fingers.

"The idea's a beauty, sir, but——"

"But what?"

"The weather. You've left that out of your calculations."

"No, I didn't leave that out. We both know the sort of weather we need. We'll simply have to wait till we get it, then drive her through and take our chance of winning out." Here the old man squinted at the skylight, then thoughtfully continued, "If this breeze only holds we'll have a rattling passage across. Put Chips on the job in the morning, and—we'll see what we shall see.

"Now," he yawned, "if it moderates during the night be sure and give me a call. Good night, Lanyard."

"Good night, sir," and Lanyard went to his room, chuckling. He loved the way his skipper took advantage of a fair wind.

The wind eased enough the next day to allow all plain sail set except the fore-royal, and still held from the eastward.

Day after day the gigantic, foam-flecked North Atlantic gray-backs followed the *Iowaka* in endless succession. They were good to her, they recognized her as one of the sea people, akin to the wheeling albatrosses, gulls, and Careys. Part of her creator's amphibian soul had been built into her, therefore the angry sea loved her as it loves some ships and men. Others, it takes fiendish delight in torturing, grinding, smashing and utterly destroying.

On the evening of the fourteenth day the master gave orders to keep a sharp lookout and after midnight to take frequent casts of the lead. At every cast the priming in the base of the lead would fetch up a sample of the bottom, this, combined with the depth of the water would give him a fairly good idea of his position. He was running in solely on dead reckoning as he had seen neither sun, moon, nor stars for seven days.

"The old man's runnin' her in on his guts," Lanyard remarked to the second mate, "an' believe me, son, he's got just the right amount an' quality. He needs 'em all, every one, to run this old girl dead on a lee shore, in a howlin' easterly, an' him with no anchors."

"Yes, sir," answered Bowlin, "but it'll help fool the tugboats, won't it? They're sure to be lookin' for us."

"By the livin' cat-head, son!" growled the mate, leering at a Carey hovering over the top of a mighty sea, close to windward, "but you are a brilliant youth. Maybe you're right."

Luckily the weather remained clear all night, and shortly after daylight the mate went aloft to see if anything was in sight. Presently he sang out that he thought he saw Delaware Breakwater, about two points on the lee bow. He was right, for shortly after it was plainly visible from the deck. The mainsail was then clewed up, and while it was being furled the captain called Lanyard aft and pointed to a tugboat tumbling toward them, green seas smashing all over her. After a prolonged look he handed the mate the glasses, and remarked, "That fellow has his nerve with

him all right to come outside in this sea."

Taking the glasses the mate looked for a little, grinned and said. "The *Sokum.* B' Gad, sir, she's well named —judgin' by the amount of water she's takin' over."

"Yes, my lofty friend, *Sokum* is good, but he'd better watch himself or he'll be drowning all hands."

"Glad it's not *Sokus,* sir," answered Lanyard, looking at the spanker-boom with somber intensity.

The skipper groaned, then observed that the *Sokum* had rounded to and was waiting for them, while her skipper was thoroughly surveying the bark through his powerful glasses.

When the two vessels were nearly abreast, a sharp, shrewd-faced individual stepped out of the tugboat's wheelhouse and howled, "Where yah bound, Cap?"

"Philadelphia," answered Grierson, shortly.

"I'll take yah up fer five hundred dollars, Cap."

Grierson merely waved his hand and turned away, then as the boat dropped rapidly astern he turned to the mate and said, "There'll be some tall bargaining done this day, Mr. Lanyard; there are no less than five more sharks waiting for us further ahead." The *Iowaka* tore on and twenty minutes later she overhauled the *Chester,* her skipper hailing the bark as she passed.

"Bound up to Philly, Cap?" he bellowed.

"Yes," roared Grierson.

"Take yah up fer four hundred, Cap."

"Nothing doing, old man, not with this breeze."

Before any further offer could be made, the *Chester* was astern, and the skipper of the *Hoosier* had started his dicker. His price was three-fifty, and use the bark's hawser. The *Henlopen* was next with an offer of three-fifty and use his line.

"I'll take yah up for three hundred, Cap," howled the skipper of the *Cape May,* as the *Iowaka* snored past him.

The *Delaware* was next but she was too slow to get a bid in.

They were all astern now, but they held on after the bark, knowing she would soon be shortening sail, and then they would make a kill. But Grierson, being in his element, gave them a long chase, and did not clew up the foresail till Brandywine was abeam. Even then the *Chester* and the *Sokum* were the only ones that held their own.

Half an hour after the foretop-gallant-sail was clewed up and furled, the bark was surrounded by tugboats; their skippers howling and yelping like a gang of cabbies at a railway station.

As the *Sokum* and *Chester* belonged to rival companies, and their skippers were the nerviest of the lot, they pushed their boats alongside, one on either quarter, and attacked at close range.

This lively competition soon brought the price down to two hundred, then gradually it dropped to one-fifty, but even though Grierson had never dreamed he could be towed up for that he utterly ignored them. Thereupon they all hauled off, but continued to follow.

The old man, left alone, was busy with his thoughts. He knew the reckless way he had driven his ship on a lee shore in an easterly gale had completely allayed any suspicions his enemies might have had. He knew by the way they had all looked the *Iowaka* over before they made an offer that they had expected something to be wrong with her. Yes, he had fooled them, but how much longer could he fool them? If the fog should suddenly shut in, or the wind drop he'd be compelled to take one of those boats and pay any price that was asked, or lose his ship. Suddenly his teeth snapped and his chin shot out, then, after another wicked look at his lifelong enemies, he resumed his nonchalant pacing of the poop, though not a move of the circling tugboats escaped him.

Twenty minutes later the slow *Delaware* and the two smaller boats gave up the chase, and the three big ones returned to their prey.

This time the *Hoosier* ranged up on one quarter and the *Chester* on the other, both making the same offer.

The skipper of the *Sokum* raved, swore, and cursed everything that ever floated, then he deliberately shoved his boat between the *Hoosier* and the bark. This was a nervy, tricky, also a dirty maneuver, but it required wonderful skill and judgment, and was done without even scratching the paint on the *Iowaka's* glossy black side.

As soon as the *Sokum* had resumed her former position, her captain cursed his displaced rival and ordered him to fade away, which the poor invertebrate reluctantly did.

After the *Hoosier* had been dispensed with, the nervy one yelled, "Say, Cap, what's that slant-eyed maggot on yer port quarter askin' ter tow yah up?"

"One-twenty-five, and give me his line," drawled Grierson.

"Don't listen to him, Cap, an' what's more don't take him, 'cos he'd have yah ashore afore he got yah half way up. The crazy stiff has to have a wet-nurse to show him up an' down the river." With this brotherly remark he started to climb aboard the *Iowaka*.

"Don't let that blasted down-East beach comber put his foot aboard yer ship, Cap," yelled the *Chester's* skipper, "he'll steal the eyes outa yer head as sure as hell's a man-trap." Then he also boarded the bark.

They both rushed toward Grierson, the *Sokum's* presiding genius vociferating, "I'll take yah up fer a hundred, Cap. Gimme yer hawser!" while he of the *Chester* howled, "I'll take yah up fer a hundred, Cap, an' give yah my line."

Grierson, ignoring them, walked aft, where the second mate said to him, "They appear mighty keen on this hawser business, sir."

"Yes," answered the old man, grimly, "that's usually their twenty-five mark, but just now they seem to have halved it. It's always better to take their line in the beginning, because if you give 'em yours they'll only break it by foul means, if they can't by fair, then you'll have to wind up by taking their line and they'll soak you an extra twenty-five for the use of it. Not satisfied with that they'll try to steal the piece of your line they broke off. Yes, always take their line if——" He suddenly broke off on hearing a mighty scuffle on the forward end of the poop. The two tugboat skippers were industriously fighting it out to see which should get the tow, each accusing the other of cutting prices.

Before Grierson and the second mate could reach the scrappers the latter were yanked to their feet by the lofty Lanyard, one in each hand. After banging their heads together a couple of times he slung them apart, and roared, "If there's any rough stuff to be handed out on this hooker I'm the gent that's goin' to do it. Now, you infernal sharks, get aboard your stinkin' jam-tins, an' get quick, before I drop you down your own filthy funnels!"

They went, but before they had reached their respective wheelhouses a stentorian voice rolled across the bay: "Say, Cap, listen here—pay no attention to them stinkin' buzzards! With this breeze I'll pull yah up to Philly fer seventy-five slippery little simoleons, an' I'll take yah up in seven hours. What d'yah say?"

"Look here, Cap," piped the *Chester*, "I've been alongside longer'n any one, yah oughter gimme first chance. I'll do it fer seventy-five. Take my line."

"Here, Cap," the *Sokum* yelped, "where do I come in? I spoke yah first, therefore I got the best right to the tow, fer that money. T'hell with them price-cuttin' scabs!"

While the big-voiced fellow was circling round the stern, the old man looked from one boat to the other, then turning to Mr. Bowlin, said, "They're deadlocked. I don't believe they'll come down another cent. This is the luckiest landfall I ever made, believe me."

"As it is now it is pretty hard to decide which one to take, sir," answered the second.

"Ye-es, they're much of a muchness, any one of them could take us up in seven or eight hours, easy."

At that the *Sokum's* heaving-line flopped on deck, and her skipper yapped, "There's my heavin'-line, Cap, when I go ahead you can haul my hawser aboard."

Grierson strolled across the deck toward the speaker, and said, "Captain, I rather like the name of your boat. Would you mind telling me your name?"

"Not a bit, Cap. My name's Spicer. Bill Spicer. Why, Cap?"

"Nothing. Just wanted to make sure."

"Look here, Cap," Spicer almost whispered, "give me the job an' I'll put yah in yer loadin' berth for the seventy-five. What say?"

"Will you put that in writing, Captain Spicer?"

"Sure I will. Just a minute, Cap."

While Spicer was putting his offer on paper, Captain Grierson called the mate aft and told him about the deal. "Now, Mr. Lanyard," he concluded, "our friend in the *Sokum* was elected ten years ago to tow the *Iowaka* up to Philadelphia this day."

Lanyard nodded with solemn gravity, then suddenly brightening up, said, "But, sir, the *Iowaka* is only four years old."

The master glared. "Don't be so dense, Mr. Lanyard," he finally exploded. "You're long enough to know my meaning. Go forward, sir, and stand by to get Spicer's towline aboard."

The mate went forward to his station wearing a most unholy grin, and Grierson went down to his cabin, but returned almost immediately, smoking one of his fair-wind cigars.

As soon as the hawser was made fast and the *Sokum* had settled down to her business of towing the bark to Philadelphia, Grierson called Lanyard and told him to send all hands aft to splice the main brace.

While the ancient rite of splicing the main brace was being observed the old man showed the mate Spicer's written agreement and ended his pithy remarks by saying, "Now I never dreamed the smart Captain Spicer would give me that paper and make no stipulation about our carrying sail as long as we possibly could. As it is now, Mr. Lanyard, have all your sails furled by the time we pass Reedy Island. We'll see that Spicer earns his money legitimately this time."

The mate started swiftly forward, but abruptly sat down on a spare spar and twisted about most agonizingly. Captain Grierson went along, felt his pulse, looked at his tongue then sadly opined that the "poor little fellow's pain was indeed great, but with careful nursing he might survive."

At four p. m. the *Sokum's* whistle was blown for the hawser to be cast off. When the bark had slipped up beside the tugboat, Spicer yelled at Lanyard, "Why the 'ell don't yah let go yer anchor, yah long streak o' misery?"

He was mad because the sails had been taken in so early, but the mate merely waved his hand aft, implying that that was where his orders came from.

Spicer then addressed the poop, and again demanded that an anchor be dropped.

"You've promised to put this clipper in her loading berth," replied Grierson. "So why should I anchor?"

"Because yah haven't got yer orders yet, so how the devil do I know where to put yah?"

"You put me alongside any old wharf at all, till I get the orders. That's all you've got to do."

"I tell yah it's a 'elluva lot handier to anchor. So drop one of them hooks an' don't be so blasted pig-headed about it."

By this time the two vessels were side by side so Spicer went aboard the bark, to try moral suasion, at close quarters.

"Come on, Cap," he wheedled, "drop an anchor, like a good feller. It'll save us a coupla hours, sure."

"Spicer, I wouldn't drop an anchor if I could."

"An' why'n 'ell can't yer? They're hangin' there all ready to let go."

"Because," answered Grierson, sadly, "I'm afraid they wouldn't hold this vessel in a dry dock, much less anywhere else."

"Holy mackerel, man, talk sense! Why the little peeled-heeled Lazarus wouldn't they? Lord knows they're big enough."

"Yes, Captain Spicer," the old man replied, softly, "they're big enough, but I fear they're not—heavy enough."

"Not heavy enough? Jumpin' Jermima, Cap! Have yah gone bugs, er what? By the little red hen, man, yer crazier'n—— Say, Cap, what makes yah think they're not heavy enough?"

"Because, Captain Spicer," answered the master, lugubriously, "those anchors are both—wood. Circumstances compelled us to leave our iron ones in Barry Roads."

Spicer emitted a terrific howl and tore away forward. Getting out a big knife he stabbed, hacked, and whittled those anchors and chains in scores of places.

"Yes," he finally growled to himself, "both wood, soft wood, an' the chains Manila with wooden bars, but——"

He gazed around dazedly for a bit, then went slowly aft. "Say, Cap," he opened up, on reaching the poop, "who's the artistic guy that painted the rust on them anchors an' chains?"

"Mr. Lanyard, the mate; he says it gives them a touch of realism. Don't you think he made an excellent job of it?"

"He sure did. But why the 'ell paint rust on wooden anchors an' rope chains?"

"To make doubly sure of catching certain little fishes, with big round mouths, called——"

Spicer didn't wait to hear what they were called; he knew.

Two minutes later he slammed down a large empty bottle labeled, "Monongahela," opened the wheelhouse window, and roared at his crew: "Hop 'raound, you flea-bitten stiffs, an' make fast to this cursed windjammer. It makes me sick to look at her. Them infernal tall-water stratergists has done me out of a five-thousand-dollar tow, with their dam' wooden anchors an' blasted rope chains." Here he stopped, wind-bound, and shook his fist at Grierson.

"You don't appear to appreciate rustic art, Captain Spicer," remarked the old man, kindly, when Spicer had regained his breath.

OYSTERS HEALTHY AND FAT

DESPITE the statement of French scientists that oysters have been suffering from la grippe to such an extent that beds are rapidly decreasing in number, oyster men of Galveston, Texas, claim that the belief is quite unfounded.

The bivalves found in the beds on Pepper Grove, Shell Island, and other places in Galveston Bay are said to be suffering only from an excess of fat. It is admitted that they are somewhat scarcer this year than usual, but any deficiency in numbers is more than made up in the larger size and in the fine quality.

A TWO HANDED STOWAWAY

By FREDERICK GILBERT

Terry Dempsey really was not a stowaway, but Captain Fold chose to consider him one. The captain, however, did not take into consideration Terry's antecedents, and then the fun began. A good story.

AS he opened his eyes and stared into darkness, Terry Dempsey felt that something was wrong. He was lying on a very hard and comfortless mattress. The bed seemed to be in motion, and a strange rattling at short intervals was confusing to his mind.

Terry was further surprised, on struggling to a sitting position, that he had not undressed for the night. He had on his collar and necktie, his fall overcoat had not been removed, and, worst of all, to his intense disgust, he had slept in his shoes and stockings.

"Well," he muttered, as he searched his pockets for a match, his body rocking meantime with the motion of the bed, "this is going some. Where on earth am I?"

A moment later, as he struck a match, he repeated this question in greater wonder. The light showed that he had been lying on some gunny sacks in a huge, gloomy apartment without windows, and ventilated only with a square opening in the roof!

He failed utterly to realize his whereabouts. His head pained him frightfully, and a dreadful nausea caused him to reel in unison with the motion of his strange lodging place.

He was soon possessed with one idea—that he had been trapped into some vile den, and that he must escape at once to keep faith with his backers.

A rope was dangling from that aperture in the roof; he had seen that much while the match lasted. He groped unsteadily toward it, and soon felt it dangling in his hands. A sharp tug assured him that the other end was well secured, and he scrambled up toward what he thought was the scuttle of the building.

But as soon as his head emerged he was grabbed by a pair of rough hands, and a harsh voice shouted:

"Shiver me, if it's not a stowaway! Come out, you infernal rat, and give an account of yourself!"

A stowaway! Then he must be on board a ship, and he ought to be on shore and in trim for the match.

But the man who had yanked him to his feet gave him no time for reflection. With harsh words and violent wrenches he dragged Terry aft, where a big-boned, brutal-looking man, who had just

issued from the cabin companionway, stood glaring at him.

"What's up now, Seaton?" demanded the big man in a tone of authority.

"A stowaway, sir," replied Seaton, puffing from the exertion of dragging his captive along the deck.

"A stowaway," yelled the skipper. "By the great horn spoon, this is too much! Stand him up and let us look at him!"

To this day Dempsey never can explain his part in the ensuing scene. The mate seemed to hold him upon his feet by the collar. His head swam, and all his strength seemed to have left him.

Members of the crew gathered around to watch the performance; but they fell back in evident alarm as the captain shook his fist in Terry's face, crying:

"You moon-faced whelp, what do you mean by coming aboard my ship? I'll make an example of you for that measly crew of mine. Give him a rope's end and put him in irons for twenty-four hours! Then make him work his passage. We have no use for skulking stowaways on the *Welcome Home!*"

Dempsey was still dazed and powerless. He felt like a baby in the hands of the rough mate. He scarcely comprehended the fate that had been mapped out for him. All he knew was that he was at sea on a strange ship, with two brutes of officers ready to maul him beyond recognition if he showed the slightest resistance.

"Tell me," demanded the captain, as Seaton turned to carry out his instructions, "tell me your name and your business, and why you stowed away in my ship. No lies, now, or I'll smash your skull!"

Dempsey was hardly able to reply. He had become green about the gills, and the whites of his eyes were turning a sickly yellow. He was only kept from falling to the deck by the strong grip of the eager mate. He was not a prepossessing object by any means, and his weakness and lack of spirit seemed to arouse the contempt of his oppressors.

It was after several painful efforts that he found his voice, and answered:

"My—my name is Terence White. "I d-don't know how I got here. I—I don't f-feel g-good!"

"You'll feel worse before we get through with you," roared Captain Fold, striking him savagely across the face, and then leaving him to the tender mercy of Mate Seaton, who made life brutally interesting to him for the rest of the day.

The *Welcome Home* was a ship with a bad name. Her captain and chief officer were notorious for their brutality. Both were big, powerful men, quick with feet and fists to punish for the slightest lapse of duty. Indeed, they rarely waited for such lapses; they seemed to take a demoniacal pleasure in cursing and cuffing the crew and scrimping in the "allowances." Men rarely made a second voyage in the ship, and the stories told in a hundred sailors' lodging houses earned for the *Welcome Home* the name of "the terror ship of the North."

At the time of Terry's adventure she was a day out from Portland, bound for Rio with a cargo of limestone.

Terry White, as he was called now, was in a terrible predicament. There was no discounting the fact that he was sick. The ship was laboring in bad weather, and to add to the misery of the situation, she was putting miles and miles between him and Portland, where his disappearance was doubtless disgusting the friends who had backed him for the mill.

But what bothered him more than anything else was the chaotic state of his mind and his physical depression. He could not think connectedly, and it seemed as if all his strength and his spunk had left him. He took blows and insults like a shrinking schoolboy.

He could not muster courage for anything. He was meek and servile almost, and, as a result of this disposition, he was bullied by the crew as well as the captain and mate. In fact, Terry was regarded as a bit of a simpleton as well as a physical weakling.

This condition continued for a week, but gradually the effects of the drug that had laid him out, and the seasickness, which kept him there, were wearing off, and at last one morning, after a particularly long watch below, he awoke with a clear eye and a steady brain. He was no longer nerveless and wavering. The circumstances leading up to his plight passed quickly through his mind. He was able to figure out all that had transpired since he arrived in Portland a few days before the *Welcome Home* sailed.

He remembered, clearly now, how he had been lured from his training quarters by one he had always considered a friend, but who was evidently in the pay of the men who wished to destroy his reputation as the champion lightweight of the East.

It was easy for this traitor to drug him, and afterward they had dumped him in the hold of the *Welcome Home* in the hope and belief that that was the last of Terry Dempsey.

He made a rapid mental calculation. He had been drugged on the tenth of the month, the fight was scheduled for the twenty-fourth; it was now the eighteenth—six days remained. They were right in the track of steamers; almost every day they passed one or more. If he could persuade the captain to put him aboard a returning vessel, he could make it.

If he could persuade the captain! Terry smiled quietly to himself; and on deck that day he was noticed to be as quick and as alert as a seasoned tar.

The ship was still making nasty weather of it, and both Captain Fold and Mate Seaton were in ugly tempers. While Terry was doing stunts for the cook near the galley, he saw the captain grip one of the crew by the throat and shake the man until his teeth chattered.

"I'll choke the life out of you!" bawled Fold. "How dare you come aft without orders?"

"The mate sent me," gasped the man, who was growing purple in the face. "I'm to relieve Jackson at the wheel."

The captain released his victim and shouted for Seaton.

"Did you send this man aft?" he demanded when the mate appeared.

Seaton grasped the situation at once, and took refuge in denial.

"No, sir," was his reply.

"Then take that for lying," yelled the furious captain, giving the sailor a blow that knocked him flat on the deck.

This incident made Terry's blood course quicker in his veins. He was certainly regaining confidence. He knew it by that curious itching of the muscles he felt when anything aroused him. But it wasn't his time to interfere, he persuaded himself, and he continued at his work.

All that forenoon Captain Fold paced the deck like a madman, with a blow and an imprecation for every one who came within striking distance. By some chance he had forgotten the existence of the stowaway, on whom he had often vented his fury, and Terry was content to keep himself out of sight, for he had no desire to precipitate trouble until a homeward-bound ship was in sight.

When the watch went below at eight bells, the fo'castle soon learned that Terry was a changed man. One of the crew started the usual game of badgering, and was surprised to receive a tap on the nose which brought a copious flow of claret.

There was danger of rough-house then and there, but one of the older hands seemed to scent unusual prowess

in the recreated Terry, and he stepped in as peacemaker.

"Look here, youngster," said he, "don't you go for to fight your messmates. If you feel like doing a trick of that sort, it might be well for you to tackle old Fold, or that ugly beast, Seaton."

"That's so," agreed Terry heartily, starting for the ladder. "I'll go now and take a fall out of them both."

This grim determination, strange to say, did not strike the others favorably.

"See here, Terry," said one who had been mauled that very morning, "I've no objections to you licking Seaton and Fold if you think you are strong enough, but there are other things which we seamen must take into account. They both carry revolvers, and the law of the sea permits 'em to use them in case of a mutiny. If you cause any row, either one of them is like to shoot you, and we may all get it in the neck for mutinous conduct."

Terry saw the point, but there was a peculiar expression on his face when he turned into his bunk to sleep till the next watch.

During the dogwatch—between four and six—matters came to a climax. The cabin boy of the *Welcome Home* was a weakly lad of fifteen, who seemed to be an object for badgering by the whole ship's company. Nothing that the lad did or said suited anybody, and when Terry came on deck he noticed him sitting on the fore-peak hatch crying bitterly. He noticed something else, too —a big tramp freighter, off their port bow and scarcely a mile away.

At two bells Captain Fold came on deck. A few drops of paint had been dropped by the cabin boy near the binnacle. The lad was ordered to lick it up; and then, in spite of his plea that it was an accident, he was turned over to Seaton to be "dressed down."

The mate caught the lad by the collar and smote him cruelly on the face. He was about to repeat the blow when a quick voice checked his hand:

"Hold on there, Mister Mate; I'll take the boy's punishment!"

Seaton turned in amazement, to be confronted by Terry, who, while not in an attitude of fight, seemed to invite attack. The mate grew red with rage as he let go of the boy and started for Terry, who sidestepped a furious punch aimed at his breast, and landed a good whacking jolt on Seaton's jaw.

The mate staggered at the impact. He certainly knew that something had hit him, but he could not bring himself to believe that this common butt of the ship had the courage or the strength to administer such a punch. Seaton reached for his revolver, but before he could draw, Terry had closed one of his peepers with another rattling stroke. The man was now wild as a bull. With his unclosed eye he saw that the rest of the watch were laughing at the encounter, and that Captain Fold himself seemed to enjoy the bout.

"You—you——" was all he could find breath to yell as he again rushed blindly at Terry, who stood calmly awaiting the attack in an attitude that showed some knowledge of the ring.

This time Seaton got it plump on the nose, from which the blood spouted, causing another bull-like roar from the infuriated man. Then a heavy weight seemed to fall from aloft upon his chest, another weight, as he supposed, bunged up the other eye, and finally, with a resounding clip under the starboard ear, Seaton fell into the scuppers unconscious.

By this time Captain Fold, who had more than once been on the point of using his pistol on the pugilistic stowaway, thought it best to take a hand in the game. But he realized that he had better tackle Terry with his fists if he did not want a mutiny on his hands. The men were just in the humor for a first-class rumpus, and it would be

impossible to handle them now that his right bower, Seaton, had gone to the deck thoroughly whipped and disabled.

Fold prided himself on his fistic ability, and decided he had better administer a lesson to Terry and the crew by its immediate application. He advanced toward the stowaway, hands up, in fighting style.

"Now, my young bantam," he replied, "we'll see who runs this ship. I'm going to maul the everlasting life out of you!"

This bout was short, sharp, and decisive. Fold knew how to box. He was a heavy, muscular man and a hard hitter, but he hadn't the science of Terry, who ducked his swings with the greatest of ease, and pounded him on the head and body with much force and greater zest. Soon, badly bruised, the skipper fell across the mate in the scuppers.

"It strikes me," remarked Terry when his shipmates gathered round to cheer, "it strikes me there will be less bullying on this ship hereafter."

Fold peered at his visitor with a puzzled look in his swollen eyes. His pride had been abased and his heart was heavy. He felt himself the laughing-stock of the crew, and again he thought of his pistol; but he finally decided to accept his medicine.

"I shouldn't have minded," he growled, "if it had been a sailor. But a stowaway! That's what hurts! What's your name, young fellow?"

A broad grin spread over the face of Terry.

"White is my real name," he said, laughing, "but I fight under the name of Terry Dempsey."

"Then you're a pugilist?" cried Fold.

"I am a professional boxer."

"Then what are you doing here?"

"Well, a bunch of citizens who had backed heavily the man I was to fight in Portland thought I was some too good for him, so they drugged me and stowed me aboard here. You ought to have seen I was a landsman.

"And now," he added, "I want to be put aboard that steamer; I'm going back to Portland to give a few crooks the surprise of their lives."

"I'll be——" Captain Fold began, rising, but, as Terry took a step toward him, he sank weakly back. "Oh, well," he whined, "if they'll take you, we'll be blamed glad to get rid of you."

Twenty minutes later, as he watched the longboat, with his mutinous stowaway, bobbing over the waves toward the big freighter, the captain passed his hand sadly over his wounded brow and groaned for his lost prestige. He said nothing; not even a single imprecation escaped him—for he felt that there were no words yet invented strong enough to meet the situation.

OCEAN DEPTHS

THE depths of the sea are very, very cold and absolutely dark. Scientists have been able to take the ocean's temperature at various depths, and they have found that the heat rays from the sun do not affect the water more than twenty-four hundred feet below the surface. Light rays penetrate only a short distance.

In spite of these conditions, unfavorable for life, the depths of the ocean are not uninhabited. Strange fishes have been dragged up from low levels. Some of these furnish their own light, having special structures along the entire length of their bodies which give forth a phosphorescent glow.

This story began in the February number of SEA STORIES MAGAZINE. Back numbers may be secured from any news company, or will be sent direct, postpaid, by the publishers, upon receipt of price.

A SERIAL STORY. PART FIVE

CHAPTER XIII (*Continued*).

I WAS disappointed, for I had promised myself that I should deliver an unexpected blow at the enemy by the capture of their lines of communication. However, our immediate duty was to report the situation to Davenant, and so, having bestowed our own boat in a safe place, we set out in the cool of the evening up the course of the stream. We had been absent ten hours, and had accomplished nothing. We were even returning with Miss Sylvester, whose presence we had decided was inconvenient in the camp.

This part of the island, as I have explained, was not so roughly wooded, and we made easy progress, arriving below the stockade just at dusk. Here occurred an event which at once began to trouble me.

I was ahead of the others, and we were walking in silence as a precaution, when my ears detected a noise in the bushes on my left. I brought the others to a halt with a gesture and stole forward, parting the bushes carefully with my hands to make way for my eyes.

Beyond was a little clearing, and under the trees were seated two men, conversing in a low voice, and at the same time engaged in some occupation, which I could not at once determine. Nor could I recognize them at the distance, although it was obvious to which party they belonged.

Presently, as I looked, one got to his feet and picked up something from the ground. I knew him now for a big Italian, by name Benuto, and simultaneously I recognized what he had in his hand. It was a large Colt's revolver.

Here was an alarming discovery, which was intensified next moment when the second man rose; for I saw now they they had been engaged in filling a pouch with cartridges. My heart began to jump, for what might this portend? Without noise I left the point of espial and returned to my companions.

"It looks as if an attack were contemplated," I said. "We must hurry forward at once. Monsieur Carvaulx, I advise you to take Miss Sylvester and retire to the creek below. This is no place for noncombatants."

He pondered. "Yes, you are right," he agreed. "But we will not go so far. You may be mistaken. We will part now and go that way." He pointed eastward through the falling evening.

I nodded. We must act now, and not talk. We had, I discovered, two revolvers between us, and these we loaded. Then we set forward, making a slight detour, so as to avoid falling in with the mutineers, if any of them should be in the direct line of our course.

Of a sudden the silence was broken by a shot, and, as if this had been the signal, a confused outbreak of voices and sounds ensued. A revolver was banging away on my left, and I directed my steps toward the sound, falling into a run. Carter and Collins jogged along behind me; and, as I ran I heard Carvaulx's voice raised in command.

"Ariadne! Ariadne!"

I glanced round. The girl, breathless, was following in our tracks.

"Back! Back!" I shouted, gesticulating, but I dared not stop. I saw her waver and come to a pause, and then the bushes hid her.

The noises increased ahead, swelling into a fusillade of yapping pistols. I remembered, with regret, that only two of us were armed in this emergency; and as I did so an idea came to me. I turned and, scarcely pausing, threw my revolver to Carter, who was weaponless.

"Use that," I panted; "and use it well. You're with us, mind."

"Aye, aye, sir," he called back, with an energy which dissipated my doubts of him.

In my direct path was the ruin of a fallen tree, and, swiftly detaching one of the stouter branches with an abrupt wrench, I darted forward with my new weapon. It formed a sort of rude, barbaric club with a long handle, and I could feel it plying and giving elastically in my hands as I ran. The next moment we came out of the wood upon the barricade.

The dusk was gathering, but the figures were plainly visible in that theater of battle. Davenant stood upon the brushwood, elevated against the sky and in full view from either side of the barricade; and as he stood there, so rashly exposed, he pointed and shouted something which I could not hear. His back was toward us, and he was not aware of our approach. In the middle distance I recognized two of our men in hand-to-hand conflict with mutineers; and a constant popping of revolvers enhanced the confusion.

The mutineers were over the brushwood barrier, and the camp was all but in their hands. We took the barricade as a hurdle and dashed up. Collins' weapon flashed out near me, and one of the mutineers struggling by the stream fell. Then, oblivious to all else save my personal share in the mêlée, I fell on with my mace.

Two mutineers were descending into the camp from the brushwood, and the first of these went down with the club on his crown; the second fired at me point-blank, and a ball singed my face. Then his skull cracked as he tumbled on his fellow. More men were mounting out of the dusk, and it was evident that the stronger part of the attacking force was still to come.

"To me! To me!" I cried, leaping forward to the barricade.

Collins hurried to my side, panting and puffing. I glanced round. The two mutineers by the stream had disappeared, but one body lay outstretched along the bank. McLeod and another man were fighting at the back. Where was Davenant? He had gone from the brushwood pile, and I could see nothing of him.

"We've got them checked now," I said to Collins. "McLeod is holding that side and we can hold this."

His revolver promptly answered the appearance of a head beyond the barrier, and it was hurriedly withdrawn. Except for the sounds which came from McLeod's side there was now silence.

"Keep this!" I said to Collins. "Have you cartridges? Shoot on the slightest provocation!"

I ran back, crossed by the shelters, and joined McLeod as his companion stumbled heavily and fell. There were three mutineers on this side, and one was armed with a gun, which he was using as a club. This club met mine and crumpled up; he lost his balance and staggered. My mace recovered and descended ere he could recover. He lay beside our fallen sailor.

McLeod, from behind a tree, began to shoot fast, and one of the mutineers uttered an oath, dropped a useless arm by his side, and, turning, fled. I took the third as he, too, turned to assist him in his retreat. He was a little out of reach, but he yelled like a red Indian, and the last I saw of him he was scrambling futilely at the barricade of bushes and being helped over by his companion.

I turned to McLeod. Silence had fallen. We were victors. The deepening dusk was broken by a leaping light, and I saw some one against a pyre. I went over, and found it was Davenant.

"We're well out of that," was his greeting. "You came in the nick of time."

"It's a wonder we came at all," I said.

"How's that?" he asked. The flames lapping up the dry wood ascended in tongues to heaven. The camp flared with it, and the darkness of the surrounding woods was enhanced by it.

"We were seized by the remainder of the crew," I explained. "They've joined the mutineers. We were jockeyed there. We played into their hands like lambs."

"Seized, were you?" he said, staring. "How did you escape?"

Before I could tell my story Carter came up.

"There's one of 'em dead along the stream, sir," he said, in his matter-of-fact voice; "and that there one you hit—he ain't going to give much trouble—an Italian he was, called Bellows."

"Belloso!" I corrected. "How many on our side?"

"Let's go and see," said Davenant. We encountered McLeod, breathing hard, but very well satisfied with himself.

"You've broken that fellow's skull, Herapath," he said. "Lord, what a flail to lay on with!"

"Much damage?" I asked.

"That poor beggar, Atchison's, gone," he said. That was the man who was shot just as I reached him.

"It's a bad business all round," said I.

Collins was lighting another pyre by the waterside. We walked in brightness, a mark for any sharpshooter, but I don't think any one of us gave a thought to this. And as for the mutineers, they had had enough for that day. There were no signs of them.

We reckoned up the losses. One of our men had been killed, and three, including Collins, wounded. Collins' wound was only in the hand, and he made light of it. On the other side the casualties were heavier. Two of the mutineers had been killed, and we had two of them, wounded, in our custody. How much more they had suffered we could not say. Suddenly I recalled Halliday. Where was he?

We found him, on searching, near one of the fires, where he sat with a piece of paper and pencil busily engaged in making notes.

"Say, Herapath," he eagerly exclaimed, looking up at me, "I've just got the most all-fired notion to get that

treasure out of there! You sit down right here, and I'll show you. It came upon me like a flash just as I was pulling the trigger of this gun. Say now——"

He rose excitedly, but I interrupted somewhat curtly: "Oh, hang it! We've got other fish to fry at present. Let that keep. Do you know that Atchison's dead, and that two of their men are dead, too?"

"Say, now, that's a nuisance about Atchison," remarked Halliday, scratching his head reflectively. A handkerchief untwisted itself on his arm and dangled.

"What's this?" I asked.

He looked out of his dream. "That? Oh, I guess I got stung by one of those wasps," he said indifferently.

His coolness staggered me; his power of abstraction was something utterly unfamiliar. The idealist was in full play, and nothing mattered but the "scheme." He came back slowly to earth.

"I reckon this was pretty tough," he remarked, glancing about.

"We couldn't stand much more of it," said I.

"I'm just going to make it nice and comfortable for all those sailors who have stood by me loyally," he said, with the complacency of one who is already in possession of a fortune. "You must just make me out a list, Herapath, and I'll square generously with the widows and orphans. They won't find Vincent Halliday a cold stone, you bet. Come along, now, and we'll tot up how we stand."

He made a move for the big tree under which he had built his shelter of brushwood, and I followed him, affected in a strange way by his remarkable attitude. Here was I come back with the worst of news, and the camp saved by the skin of its teeth, so to speak, from the mutineers; and this bright-eyed, sanguine man was seated, feverishly plotting out what he should do with the fortune which was not his, which might not even exist, and from which, at any rate, he was cut off by virulent enemies.

"Say, Herapath," he said, lighting his lantern, which hung on the brushwood windbreak, "we'll have to fix up a fresh deal. That original agreement's in the melting pot, I guess. We'll have to hand round slices on another footing. I'll have you and those men in, anyway."

I turned at a sound, a rushing, whirling sound of skirts, and into the light of the lantern broke Ariadne Sylvester.

"Miss Sylvester! You!" I said.

"Yes—I came to—I came to——" She was breathless, and did not finish. "I'm so glad you're not—oh, I'm glad you beat them."

She was glowing; she looked like a creature of fire, a radiant nymph of the woods, with her disheveled hair. Halliday had stuck his pencil behind his ear and risen. He offered her welcome, as if he had been receiving her punctiliously in a soft-goods store.

"Now, it's right down good of you to come along and look after us," he said courteously. "But I'm blamed if I didn't think you were on board the *Duncannon.*"

"Halliday, that's my story," I put in; "and it's ugly."

He stared; and I told him.

CHAPTER XIV.

IN THE PULPIT.

I cannot honestly say that my dismal tale affected Halliday much. He contorted his brows in thought for a minute or two, and then they cleared.

"We'll fix them up all right," said this unmitigated optimist. "I guess we'll freeze them out, so as they'll be glad to quit. I got a notion or two."

Well, it must rest at that. Halliday's notions were innumerable; he hatched

them out prolifically; and it was odds but one among so many would serve. At any rate, he was confident. One notion he revealed that night, as we rested after the toil and hazards of the assault.

"I don't take no stock in a man that can't turn and face about," he said complacently. "You got to legislate for emergencies. And here's one. Well, I've got the prescription to cure it, and that's dynamite."

"Dynamite!" I echoed.

He seemed pleased with my surprise. "Yes, I thought that maybe it would come in handy, and so I scheduled a bit; and, what's more, it's cached along with the cans in the cove yonder."

But of what avail could dynamite be? I pressed him, and gasped at the brave ingenuity of his confident mind. If dynamite wouldn't blast the Devil's Pulpit, it might blast the traitors' camp. He had faith in dynamite—as a last resource. But other resources were not exhausted. He fixed his gaze contemplatively on the precipice, and he was owning it in his inmost thoughts. His possession of it was legible on his mobile face. There was no contending with such assurance.

Yet our case was bad enough. On the one hand we had lost the ship; on the other, our embittered and unscrupulous enemy lay in wait for us. Doubtless we had given them a lesson which would keep them quiet for a time, but I felt certain that they would not abandon their designs on the treasure—if treasure there were in the ledges of that abominable wall above us.

Diminished in numbers, therefore, and with growing misgivings, we kept strict watch throughout the night. Miss Sylvester, it appeared, had deserted her uncle out of an irresistible curiosity to know what had happened. At least, that was what she told us.

"I knew we could thrash those scoundrels—those murderers," she said, with vehemence. "I wasn't afraid of being beaten."

And yet her confusion and distress on her hasty arrival was hardly compatible with the assurance which she afterward professed. She still remained the problem for us, but I was in hopes that I might persuade her in the morning to return to her uncle in the safer woods.

Despite the excitement of the day's adventures, or, indeed, perhaps because of it, I was unable to sleep more than a few hours, and it must have been one o'clock in the morning when I at last gave up the attempt and strolled out into the light and shadow of the fires. I passed one of our men on sentinel duty near the water, and exchanged a friendly sentence with him. Saving for the fires, the night was profound and still. A cool air fanned my face very agreeably, rolling in from the sea. I looked up at the vague wall behind, from which the projections of the Pulpit stood out darkly. And then I remembered an earlier thought of mine regarding the stream.

I went down to this, and walked into it up to my thighs. The mutineers' quarters could be seen in the flame of our fires on the distant mound. I wondered if they kept so strict a watch after their repulse and disaster. Could Crashaw keep his men in hand after so signal a defeat? Bending my body down toward the face of the stream, I crept across toward the bushes on the other side. The torrent broke over me a dozen times, and I all but fell on a round bowlder underfoot, but I succeeded in reaching the bushes, and rested under their shelter for a little while, meanwhile making observations from my new place of vantage.

The stream brawled out of cavernous darkness some fifty yards away, and I meant to reach this as my second stage. Consequently, I once more crawled, waist-deep, with bent head, along the

bed of the water. The current was tremendous, and every step I took was as if some heavy blow was delivered on my body. Still I made my way, if slowly, upward, and, without causing an alarm, arrived at the mouth of the gorge through which the stream tumbled. Once there I was safe from observation, even if I could accomplish nothing more. Here darkness hung between the walls, and I could at first make out nothing of my surroundings.

But presently the dim mass of the precipice on both sides emerged upon the sight, and as I pressed forward and upward, still in the stream, which ran cold as ice, I was aware by my ears of a cascade somewhere at the back of the little cañon. The stream must rise somewhere high up, and come down in falls on its abrupt and sudden way to the sea. I was momentarily getting more and more chilled, and I decided that I must leave the water.

On each side was rough rock, in the interstices and ledges of which bushes and creepers were growing. I clambered out of the water on the east side—that is, toward the wall of the precipice which rose into the Devil's Pulpit on its south side.

At first I found the ascent easy, for the numerous bushes were of invaluable assistance in climbing; but presently they became sparser, and the elevation almost perpendicular. I was afraid of making a mistake in the darkness, and of being precipitated down upon the rocks and bowlders below. I tried every projecting stone or bush thoroughly before trusting to it, and I mounted very slowly. When I had reached the height, as I guessed, of about one hundred feet, the precipice suddenly eased, and I found myself climbing under the loom of great walls at an angle of sixty degrees. It was as if I had slipped unawares into a narrow valley path, cut in those rock mountains; and I wondered, as I went, if by chance this could be the way in which the former ascents to the treasure had been made.

I was by now full of the spirit of my adventure, and I moved with greater speed and confidence. Nothing, I think, would have turned me back. The track between rocky spurs, like a gutter on the leads, now twisted and began to crawl over a shoulder, and presently my eyes, which had been peering through black night, were saluted by a gleam. I took a few steps farther, and the light increased. Next moment I was looking over a projecting rock down at the blazing fires of the camp. A dozen feet below me was the floor of the Pulpit!

The sky was full of stars and a failing moon, which shed soft radiance upon the sheer and jagged wall above me. Earthward the flare of the pyres threw leaping shadows on the base of the precipice. For a moment I stood resting on the rock by which I had mounted, and drinking in this scene with curious eyes. It was wonderful in its strangeness and in its beauty. Upon that ledge I was but an emmet, safe from the notice of any observer on the earth beneath.

The waning crescent shed a glow westward upon the dark woods, that descended to the sea, and far out upon the quiet ocean left a luminous track. From my aerie I could see over the projecting headlands, where the coves indented the shore line, and the dark outline of the *Duncannon* was dimly visible. Beneath, the smoke ascended in wreaths from the watch fires, which shone through five hundred feet of space.

I stepped down upon the floor of the Pulpit, fascinated; and then I remembered the treasure. The ledge on which I stood was some twenty feet square, and rose on the outside edge into a natural parapet. On each other side the rock fell away into the space which it overhung. By the light of the moon I took in these facts, and also others.

The rock was overlaid by a slight surface of earth, but this was only a few inches deep, and it was, therefore, obvious that no treasure could have been buried there.

I was fast coming to the conclusion that the whole story was a figment, as I had always in my heart conceived, when I approached the perpendicular wall from which the ledge jutted out. Here my interested and now excited gaze was caught by a hole yawning in the rock. I explored it, and found that it opened into a cavern of some dimensions. Was it the Treasure House? And was there something, after all, in the wild story?

I had some matches in my pocket, and, striking one, by the flickering light I scrutinized the cave. In one corner was a rude chest, bound with heavy iron. My heart leaped. I went forward and threw the lid open. It was empty!

Lighting a succession of matches, I examined the floor of the cave, which was uneven. It was composed of black earth, and a mound of this lying by the chest suggested that the latter had been dug up. I probed with my pocket-knife, loosening the earth, and scooping it out with my hands, until I had got down a foot. Then the knife struck something hard. Was it a second chest? Or was it merely the rock? I was profoundly moved, and I went on working, loosening and scooping, scooping and loosening with the utmost energy.

My matches were by this time exhausted, and I worked in the dark, feeling with my fingers and striving to dig round this object that claimed my attention. Presently my knife struck again on something hard, and my fingers precipitately groped about it. It was a small thing, but even through the adhesive dirt I judged it to be oblong and regular in shape. In a word, I put it down as the work of a man, not of nature. I scraped off the incrustation of earth, and my knife this time unmistakably rattled on metal. So far, good. I put the metal in my pocket and resumed my digging.

I had by this time worked down to an edge—that is to say, to where the hard surface ceased, and my hopes of discovering this to be a chest increased. I dug along it, and each time my knife slipped off into soft earth. I could feel the woodwork now with my hands. Crouched on my knees in the circumambient darkness of the cavern I greedily toiled, oblivious to all else.

I was conscious of a ray of light, and looked up, wondering that the moonlight had struck through the aperture so opportunely. A shadow loomed behind me, there was a flash and then a report, and I fell forward with a sharp pain in my shoulders.

The bullet fired by my assailant lodged under my left shoulder blade; but, though taken by surprise, I did not lose my consciousness. On the contrary, something braced me for the impending struggle.

It was pitch-dark again, and nothing was visible, nothing audible. I had lifted myself up, and stood on guard, wrapped in the darkness, listening. I could not even hear breathing, yet I knew the man was in the cave. He, too, evidently was on guard, waiting. I had carried a revolver ever since we had landed, but to fire would serve no purpose; and, indeed, would only disclose me to my enemy. A terrible silence prevailed for five minutes or more.

At last I could endure the situation no longer, and I edged slightly away from where I imagined the back of the cavern to rise. This I accomplished without any noise, and so, encouraged, I repeated the movement. This time my boot kicked with a dull sound against an inequality in the floor; and upon that ensued a report. But the bullet missed

me, and by the flame I detected where the other stood. Instantly I fired.

I could not tell what result my shot had, but under cover of the noise I slipped a couple of feet away; and then it occurred to me that he might have pursued similar tactics. To my satisfaction, my maneuver by the merest luck brought me into a position from which the mouth of the cavern was accessible. I could see sideways a vision of blue-black sky and of stars. My best course was the boldest; I had to take a risk; with a swift step I darted for the opening, lowering my head as I did so to get through. The crack of my foe's revolver acquainted me that I was visible between the cavern's entrance and himself, but his shot whistled by. It was, however, owing to my increased precipitancy at this alarm that I tripped and stumbled, and came down just over the threshold of the cave and on the outlying floor of the Pulpit.

Before I could recover myself some one was upon me.

I struggled to rid myself of the enemy, but he was astride me, and held me about the right arm with steel tentacles. My left was underneath, and was practically useless, owing to my wound. I felt, as I struggled, that I was being shoved and dragged, and I suddenly guessed, with something like a chill of the heart, at his purpose. We were slowly approaching the edge of the Pulpit, and below were five hundred feet of space!

I renewed my efforts and redoubled them. I was frantically aware of my danger, as those slender but remorseless and unyielding arms drew me forward inch by inch. I managed to raise my head and free my left arm, with which I gripped my assailant. He struck at it with the heavy butt of his pistol, and the blow shuddered through every bone, yet in releasing one arm to do this his grip upon me had weakened. I lifted my head still higher and wrenched my right arm free of him.

All this time no word had passed between us, and only the sound of our struggles and our laboring breath could be heard. In my new position I glanced aside, and to my horror perceived that we were within two feet of the precipice. He was straining every muscle to repossess himself of my right arm; but, as if he, too, had suddenly become aware of our proximity to death, he ceased now, and, exerting himself, pushed me forward. I felt my feet dangling over the edge, and then I seized him with both arms, and the damaged one, if it was no longer of active use, could still cling passively. If I were doomed, I swore to myself he, too, should go.

I think he saw my idea in that instant, for he ceased, and began to withdraw himself from my clutches. I held on like a vise, and he squirmed and wriggled. I could feel in his bones and muscles as he fought me that he was no match for me, even in my crippled condition. He pulled against me, and I let him go, and jerked after him. This performance I repeated until we were well away from the edge, and then I rolled over, and straddled him by a supreme effort. The low-hung moon distributed but a faint glow, but it was sufficient, lighting that upturned face.

"Davenant! Good God!" I cried.

The answer panted out of his breathless body: "Herapath!"

I relaxed my grip. "Man, you nearly had us both over. What a tragic mistake!" I exclaimed.

He sat up, breathing heavily. "I thought it was one of the mutineers," he said, "I followed."

"When did you see me?" I asked.

"I saw some one moving upstream, and I tracked you. You vanished up the precipice, and I went after you. I thought you had designs on the treasure."

"Well, so I had," I replied grimly. "Lord, what luck! What luck!" and then I remembered. "The treasure!" I said.

Davenant did not reply for a moment, and when he spoke it was with some significance in his voice.

"Don't you think that you made a mistake—let's call it an error of judgment?"

"How do you mean?" I asked.

"Oh, well, it's of no consequence; it was only an idea. But, you see, Halliday is the person immediately concerned in the treasure."

"I'm not a formalist," I answered bluntly. "I wish to Heaven you'd not been so free with your popgun." My shoulder ached bitterly and my arm was growing stiff.

"My dear sir, how could I tell?" he asked.

"All right," said I. "I'll try to forget it. Anyway, the mischief's done, and so's my error of judgment. The treasure's there."

"Are you sure?" He spoke in a new voice.

"I was just digging about a heavy chest when your infernal pellet took me."

He moved toward the cavern quickly, and I followed.

"Have you matches?" I asked.

"No," he said.

"Mine are gone, but you can feel. It's pretty dark, as you know. I think I can guide you. Here, give me your arm."

We entered, stooping, and I felt my way toward the chest, blundering somewhat in the dark.

"Here we are," I said. "Put your hands down there, and tell me what you make of it."

He bent, and I heard him fumbling in silence.

"It's a chest, right enough," he said presently, in a low voice.

"Well, we can do nothing more," I remarked. "We've learned the way up, and that the treasure's here. That's enough for one night. I wish it had stayed at that."

"So do I," he agreed. "My ribs are nearly cracked. Halliday will go wild. He'll dream dreams. Come along."

We passed out into the radiance of the starlight, and began to clamber over the rock behind which gave access to the broken pathway. I went in front, and Davenant came about a dozen paces in the rear. What with our bruises and our breathlessness and my wound, we were neither of us in the mood for conversation, even if that had been advisable. Slowly we groped our way downward by the shelving gutter toward the steeper part of the wall that ascended from the gorge.

As I entered this difficult descent at an angle of some eighty degrees, I happened to cast a glance backward, and found Davenant's figure had disappeared. I hailed him.

"All right," he said, from the invisible. "I twisted my ankle slightly."

I plunged over the verge with all the more caution because of my disabled arm, and slowly, step by step, went down, as though I were descending by so many rungs of a ladder. I had got some distance down when there was a rumble above, and with a rush and a crash a big lump of rock flashed past me on the right. It shot by too closely to be pleasant, and I called out again:

"Hi! Look out! I'm just below!"

The words were scarcely out of my mouth when a second rock, larger and more formidable than the other, came clashing down upon me. My eyes went up as the noise reached me, and I could see it flying toward me directly in my track. There was no time to spring aside. It had a fierce momentum, and it drove down upon me. I instinctively pressed my head into the wall.

It must have struck a peak just above me. The wind and sand and dust and horror of it were in my face. But it

cleared me with a leap that sent it twenty feet beyond, where it bounded and rebounded from the rock face and broke into shivers in the gorge below.

"Good Lord, man!" I called out angrily. "This is too hot. You're bent on doing for me to-night."

There was a moment's silence, and then Davenant's voice sailed down to me:

"Good God! Did they touch you? It is my ankle. I dislodged them in the dark."

I grumbled in an indistinct voice, for, to say the truth, I was all in a sweat.

"I'll wait for you, by your leave," I called up. "I'm not going to take any more risks."

He joined me soon, descending awkwardly and limping, and we kept close together during the remainder of the journey down. We reached the bottom without mishap, and began to wade down the stream toward the camp. Weariness had set in with me, and Davenant did not seem disposed to talk. We successfully made the passage, and entered the zareba. The banners of the dawn were breaking out in the east, and I was dog-tired. I sought my rude shelter, and was soon buried in slumber, oblivious of bruises and wound, and even of my strange discovery.

CHAPTER XV.

THE CAPTURE.

I awoke when the sun was well up, and found the camp in a bustle about me. Davenant had acquainted Halliday with the events of the night, and the news went from lip to lip; our party was all agog: My first sensation was one of extreme pain, which slowly evoked in my mind a recollection of the night's affray. I made my way to McLeod.

"I'm afraid I'm another subject for your prod," I said in a feeble jest.

"I've just heard," he returned. "Awkward business it might have been. Let's have a look."

His examination showed no occasion for alarm. At the cost of a few sharp pangs the bullet was extracted, and the application he made soothed the wound mightily.

"If they'll leave us alone another day, there won't be much the matter with you," he said cheerfully.

Halliday was already bustling about, showing manifest signs of suppressed enthusiasm. He was all over the camp with questions and with orders.

"Say, my scheme's in the gallery now," he declared cheerfully. "Yours is the copper-bottomed proposition, I guess. We'll soon run it through. What's the matter with to-night? Anyway, we'll have a conference on this."

He dashed off to make a kindly inquiry about Marley, who was distinctly better, and showed it in a reluctance to remain quiet.

"We're in sight, Mr. Marley; we're right on it," he said, smiling; "and I'm going to let you boys in a bit more. It's taken a heap more getting than I thought, and I reckon it's worth it."

"Good luck, old man," growled Marley. "Sorry I've not been able to do much myself."

At eight o'clock we were hailed from the wood, and, looking over the stockade, I saw Monsieur Carvaulx approaching. He came up, gave a civil bow, and said:

"Can you give me any provisions, monsieur?"

"We can manage it," said Halliday. "Come right along in. This is a great day with us. We're on the treasure."

The Frenchman stared. "Have you found it?" he asked incredulously.

"Why, yes, right away in its crevice, sir, and make no mistake," chuckled Halliday. "Come right along."

Carvaulx crossed the barrier with some difficulty, and tapped Halliday on the arm.

"Monsieur, if then this is accomplished, it will be possible to pursue the voyage to Baltimore——" He hesitated, and looked anxious.

Halliday also hesitated; then he spoke in his measured voice. "That's all square. I contracted to take you and your niece to Baltimore, but I didn't say how long it would take or where we went first. It was your own fault, monsieur. You were pressing."

"I do not mind," said the Frenchman, with a gesture, "if it is agreed."

"I reckon Baltimore would maybe suit me as well as any place, too," said Halliday thoughtfully. Monsieur Carvaulx had, I observed, not yet inquired for his niece. He did not seem a very considerate uncle. She had risen later than the rest of the camp, and came to meet us now, greeting the old man affectionately.

"I'm glad you're safe, my uncle," she said in French.

He wagged his finger at her almost playfully, for he was in a smiling humor. "Ah, it was naughty of you," he replied, in the same tongue, "to run away like that into such dangers."

"Herapath, find Mr. Davenant, will you?" said the bubbling Halliday, "and we'll fix up things. Lord, this is great!"

"What's the matter?" inquired Miss Sylvester.

McLeod told her the story, and, as I overheard, I'm bound to say he told it generously enough. She came to me a little afterward and inquired solicitously after my arm. Then we sat down to a cheerful breakfast.

It was difficult to restrain Halliday from rash and immediate action. The cliff beckoned him; his eyes moved to it a dozen times an hour. It was the Mecca of his prayers. It was only by our united persuasion that an attempt upon the treasure was postponed till night. He yielded, however, to the demonstrated risk of an adventure in the daylight, particularly as during the morning there were renewed signs of the enemy. One or two figures appeared in the clearing, and the smoke of their fires ascended to the blue heaven. Perhaps Clifford and Byrne were allaying their disappointment with cards, but I was certain Crashaw was alert and active; and I had my fears of that oily rascal, Headon. Davenant was even for delaying the expedition for another day in order to make sure of success; but he was overruled by unanimous voices. We were to set out after dark that evening.

There were certain preparations to be made, which we at once undertook. The idea was to leave the camp in charge of the sentinels, and for the rest of the party to ascend by the bed of the stream and the gorge to the Pulpit. These were to be armed with lanterns and picks and ropes, with which simple equipment it was hoped that our aim could be accomplished. Under the light of the lanterns the picks could unearth the buried chests in the cavern, and then these would be lowered down the steep face of the rocks by means of the ropes. It would undoubtedly prove an arduous task, and might occupy us well into the morning; but it was our one chance, and the prospect of ultimate success sweetened the thought of it.

I say our one chance, because it was becoming evident that our food would not hold out. You will remember that when our expedition to the *Duncannon* failed so miserably, we did not return to the cache where the few remaining provisions were stored. As it fell out, my decision was fortunate, seeing that it enabled us to arrive in the nick of time. But when I surveyed the larder after breakfast, I confess that I wished we had brought back the stores in the cache.

We had decided to hazard all that night, but I could not but ask myself what remained after that. Even if we were successful in recovering the treas-

ure, was our position an enviable one? The mutineers were hostile, and would remain hostile, and the ship was in their hands. Our one base was cut off, and we were practically without food. The outlook was black, at the best, unless we were able to make terms.

Yet I do not think that these considerations weighed very much with me; for the fascination of the treasure overpowered all other feelings, and, indeed, all reason. We were feverishly anxious to be at work, and we awaited the evening with ill-concealed impatience. It was toward midday that a diversion occurred. I was hailed across the barricade from the thick wood by a voice which was unmistakable.

"That you, Herapath? Where's the boss? I've got a proposal to make."

I stared, and made out the figure of Clifford lurking in the bushes. I called to Davenant.

"Here's a bloody mutineer with a proposal," I said loudly. Davenant came up slowly, and stood by my side, staring, also, over the brushwood.

"Who is it?" he asked.

"Clifford," I said; "and he's got a proposal. Sounds funny, doesn't it?" I went on cleaning the gun I held. Davenant dropped his eyes to it, and thence to the revolver on the grass, and to a roughly shaped club I had manufactured.

"We might as well hear it," he suggested.

"As you like. You're in command," I said lightly. "I argue only with these things."

"Well, I'd better hear him," said Davenant doubtfully, and glancing again at my weapons. "You never know."

"Here you are, Clifford," I called. "What do you want? Speak up, and keep your distance, or I'll drill holes in you."

"Cæsar's ghost! What a horrid man!" said Clifford jeeringly. "Cap'n Davenant, I offer terms."

"Terms be damned!" growled McLeod.

"Don't use swear words," urged Clifford sanctimoniously. "Remember the days you spent at your mother's knee and the Sunday-school marm that spanked you. Look here, Davenant, you're in a hole, and we're now engaged in the interesting occupation of starving you out. It's only a matter of days before the last gaunt skeleton staggers on the dying embers of his fire and expires, as per sample. So let's be sensible. I offer Halliday a third to quit the camp; and I'm dog-rotted if it ain't generous."

Halliday, who had joined us, passed his long, white hand nervously over his smooth, lank hair. "Good Lord!" he was muttering. "Good sakes! A third! Oh, my hat!" He seemed too greatly overcome to make any audible or official retort; and it was Davenant who spoke.

"It isn't likely that Mr. Halliday will agree to——"

"Oh, stow that bilge!" said Marley's deep voice from behind. And we turned and found him supporting himself on a stick. "Damn it, man, of course we won't. Don't be mealy-mouthed with the reptile."

"Excuse me, Mr. Marley, I am in charge——" began Davenant stiffly; "and I must be allowed to manage things my own way."

"Right, old bird," returned the even-tempered Marley. "I'm not on duty here. But give the bounder his deserts."

Davenant approached Halliday, who was gazing with fascinated amusement at the man who presumed to offer him a third of his own treasure. They spoke together so that I could not hear them.

"If it will anyways make it easier for you, sort of soothe your conscience, I guess you'd better," said Halliday at last.

Davenant mounted the barricade.

"Where are you going?" I asked. "Don't fool with that scum."

"I'm only going to parley with him," replied Davenant.

"It's not worth it," said Marley.

"Let him, if it eases his mind," said Halliday, smiling.

"Herapath, I'm relying on your gun," called back Davenant mellifluously, as he leaped to earth the other side. I put the barrel over the stockade and covered Clifford, who was not at all disconcerted.

"All right! Flag of truce," he called out. "I'm fly."

Davenant reached him, walking slowly, and stopped. For some minutes they talked together, and then Davenant turned away abruptly.

"It's not the remotest use," he called back from a little distance. "But I'll communicate what you say." Under our interested eyes he came deliberately back and climbed over.

"He says they're sure of starving us out," he said to the group; "and he's willing to allow a third of the treasure and a safe passage to any port desired, providing no report of the voyage is made to the authorities."

"Gad, he's a daisy!" tolled Marley's bass.

"Oh, give up the farce," I cried, and raised my voice and my gun. "I fire, Clifford, after I count ten. One—two—three—four——"

"Could you do with a bottle of fizz?" he shouted, and was gone; but back from the bush into which he had vanished streamed an echo of song:

"Don't you leave the girl in the lurch,
Take her away right off to church——"

"He's a daisy," repeated Marley. "God, what cheek!"

"He couldn't have expected we should accept!" said Halliday incredulously. "What does he take us for?"

The offer was dismissed with ridicule by all; so deep were we under the influence of that treasure. Only Davenant seemed to be reasonable about it. "We're not out of the wood by finding that treasure, or even getting it," he said to me later.

I agreed. "But, my dear man," I said, "When we come to straits like these, it is sufficient to think ahead twenty minutes. As we've thought ahead till nightfall, we're not doing so badly."

"Do you think we have?" he asked curiously. "Have you inspected the supplies?"

"Yes; they won't last over to-day; but, then, we mayn't," I said bluntly.

"It would be a good thing to replenish them. There's the cache," he said.

"There's the cache," I agreed. He said nothing for a time, and then:

"I think we ought to make an effort to get the provisions up here," he said significantly. "What do you say to having a shot at it?"

I shook my head. "I daren't risk it," I said.

"Afraid of Clifford's sentries?" he asked coolly.

I felt angry. "A comment of that sort is better not made," I said. "You ought to know better. What I'm afraid of is splitting the party."

"Oh, we're in no danger just now," he said.

"You said that before," I reminded him.

"They've had their stomach full," he said, ignoring this.

"Anyhow, I'm not going," I remarked. "After to-night it's another matter. We stand or fall by what happens to-night."

I turned away. "I thought I was in command here," he lisped in his satiric way. "But it seems I'm not."

I was annoyed, although I knew I was technically in the wrong. "My own impression is that Marley's in charge again," I threw back at him.

"When I receive an intimation from him to that effect I'll act on it," he said;

and I went away, leaving him the honors of the field. He was, as a rule, of so neutral a color that it surprised me to find him assert himself so openly. Nor could I understand why he had so unwarrantably attributed to me a reluctance on the score of my own personal safety. I grew somewhat ashamed of the little squabble when I considered it, which made me all the more relieved that I was able to back him up a little later in what appeared to me an important matter.

Halliday was busy drawing up a scheme for the distribution of his unseen treasure, an elaborate scheme, as far as I could make out, in which we were all allotted shares in a joint-stock company. He was feverishly anxious to be just, and more than once sounded me as to what I considered I was entitled to. It seemed to me that that was a matter which might very well wait until we were, so to speak, out of the wood, and I told him so bluntly.

"Well," he remarked amiably, "I guess this is little Willie's show. You go right ahead, and I'll answer for the rest."

Accordingly, Davenant and I outlined our plan by which the cliff was to be scaled and the booty recovered. Operations were to be started between ten and eleven. And in the late afternoon Davenant brought forward his proposition—that Monsieur Carvaulx and his niece should withdraw from the camp.

"It will be much safer for you," he told the Frenchman. "Because at any moment we may be exposed to danger here. And I think in Miss Sylvester's interests you should withdraw to some temporary place of safety."

I agreed, and added my arguments.

The Frenchman shrugged his shoulders. "I do not fear," he said. "But I do not wish to run unnecessary risks. I have nothing to do with your quarrels. If you would only compose your deeferences——" He shrugged again. It was immaterial to him that lives had been lost on either side. He stood aloof, anxious to get on with his journey, and impatient of our delay. He desired us to patch up our foolish quarrel and get to business. "As for this treasure," he pursued, "I have had much experience. During my career as a banker I have had dozens, more than dozens, of people anxious for me to what you call finance their treasure expeditions."

"Well, monsieur," said I, to cut the argument short. "You will go? We will keep in touch with you in case of necessity."

He bowed. "It is very wise," he said. "I will take my niece now. I have no dispute with these sailors yonder."

Miss Sylvester received our decision with a fallen face. "I—I don't want to make a fuss, or to disobey orders," she said hesitatingly; "but I'd much sooner stay here." Davenant pointed out the danger, and she looked doubtfully at him and then at me. "I'd much rather——" she began, and then, suddenly and impulsively: "Do you think it would be better, Mr. Herapath, for every one's sake?" she demanded, throwing the decision upon me.

"For every one's sake," I repeated gravely. "Your uncle already has a hiding place, and you will have provisions, and we will communicate with you in the morning."

"Very well, I will go," she said quickly, and went straight away to make her preparations, like an obedient child.

It was close on dusk when they left the camp on the eastern side, for Monsieur Carvaulx had constructed in the woods a shelter for himself in that direction the previous night; and then, our fires lit, we settled down to await the hour of the great venture. But half an hour had scarcely gone by when a voice crying far beyond the barricade reached us. Halliday and I started up.

"What is it?" I called. "Who's there?"

There was a shout, a challenge from the sentry staring at the black wood, and then voices rose together on the evening air.

"It's the Frenchman!" called out Carter.

"What is it?" cried Halliday, hurrying to the spot, to which I, too, hastened.

Monsieur Carvaulx was on his knees, having tumbled over the barricade and caught his foot in the brushwood.

"What has happened?" I demanded.

He was breathless; a little old shrimp of a man in a fright.

"The sailors!" he exclaimed. "The mutineers! The mutineers!"

"For God's sake tell us," I said roughly, in my sudden access of alarm.

"They attacked us. I have no weapon!" he exclaimed in staccato sentences. "They were drunk. They knock me down. Ariadne is taken. Ah, it is infamous!"

"Good Lord!" cried Davenant, and stared at me. "They have the girl, and they are drunk."

"And she threw herself on me, and I advised her to go," I said grimly.

I looked toward the black wood. "I must go, Davenant," I said.

"Will you have some one with you?" he asked, without contesting this.

"No; you can't spare any one; besides, I shall suffice. Good Lord, how I shall suffice when I have them in my hands! I'll tear——" I found myself tearing the stick I held in my hand unconsciously. I think, somehow, I "saw red" at that moment. I could, in my mind's eye, see Clifford, that gross reptile, with his hands——

I leaped on the brushwood. "I'll be back in time," I called out, as I jumped down.

There was no time to waste. I knew the direction of the Frenchman's shelter, and I made for it through the dark wood. I do not think I had any definite plan in my head, but I was sure I should succeed. And when I was nearly arrived at the place, my eyes, sharpened by passion in the obscurity of the wood, noted the breakage of some undergrowth, as though by the passage of bodies. I paused, sensed the trail rapidly, and was off upon it westward. The raiders had turned for their camp.

I followed this perceptible track for a quarter of an hour through the trees and shrubs, and then came out on the stream. Opposite I thought I could detect the mark of feet where the party had landed, and I crossed. Yes, the footmarks were manifest. I picked up the scent and sped onward. I felt in my pocket where my loaded revolver lay, and with my right hand I gripped the heavy club I carried.

And by now real night had fallen, as it falls abruptly in those latitudes, and I had to pick my path with care. No longer was I able to follow the trail, but, as I had made up my mind long since that the mutineers' camp was its destination, this did not trouble me. I had an excellent sense of topography, and I knew I was steering northwest from the stream, which should bring me into the neighborhood of the camp.

I now began to realize something of what it all meant. I had not understood, perhaps had not time to understand, my own feelings. When first I had seen Miss Sylvester she had seemed to me but a coquettish girl of a type common to the sex, if singled out by especial beauty and a strange grace. Later, I had come to appreciate the simplicity and innocence of her girlish nature. And then—now I knew, indeed, and I ground my teeth at the vision in my brain of that slender form in the hands of those gross sailors, in the power of that black scoundrel, Clifford.

I emerged from a covert of bushes slowly, my body taut, my spirit stiffen-

ing. The smell of wood fires was in my nostrils—but then a flash was in my eye. The bullet arrived coincidently with the flash of the hammer, but I had by instinct and chance thrown out my club, and it struck that and glanced off. I made two steps forward and smote.

Some one went down with a smothered ejaculation, but at the same time I was seized from behind. I struggled fiercely, but it seemed as though a score of hands held me, and gradually I ceased. I was taken, caught in the web, and lay as still, as exhausted, and as helpless as a fly.

"Snakes! He's hot stuff!" said Clifford breathlessly. "But we've done him, all the same."

"Good old Jacko!" cried Byrne cheerfully.

CHAPTER XVI.

ARIADNE.

I could not make out the separate figures of my captors, who were nothing but a moving knot in the gloom, and I held my tongue, being more anxious to get my breath than to enter into altercations with the mutineers. I had walked into a trap. Of that I was certain. Why else was this strong party —five, at least, I reckoned—waiting in ambush?

"Let us get a move on. We'll be too late for the job at this rate," said Clifford in a businesslike way which seemed unlike him.

My arms were tied behind me, and a knee was jerked into the small of my back, so that I suddenly had the alternative of going forward or over. I chose the former, and in comparative silence we penetrated the fastnesses of the forest. Five minutes later we had reached the mutineers' camp. In the shelter of the bushes and scrub that grew low under the larger trees some huts had been constructed, and I was hurried into one of these before which a fire was blazing merrily.

Stakes were driven into the earth in four separate places, and to these I was pegged out by hands and ankles, so that I was unable to do more than move my body an inch or so any way. This operation was superintended by Crashaw, who eyed me the while with the cold eye of a butcher contemplating his victim. In the distance I heard Clifford and Byrne talking.

"How goes the enemy? Well, that makes it an hour, doesn't it? We must be on time."

"That back way," said Byrne's voice, "was a great find."

"Immense," agreed the other. "Barney, we'll have a tot to celebrate this. Where did we put that bottle of Oh-be-joyful?"

There came to me the noise of some one groping among the grasses, for the camp was wonderfully silent. I marveled. The mutineers were on the eve of some venture, just as we were. What could that be but an attack on the zareba? And how was it that they knew about the back way to the Pulpit? I was puzzled even while I chafed at my impotence. I heard some one approach me.

"How's the brigadier?" inquired Clifford cheerily. "Glad that wasn't me you hit. I hoped it was Crashaw. He's getting a bit lofty, and wants his hair combed." He sat down near me and bit off the end of a cigar. "You owe me one, Herapath," he resumed. "Don't be sulky. They wanted something with boiling oil in it, but I fell on my knees and begged your life. 'No,' says I, 'he's a philosopher as well as a bruiser. Let him philosophize; give him time to meditate on the vanity of human wishes. Slow rises worth by poverty depressed,' says I. 'Peg him out for a period of prayer and recreation. He hasn't had a holiday for a long time, and has earned one, he has.' "

He laughed, and held the match he had struck so that he could see my face.

"'You are my honey—honeysuckle. I am your bee,'" he sang briskly. "You shouldn't orter have done it, Herapath, at your time of life. I put it to you anxiously; was the gal worth it?"

"She is here?" I asked quickly, breaking silence for the first time.

He lighted his cigar, so that the match flamed red on his brick-red face. "We've fixed up the little angel for a spell like you," he said indifferently. "Unfortunately, I can't afford to pay her the attentions proper to her rank and beauty; but a time will come, and once aboard the lugger——"

He made a gesture which drove me to madness. I strained at my ropes, and they bit deep into me.

"Comfortable?" he asked mercilessly. "Both doing well? That's all right. Nothing would have pleased me more than to have had a nice little chat with you, Mr. Herapath, but unfortunately I haven't time. I've an appointment. But I'll drop in some day soon, and we'll fix it up."

"Look here, man," I said, restraining myself. "Do you mean me to believe that Miss Sylvester is roped down in the same way as I am?"

"Allee same you," he nodded. "You see, we're off on an important engagement, old cock, and we can't afford to leave our guests exposed to risks. So we've put cruel gyves about her little tootsies, and——"

I strained fiercely. "Steady on!" he urged. "Somehow, I thought we should fetch you by taking the lady. Neat scheme, wasn't it? Mine."

The trap was manifest enough now, and yet how could I have avoided it in the circumstances? I growled an oath under my breath.

"Who's that swearing?" said the insufferable Clifford sternly. "I won't have it in this camp."

Byrne joined him now in the firelight, and the two contemplated me.

"It's a mighty fine compliment to you, Herapath," said the newcomer. "You can comfort yourself with that. We wouldn't have taken the trouble for any of the others. We laid for you."

"Smoke that all right," said Clifford serenely. "It will be as soothing as a fragrant Havana. Incidentally, Barney, this is no great shakes."

"Well, whose fault is it?" asked the Irishman. "You looked after the food and the liquor and all."

"Talking of food and liquor," said Clifford, addressing me, "we expected you to make a raid on the cove this afternoon. But you hadn't the pluck, V. C."

It crossed my mind as I lay there helpless and hopeless that they seemed very well informed of our intentions. Davenant had urged me to make this very expedition. Clifford rose.

"We've got half an hour yet," he remarked as he strolled off, and I was left to the misery of my own reflections.

The garrison of our camp was not anticipating an assault, and it was now the weaker by my absence. Moreover, Miss Sylvester lay close by, probably in the neighboring hut, and in the shameful bondage which held me. These were two reasons why I should rack my brains and my muscles in an attempt to get free. But I saw no way, and in sheer despair I desisted, my mind a futile pulp of vague thought, my body full of aches and pains. Presently the voices of the mutineers beyond the fire reached me.

"Don't swipe any more, Jacko. We mustn't keep Davenant waiting."

Keep Davenant waiting! The words burned in my head.

"Oh, let him fry cheese," said Clifford. "I'm running this show. He's not got nerve enough."

I cannot tell you my sensations as these words fell on my ear. It was as if

a whole house had tumbled in ruins on me, as if the world had, by a dreadful accident, suddenly turned topsy-turvy. And then, as my mind, under the impulse of its amazement, played rapidly on the situation, a flood of light swept quickly over the past, illuminating all the dark places. I understood. Davenant was a traitor!

Little things, big things, things of no import, which have no place in this narrative, things of great moment, which had been grievously misinterpreted, all became invested with new significance now. Clifford had been the open mutineer; Davenant was the silent plotter.

From the very first I seemed now to trace Davenant's guilt. It was he who had apparently made the mistake about the island; it was he who had endeavored, against my desire, to steam away and thus maroon Halliday and Wade and Marley, whose presence was dangerous to the plot. It was he, once more, who had striven with me on the ledge and tried to throw me over the precipice. There came back to my memory those tumbling rocks which so nearly committed me to death. It was he who had wished to send me to the cove, where, no doubt, a posse had been awaiting me.

It was he—ah! it was at his instance the Frenchman and Miss Sylvester had been dispatched out of the camp to safe quarters. Safe quarters! I could recall the picture of Davenant and Clifford conferring outside the camp, while we deluded fools looked on in placid ignorance of what they were plotting.

And now Davenant had communicated to them our intentions, and they were to assault the camp by arrangement with him. And I not there! There was bitter gall in the thought. We had all played the fool, but most of all I, who was doubly in their toils. Miss Sylvester had been the bait for me.

I came out of this fierce mood of despair, to hear the voices round the fire louder.

"I'll play you for the girl, Jacko."

Clifford had the cards. "I'll cut, toss, or fight you for her, Barney, my boy," said the ruffian. "She's a knock-out. She's a daisy, she's a ducky, she's a lamb. Look here, Barney, let's draw for the queen of hearts—that's her—come along. We've got ten minutes. Pay the bottle round, my boys.

> 'Bacchus only drinks like me
> When Ariadne's coy.

But when the time comes I'll forswear sack. Ace of hearts, by thunder!"

It was diabolical to have to lie there and listen to these vile exchanges. There was something like a menace in the conversation which made my blood sour, but I was as helpless as a log.

"That's warmer, Jacko," said Byrne. "Knave!"

The drawing went on, punctuated with coarse jokes, oaths, and innuendoes, until at last Clifford gave vent to a laugh.

"Great Cæsar! She wasn't in the pack. Now, how the devil did that happen?"

"Well, it was my draw, Jacko," said the Irishman, "and so I claim the stakes."

"See you canned first!" exclaimed Clifford. "Let's try again. Hello! Is it time, Crashaw?"

A third voice joined the others, and I heard no more for a time, since their tone dropped lower. But presently Clifford called out:

"All right. Settle that. I'll have a look at Hercules."

He came over to me, entering the open side of the hut.

"Samson, I've come to say ta-ta," he said, "and I've got a bit of parting advice for you. 'Ware woman as you 'ware wine. I dare say Delilah was a damned handsome jade, but she wasn't worth it; and here's a word in your

ear." He stooped and whispered, and in my black rage I could have torn him in pieces. He drew back, as I struggled. "Nebuchadnezzar! Here's a regular Gaza!" he said breezily. *"Tatcho,* my elegant warrior, which sounds like a sneeze, but being interpreted is 'Keep your hair on.' So long!"

His retiring steps lessened in my ear as I slowly drilled myself to a more level temper. It was difficult, but I grew master of myself, knowing that I could do nothing by sheer blind fury. The camp sank into deep silence, and only the distant noise of the breaking sea reached me. I set myself to earnest and desperate thought. I reviewed the past with all its misapprehensions and blunders; I faced the future with all its doubts and darkness.

It seemed months since Wade and I had started with such light hearts from Southampton that misty evening; and Wade was in his island grave, and here was I stretched out like a criminal of old to die on the rack of starvation or maybe by a more merciful pistol shot. I guessed that they had no use for me, and I wondered why they had so far spared my life.

I have since come to the conclusion that my knowledge of engineering had some influence with these scoundrels. I was to be reserved for eventual disposal, but in the meantime there was the *Duncannon* to work, and not one of the mutineers had any knowledge of machinery.

At any rate, I had been spared so far, but it was as bitter as death to lie there hour after hour, and watch the stars go past and the heavens cloud and clear and the pines rustle in the sea winds and the flames leap on the rough rafters of the hut. I fought long and intermittently, raising first one shoulder and then the other a little way off the ground. But all my efforts were in vain. I remained a prisoner, ignominiously secure to the earth.

My thoughts, moving in this sickness of the mind, reverted to Davenant, the sleek traitor, the doubly damned, and I felt that if it were possible I would gladly have pulled over the pillars of Gaza to which Clifford had alluded on his treacherous head, even were I involved in the ruin myself. And then, again, Miss Sylvester—what was to be her fate?

In those watches of that terrible night, I realized my heart, and I knew that I loved her. Yet I who would have laid down my life at her feet was unable to put one finger to her assistance.

Orion lay far in the west. I knew the dawn was near—and suddenly I heard a cry, a cry of fear, of mingled terror and supplication; and it was the cry of a woman. There was but one woman on that island of despair. I lifted my head and listened, every pulse in my body seeming to have stopped.

The cry was raised again, and it appeared to sound near me. Was it Ariadne crying for help and crying in vain? A madness seized me, greater than I had ever before experienced. I put forth all my strength; the muscles in my arms stiffened into lumps of iron; the blood poured into my face and brain. And still I wrenched—and all of a sudden the stake on my right gave.

With a repetition of the effort it came slowly out of the earth in which it had been buried. My arm was free.

With tremulous fingers I sought my pocket, and found there the knife which in their certainty of my secure fastening they had not troubled to remove. With it I shore through the ropes that bound my left arm, and then repeated the operation on the ropes that held my feet. I cut away the wreckage and rose to my feet, a man once more, a man with a giant's strength because of the thoughts that moved like flame within him. I caught up the stake, a

heavy billet of wood, damp from the earth, and I stalked out into the light of the fire.

The cry had come from my right, and I directed my steps thither, to a hut like my own such as I had already noticed. I reached the entrance, on which the light of the great fire flickered weakly, and in the flashes I made out the figure of a woman on the ground and that of a man who stood over her. A low cry went to my heart. I stepped in and raised my billet.

The next moment the sound of my feet had come to his ears, and he turned, and a revolver belched in my face. The bullet whistled past my neck, and then my billet fell. It fell on his right arm, and broke it like a cracked stick above the elbow. He shrieked with the pain and made a rush for the back of the hut.

Between the flashing and dropping of the firelight I had glimpses of him. He dashed from wall to wall, his arm hanging helpless, his hand still nervelessly grasping the revolver. He ran about squealing like a rat, and he trampled on the girl as he ran. I shouted, and, stimulated, possibly, by his panic, he suddenly put out his left hand and seized the weapon from the dead right hand. It was leveled and he was firing as I raised my billet again; and he dodged.

He pitched sideways with no cry, only with a little dropping bump into the darkness of an unlit corner of the hut. My stake had taken him behind the ear, and he had died immediately.

There lay the man with the ugly dead face that we had commented on early in the voyage, and the face that pressed the cold earth in that rough shelter was really a dead face now. For it was Headon, the steward, who had been a confederate of the mutineers from the outset.

Ariadne Sylvester was whimpering at my knee.

"Oh, save me! Where is that man? He frightened me. Oh, he was terrible! I knew you would come. I knew —where is that man?"

"He will frighten you no more—never any more," I said, comforting her.

"Is he dead? Have you killed him?" she asked in an awe-struck voice. She was still trembling, clinging to me. I'm glad he's dead," she breathed, and then, her face panting up to mine, she collapsed on my breast.

I let her come to of her own accord, having carried her away from that hut into the shelter of the wood. She emerged from her swoon with a long sigh, and the first thing she saw was my face above hers, watching it with anxiety. The stars were paling before the shafts of the new dawn, and her face was dimly luminous. An expression which was not a smile, but mere content, passed over it.

"I'm glad it's you," she whispered.

I pressed the arm which was supporting her closer.

"Do you remember when we walked this way once?" she asked, after a pause, and was silent as if she puzzled to herself.

"Don't bother to talk," I told her soothingly.

"No; no. I must," she said, almost fretfully. "I wanted to tell you. I remember walking," she said slowly, "and it was night; and those men were about; and you—yes, you struck one as you struck——" She shuddered and ceased. "Why do you hold me?" she asked.

"You fainted," I said. "But you're better now."

"Is that all?" she asked in the slow voice she had been employing. "Is that all?"

I drew her nearer. I thought she wandered, and I was afraid. Had the strain been too much for her brain?

"Why do you press me like that?" she asked again slowly.

"Because—oh, because I love you," I cried, forgetful of all else save that I did love her and that she was in my arms.

She put out hers toward me. "That's what I wanted to say," she whispered, pulling my face down to hers. "It was on that night it happened. I loved you then. It was then. I can see it now. For I felt—I feel it more now; and that's how I know it. Oh, I'm glad you love me."

I kissed her lips softly, gently, and she sighed her soul toward me. Whatever might be the fate of that hapless expedition, I at the least was indebted to it for more than life.

I laid her down on her ferny bed, and stood up to regain the mastery of myself. About me spread the wonder of the dawn, which grew sensibly into morning. The grayness was slipping from a sky that was flushed with gold and rose toward the Orient, and the sea alone was drab, darkly drab from the opacity of its depths. The firs and the palms that surrounded me like upstanding giants whistled in the breeze that blew off the water. And out of the innumerable crepitations of the twilight in the undergrowth sprang the strident but triumphant voice of a parrakeet.

I turned my eyes again seaward, and absorbed the rare fine air in what was no less than an ecstasy of mind and emotion. I was like one taken out of the rough circumstances of this rude world, and rapt to heaven. I was Nympholept, and behold at my feet, recumbent, silent, and with wet lashes over deep and tired eyes was Ariadne of the Island, yet no desolate Ariadne, derelict and tear stained, but one blossoming, even through her terrors, into the flower of full life and happiness. I looked down on her; and she stirred and looked up at me.

"You must rest, sweetheart," said I.

"I will go with you," she whispered.

"No," said I. "I have stern work. You have seen enough, too much. You must rest."

"What will you do?" she asked anxiously. "You won't——"

"I must visit our camp and see what has happened. I fear the worst. I have discovered many things during this terrible night, and I am afraid. Ah, but I have discovered a wonderful thing, too!" I cried, stooping to her and gathering her in my arms. I kissed her damp eyes, and she crept closer.

I stood up and faced the dawn which came with growing beauty. Away on the broad and neutral plain of the sea was a dark smudge visible against the gradual light of the east. I stooped again and picked up Ariadne in my arms, and carried her deeper into the recesses of the opening in which we had sought refuge. It was like a small gravel quarry, in the side of the slope on which we were, and was grown plentifully with bushes.

"You are safe here, sweet," I told her. "I will return very shortly."

"But you will not—you will take care," she pleaded, clinging to me.

I felt in my coat pocket for the knife and gave it to her. As I did so something tumbled out of the pocket to the ground. But I was in too great a flutter to give heed to this.

"I will take care, child," I said. "And see, I leave you my knife. No one will seek you here, but this will give you a greater sense of security."

I comforted her fears, kissed her, disengaged myself from her arms, and fled.

From the quarrylike refuge I made straight for the mutineers' camp. I was without weapons of any kind, and I remembered the revolver of the wretched Headon. The light of the morning was full on the hillside when I reached it, and the fire was dying into its embers, as if it had been a wild thing that feared the day and crept to earth. There was no sign of life anywhere, but the

light had found its way into the recesses of the hut, and a shaft played weakly on the dead man's face with its glassy eyes. With a shudder I withdrew the revolver from his stiff fingers, and secured the cartridges also. Then, thus armed for emergencies, I set out for the stream.

When I had crossed it I approached our old camp with caution, for I did not know what might have happened. But I saw nothing to alarm me, and so noiselessly reached the barricade; no one was visible, and the fires here also were failing. I climbed the brushwood, revolver in hand, but was challenged by none. It was as the camp of the dead. Presently I noticed the body of a man lying in an awkward heap, with his face to the sky. I recognized him as one of the mutineers.

So our party had made a gallant fight for it. I could not doubt what had happened. Overpowered and surprised by the superior numbers of their opponents, Halliday and McLeod and Marley had fallen victims to the treachery of Davenant and the ferocity of the mutineers. I glanced up at the Pulpit, and my eyes detected some figures crawling on the cliff like flies. The treasure was in their hands. Sick at heart, I entered the central hut, which Halliday had occupied, and as I did so a groan reached me.

I looked carefully about me, and discovered Halliday securely fastened, hand and foot. I had only just time to release him, when in the farther corner I saw another figure. On examination this proved to be McLeod, similarly bound. I cut his bonds, also, and presently he had recovered enough to sit up, chafe himself, and tell his story. Poor Halliday was only half conscious, owing to a severe blow on the head.

The mutineers, according to McLeod, had made the assault at ten o'clock, just as the start was being made on the expedition. It came with dramatic unexpectedness, and the issue was never in doubt from the first. They had attacked from the stream, and seemed to be aware of our dispositions. McLeod seemed puzzled by this, but it was no source of wonder to me with my newly acquired knowledge of Davenant.

"We made a struggle for it," said McLeod sadly. "But it was a one-sided business. Halliday went down at once, and Collins and one of the stokers were shot. I didn't see Marley."

"I must look," I said, rising, for my own tale could wait. "Just give a glance at Halliday, while I search the camp."

I went out, and succeeded in discovering Marley, also bound and swearing like a trooper. Near by was Collins, with a bullet in his thigh and a resigned expression on his face. Carter had been clubbed with a gun, and was secured like the others. The stoker had been shot dead. There was no sign of the Frenchman.

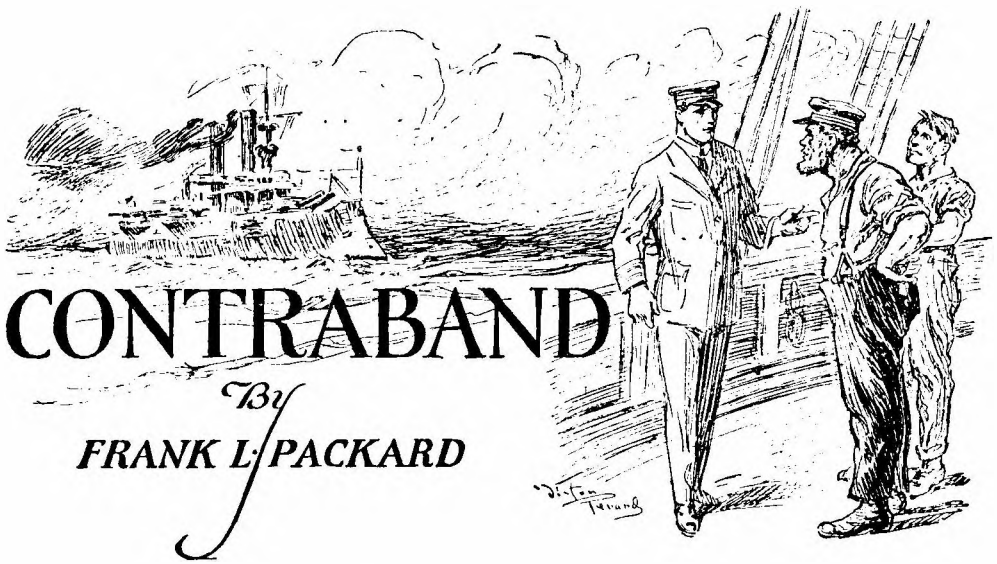
Thus our party was reduced to McLeod, Carter, and myself, able-bodied members, if we omit Marley, who was still something of an invalid, Halliday and Collins and the remaining hand, more or less hors de combat—in all, seven. I made out that the mutineers must at least count ten, ashore, to say nothing of those who had seized the ship. It was impossible for us to continue the unequal struggle; there was nothing before us but capitulation.

These thoughts were moodily in my head while we were mustering our little company of wounded and broken men. Luckily for himself, Halliday had not realized his position and was only half alive.

"It's all up," said McLeod bitterly.

"I'd like to have just one more go at the blighters," said sick Marley in his growling voice.

TO BE CONTINUED.



CONTRABAND

By

FRANK L. PACKARD

Here is a story in which luck perches upon the shoulder of a man, and refuses to be shaken off. It is a story of blockade running by a particularly resourceful sea captain, during the Boer War. That conflict is sufficiently far away to enable us to enjoy a good story about it, especially if that story is laid upon the sea.

ASTERN, far astern on the horizon line, there showed a tiny smudge of black—apart, an empty sea, smooth, with an oily swell. Creamlike ribbons of white from the bow wave of the *Castle Prince* curled and trailed along her sides with bubbling, hissing sounds—and lost their identity in the swirling wake.

Forward, across the lower deck, an awning drooped from its lashings, listless, motionless—mute tribute to the torrid, airless heat. Beneath it men moaned and tossed, turning flushed faces restlessly from side to side, their eyes staring with that strange, drunklike aspect peculiar to the disease—the Yellow Jack, that, like some dread phantom, strikes pitilessly, suddenly, in the night or early dawn.

In the chart house, just forward of, and below, the bridge, that served him, too, as cabin, Captain Parks bent, with scowling face, over the chart spread out before him on the table. A grim-featured man he was, with great, lantern jaws, and black eyes sunk deep beneath bushy brows—a man of squat, thickset body, of face that, even in repose, was bulldoglike in its expression.

"We'll be needing a port doctor, Mr. Miller," he said, looking up and addressing his chief officer, who stood at the end of the table.

"I was thinkin' the same," replied Miller. "I was thinkin' the same, sir."

"With a weather eye out for quarantine," added the captain.

"Aye, sir; I know it's a risk," agreed the mate.

Captain Parks smiled grimly. "Ye may well say so, Mr. Miller. It's a toss up 'twixt the Jack and the inside of a crawling hole of a prison. Were ye ever detained in one of 'em on this benighted coast, Mr. Miller?"

"I was in a bit of a row at Zanzibar one night, sir."

"I said *west* coast, Mr. Miller. Man, the other is luxurious! Look ye, we're hereabouts"—Captain Parks jabbed his forefinger on the chart at a point due south of the Gold Coast and some nine

degrees in latitude south of the equator.

"Aye, sir; thereabouts," said Miller, nodding his head.

"The mainland would be flying in the face of Providence, Mr. Miller——" Captain Parks' first and second fingers spread out like a pair of dividers, one finger tip resting on the spot where Ascension Island was charted, the other on the Island of Annobon.

"The Britisher'll be the nearer by a bit, sir," said Miller, following the captain's movements with his eyes; "but I'm thinkin' I'd rather take my chances with the Spaniards—they're not so much interested, so to speak. I'm thinkin', too, a bit of cash would go a long way with them in fumigatin' the *Prince* after quarantine, an' no questions asked about the cargo—the papers standin' good an' sufficient, sir."

"I've a mind to stand on as we are," muttered Captain Parks doubtfully.

"We'd be a ghastly, driftin' derelict by the time we was halfway to Angra, sir," objected Miller earnestly. "The Jack's sharp work, sir, cruel sharp an' sudden. Look what's happened to us since last night. God knows if there'll be one of us knowin' our own name this time to-morrow. The day's broke hot, pasty hot, an' there's a feel in the air I don't like. Anything's better than dyin' like rats in a trap."

"Would ye say the same," demanded Captain Parks aggressively, "if ye were half owner of the *Prince*, and every penny to sink or swim with her, Mr. Miller?"

"Aye," said Miller shortly; "for what's a ship, if you're dead?"

Captain Parks' fist came down with a crashing blow on the table. "After this voyage, I'd have owned her all—*all*, d'ye hear, Mr. Miller; and there'd have been a fat slice of picking for yourself and the rest of the crew."

"I'm a bit of a fatalist," said Miller resignedly. "What'll come'll come; there's no gettin' away from that, Captain Parks."

"I'll risk the Spaniards, and Annobon it is," decided Captain Parks suddenly, after a moment's pause. "We'll swing round for it. The course'll be northeast by east, Mr. Miller, and ye'll change according. That'll be by dead reckoning, but we'll get our position at noon."

"Aye, sir," replied the mate, "northeast by east it is, sir. I hope to the Lord we make it, though it's a fairish distance. I'll see to the course at once, sir."

He turned to leave the cabin, but Captain Parks halted him in the doorway. "What's yon astern, Mr. Miller, have ye made her out?"

Miller shook his head. "She's been ridin' us the last hour, sir," he answered.

Captain Parks scowled. Company at sea was neither to his liking, nor conducive to a composed state of mind. The *Prince* was on very private business, and there were some things worse than Yellow Jack; also, British cruisers had been known to be impertinent. Captain Parks had a very wholesome regard for British cruisers, and for one in particular.

When an American tramp makes four voyages over the same waters, she picks up acquaintances, casual and otherwise. Likewise, her outward freight must be very valuable, if the return voyage is made with her load line showing as high as the day she was launched, barring the weight of a few tons of coal.

A certain lieutenant of his majesty's ship *Orthon* had explained this with patience and significance to Captain Parks on the last return voyage, when the *Prince*, at the pressing invitation of the man-of-war, had laid to for the brief and interesting period of an hour or so.

It would have been extremely indis-

creet of Captain Parks to have explained that the port of Angra Pequeña, in Southwest Africa, afforded very little opportunity for picking up a cargo, or that his character looked to the question of speed with which he should reach the Weser, and load again at the Bremen docks.

Captain Parks merely said that trade was bad—rotten bad. He was empty, that was all there was to it—trade was bad.

Lieutenant Cleaver had replied in polite sea language to the effect that, in his estimation, Captain Parks was an egregious liar, and the reputation he gave the *Prince*—she was then the *Arunia*—was one of pungent unholiness.

Captain Parks had a very vivid recollection of both the words and the occasion. He was still scowling at his chief officer.

"The change in course, sir, 'll tell the tale," volunteered Miller.

"Aye," agreed Captain Parks; then: "I'll thank you, Mr. Miller, to request Mr. MacKnight to shake up his crawling machinery. It's speed we want now—to the last revolution."

"Very good, sir," said Miller.

Captain Parks grunted in dismissal, and watched the mate disappear through the cabin doorway. Early as it was in the forenoon, the heat was intense, and the perspiration was standing out in great drops on his forehead. He cursed softly as he glanced at the barometer. It had an ugly look.

He went to the door, that Miller had closed behind him, and kicked it open viciously, then returned to his chair to stare out over the rail to the range of waters beyond. His hand sidled into a box of thick, squat-cut smokes, and his back teeth closed over the end of one, but he did not light it.

Captain Parks, being a prudent man, was rehearsing the story he was preparing for the delectation of the port officers at Annobon. This did not take him long—he had had experience before—but he still sat there, listening to the accelerated thump of the engines, and chewing on the cigar, now fast being reduced to a stump.

"Quinine! A blamed quinine ship—that's us!" he snarled bitterly, and dashed the clinging drops from his forehead with a back sweep of his hand.

Fear was a sensation that in all his dare-devil life he had never experienced; but he knew what the presence of Yellow Jack meant. By night, every last man aboard, himself included, might be down with it—or they might not. As Miller had said, the Jack made sharp work, cruel sharp. The minutes passed—half an hour. Suddenly, a form filled the doorway.

"Bridge, sir," announced a seaman briefly, and, touching his cap, vanished.

Captain Parks came to his feet with a jump. He had forgotten that smudge of smoke astern. The next minute he was out of his cabin, and tumbling up the bridge ladder to join Miller.

"I haven't had the glass off her, sir," was the chief officer's greeting. "I marked her position when we changed course. She'll be followin' us, sir; there's no doubt of that."

With glowering face, Captain Parks stared astern. The speck of an hour ago now loomed big and ominous.

"She's comin' up fast, sir," went on Miller. "We're makin' a matter of twelve knots ourselves, but I reckon she's doin' almost as much as that again." The mate paused significantly; then added: "These parts ain't overcrowded with boats better'n twenty knots."

"The *Orthon's* rated at twenty-two decimal something," growled Captain Parks, with savage bluntness. "Don't croak, Miller, like an old woman. Say what you mean."

"Aye, then," rejoined Miller sullenly,

"it's her station, an' yon's she, or her likes—little matter which! Sweet luck we've got, rotten fore an' aft, an' worse astern!"

"I'll thank ye to hold your tongue, Mr. Miller, and cry when ye're hurt, and that'll be when ye're one of those" —Captain Parks jerked his thumb in the direction of the awning rigged over the forward deck—"or"—pointing astern—"dancing a jig, with a ball and chain, to the tune of 'Rule, Britannia' —and not till then, understand?"

Miller made no reply.

Captain Parks snatched at the handle of the engine telegraph—the indicator already stood at "full speed ahead"—and swinging it violently over its full arc and back again, shouted down the engine-room tube for MacKnight, the chief engineer, and more speed.

Answering the demand in person, from the engine room there appeared a little, wizen, red-haired man, in shocking dishabille—a pair of greasy white trousers, and an officer's cap cocked over one ear. The engine room, with the stifling heat of the day added, could have been little better than torment. The engineer, as he planted himself at the foot of the bridge ladder, was in a lather, and the sweat poured down his bare chest and shoulders in little, trickling courses.

"I'll have ye ken, Captain Parks, as I've told Miller, there," he shouted, "that I canna do more. Twelve knots for a benighted scrouger like the *Prince,* wi' her engines rockin' like a cradle on the bedplates, is treemenjous goin'."

"I'll have ye know, Mr. MacKnight," snapped Captain Parks, "that the 'benighted scrouger' is *my* ship, and be damned to ye!"

"She's a dissolute thing," declared MacKnight, *"an'* a benighted scrouger; but I'll no' argue the matter. Twelve knots is the leemit."

"Ye're indecent in both words and dress, Mr. MacKnight. Limit, is it? We'll have more speed, Mr. MacKnight, if ye blow her up—and less lip!"

For a moment, the fiery little Scotchman glared, unable to find words adequate to express his feelings; then, finally: "Come down in the hell of an engine room," he choked, "wi' the life oozing out by the pores, an' l'arn when a mon's doin' all his all, ye slave-drivin' Yankee!"

Captain Parks laughed shortly. "A civil tongue in your head's not to be expected. Come up here, Mr. MacKnight."

"I will," replied MacKnight belligerently, and sprang up the ladder.

Captain Parks caught him by the bare shoulder, and pointed astern. "I'm thinking, Mr. MacKnight," said he, "that ye'll be wishing ye were a Yankee yourself, if yon ever overhauls us. She'll be the *Orthon,* ye mind, that passed the time of day with us last trip up. Being a British subject, 'twill fare harder with you than with me, Mr. MacKnight. Treason's an ugly word, and ugly is the punishment."

" 'T w'u'd be vara harrd to prove," said MacKnight cautiously. "I'm consarned wi' the machinery, an' naught else, Captain Parks. A berth's a berth, an' what's an engineer to ken o' what's in the hold, so it's no' bilge water?"

"That's as it may be," replied Captain Parks. "But I'm thinking ye'd be easier in your mind if we managed to give her the slip."

"I w'u'd," admitted MacKnight, blinking; "but I canna do more. Twelve knots! Did ye ever hear of the *Prince* doin' the like before? What w'u'd yon be makin'?"

"Twenty-two, and better," acknowledged Captain Parks savagely.

MacKnight wagged his head. " 'Tis nae credit to your mathematics, Captain Parks, the way ye talk. If 'twere

late in the afternoon, I'd no' say but we'd have a chance to hold out an' gi'e her the slip in the dark; but, as it is—ye ken, Captain Parks?"

Captain Parks scowled. By every chance, the pursuer would be up with them in the early afternoon. He knew it as well as the other. "Well, then, Mr. MacKnight," he rapped out, swinging on his heel, "get back to your junk shop, and, if ye can do no better, put in the time praying—ye'll stand in need of it!"

"I'm a Presbyterian," retorted the engineer hotly. "Ye're a blasphemous mon, Captain Parks! Ye'll get your deserts for it ane o' these days."

"I'm getting them now," said the skipper gruffly, facing around again.

MacKnight stared for a moment into the captain's troubled face. "Mon," said he remorsefully, "ye're sore harassed. I'll do my best, I'll do my best—but 'twill do nae good."

II.

As the hours crept on, the heat, intense before, became unbearable. The day was a yellow haze, torrid, still. Above, the sun was like a molten disk, its color like a tongue of flame from a furnace blast. Astern, there was no longer any speck; instead, a great smudge of black smoke that, having no breeze to disperse it, settled down, a blotch on the water line, as it poured forth from the three funnels of the cruiser, now coming up hand over hand with the *Castle Prince*.

Grim, with jaws set like a vise, stripped down to duck trousers and an undershirt, that, open at the neck and with sleeves rolled up, displayed the great chest, the gnarled and knotty forearms, Captain Parks paced savagely up and down his bridge.

A ball of white smoke puffed out from the cruiser's side, hung, lifted. The muffled roar of the discharge floated across the water. Overhead, a shell sang, and hurtled by. It was good gunnery; just far enough away to do no harm, just close enough to be imperative.

Mechanically, Captain Parks' hand reached out for the engine telegraph lever; then he hesitated, the hand dropped to his side, and he met Miller's eyes across the bridge. Miller turned away, and began to whistle under his breath. Below, along the deck, the crew clustered at the rail, their glances alternating between the bridge and the ship astern.

Another fluffy puff of white, again the boom of the discharge, the angry scream of the flying shell—the gunnery was too good to be ignored.

With a laugh that was more a curse, Captain Parks rang his engines to the "stop." The shake and vibration of the ship ceased, a silence fell upon the cough and hiccup, the clatter of the machinery, and, like some sullen brute hushed against its will, the *Prince*, gradually losing way, lay still, rolling moodily with the swell.

No man aboard moved or spoke. Swiftly, the black hull of the British cruiser drew up abreast. A white boat swung from her davits, dropped to the water, and came toward them. When within hailing distance, Captain Parks bellowed through his hands.

"What d'ye mean by this?" he bawled. "I'll have ye know that I'm an American ship, and ye'll answer for it, by the etarnal! I'm the *Castle Prince*, Hamburg to Cape Town."

An officer stood up in the stern sheets, and shaded his eyes with his hands. "I'm Cleaver—Lieutenant Cleaver, of the *Orthon*, captain. Commander's compliments and apologies, but we mistook you for Captain Parks and the *Arunia*. Way enough! Make fast there in the bow!"—quick, sharp orders, as the boat's nose grated on the iron plates of the *Prince's* sides.

Captain Parks cursed heartily and with abandon. "*Prince* or *Arunia*, it's all the same," he yelled. "Ye'll come aboard at your peril. What d'ye want?"

"Contraband, Captain Parks," replied Lieutenant Cleaver, from the boat. "Contraband arms for the Transvaal, via German Southwest Africa. Is business better this voyage, captain? I see you're well loaded."

"Aye, we're well loaded," repeated Captain Parks bitterly. "We're full o' Yellow Jack! I warn ye again, though I'm a fool to do it, ye'll board us at your peril. We're a pestilence ship."

Lieutenant Cleaver laughed softly, as he came clambering up the side. "You've some humor, Captain Parks," he said. "You've well named yourself. A pestilence ship you are—the worst pest in these waters; but——" He stopped suddenly, as he swung on to the deck, and a queer look came into his face as his eyes strayed ahead of him to the awning on the forward deck. Then he turned, and motioned to his men, who were swarming up behind him.

"Get back to the boat, men! Every one of you! Look sharp!" he cried hoarsely.

Captain Parks, hanging over the weather cloth of the bridge, chuckled as he experienced the first real pleasure he had known for many hours. The Yellow Jack was a blessing in disguise! He left the bridge and went to the deck to join his unwelcome visitor. As he came up to Lieutenant Cleaver, the *Orthon's* cutter fended from the *Prince*, and began to pull back to the cruiser.

"I warned ye, lieutenant, didn't I?" demanded Captain Parks. "Ye'll take a man's word after this, likely enough."

"You did," Lieutenant Cleaver answered coolly; "but it's hard to tell when some men are speaking the truth. I've asked the commander to send us the doctor. I suppose it's hardly necessary to inform you that you are under arrest, Captain Parks, you and your crew."

"What for?" blustered Captain Parks.

"I've told you once," said the lieutenant sternly. "Contraband arms for the Boers. The game's up, Captain Parks, and you might as well take your medicine like a man. Do you think you can change a ship with a coat of paint and a new name? I've seen her before, Captain Parks, you'll remember."

"Aye," growled the captain, "I remember. And ye'll have cause to remember it more than ye do now, sonny, I promise ye that! I ain't forgotten what ye said that day, and I've a sneaking suspicion it's yourself I've to thank for what's happened now."

"You're more than half right about that," admitted the lieutenant easily.

With a snarl, Captain Parks thrust his great, savage face close to the other's, and his fists clenched into knotty lumps; then he laughed shortly, turned on his heel, and began to stamp up and down the deck until, at the expiration of some fifteen minutes, he saw the cutter coming back. He joined MacKnight and Miller, who were standing by the engine-room scuttle.

"D'ye take note of the glass, captain?" asked Miller uneasily. "It's been hangin' low all mornin', but I've never seen the like of the drop it's taken in the last half hour. I'm thinkin', sir, we're in for something out of the ordinary."

"It's little matter," responded Captain Parks gruffly, and slued around to watch the doctor, as he came over the side, and handed a letter to the lieutenant. His eyes followed the doctor until he disappeared forward, then they came back to the lieutenant.

Cleaver had torn open the envelope, and was reading the contents. After

a minute, he folded the paper, put it in his pocket, and leaned over the rail to the boat's crew below.

Captain Parks could not catch the words, but the splash of oars, and then the sight of the cutter appearing from under the stern, needed no interpretation. Lieutenant Cleaver was to remain aboard—just Lieutenant Cleaver and the doctor!

Something within Captain Parks stirred with unholy glee. Cleaver was coming toward him now.

"We'll get under way, Captain Parks," announced the lieutenant briskly. "You'll shape your course by the *Orthon's*—four hundred yards astern. She'll slow to your best speed."

"Ye're pretty free with your orders, sonny," sneered Captain Parks.

"I am," returned Cleaver. "I'm in command."

"We're to follow the *Orthon*, eh?" murmured Parks slowly, softly. "For why, and for where, I'd like to ask?"

"Commander's orders," replied the other shortly. "Ascension for quarantine, and inspection later."

"Then take her there!" shouted Captain Parks. "Take her there, Mr. Cleaver! If your ratty, crawling crowd are afraid to come aboard, take her there yourself. D'ye think we're languishing for a taste of prison, that we're going to work our way to the front door? Take her there, Mr. Cleaver—I'll not!"

"I think you will," was the quiet reply. "There was no need to risk spreading contagion. I am aboard, and you're under the *Orthon's* guns. I needn't tell you they could blow you to kingdom come in a jiffy. We'll get under way, Captain Parks, if you please."

For a brief instant, dominating the rage and fury that was in his heart, there flashed through the captain's mind the thought that this slight, trim young man before him had done a rather decent thing when he had kept his men from coming aboard, and that there was pluck and nerve behind the action that had forced his present position upon him—even with the *Orthon's* guns to back him up. Then anger again assumed the supremacy.

"Work her, I'll not!" he roared. "That's flat!"

"Mon," whispered MacKnight, plucking at his sleeve. "Mon, ye'll be surely daft. D'ye recollect what Miller was sayin' o' the weather a minute gone? Ye'll want no prize crew aboard the night. Let well enough alone, Captain Parks."

The boom of a gun came across the water. "She's getting impatient, Captain Parks," said Lieutenant Cleaver significantly.

"Have your way, then," rapped out Captain Parks ungraciously in assumed defeat, as he caught the craftiness of his engineer. "I reckon I've little choice. Ye'll stand by, Mr. MacKnight, to go ahead. Take the bridge, Mr. Cleaver, and be damned to ye!"

III.

Hour by hour, the *Prince* plowed sullenly in the *Orthon's* wake, and hour by hour the yellow, murky, pasty haze grew more yellow, thicker, more forbidding, gradually shading darker toward the skyline, where the horizon rim was like a jet-black band of ink.

Aboard, men gasped for breath in the sticky atmosphere, the sweltering heat, and over all brooded the dread of the prison doors to come, the horror of the pestilence already theirs.

On the bridge, Captain Parks touched Lieutenant Cleaver on the shoulder, and jerked his thumb forward. "God knows what's coming, I don't," he said; "but I'd feel better with the sick below, as I've said before."

"The doc says no," Lieutenant Cleaver answered. "The only chance

they've got is air, what little there is of it. Below, they'd snuff out like candles."

"Aye, and—look yonder there!"—he pointed his finger before him. The low, black fringe of the horizon was lifting, mounting like a pall to the heavens, and, at the lower edge, coming toward them with incredible speed, was a thin, churning, threadlike line of white.

Captain Parks' hands went to his mouth, trumpetwise, and his great voice bellowed through the ship:

"Fo'ard, there! Hold fast, every man——"

The swirl, the swoop, the onrush of a mighty wind caught up his words, played with them like whirling bits of chaff, and flung them back upon him into space. With a clap of thunder, the awning tore from its lashings like rotten silk. The churning line of white was upon them. The *Prince* faltered, staggered, then buried her nose deep in the foaming waters, rose trembling, shaking herself like a thing of life. From the scupper ports, the green water poured in hissing streams.

Like a broken man, Captain Parks, white to the lips, turned and looked into Lieutenant Cleaver's eyes, and his lips moved dumbly.

Cleaver's only response was to avert his face.

The deck was bare! Fore and aft swept clean, with awful thoroughness. Surgeon and sick alike dashed to eternity; the services of the one ended, the sufferings of the others past. And then, as though nature herself was stunned and appalled at the ghastly tragedy she had enacted, there fell a hush, and the silence was as a solemn requiem for the dead.

It was but the prelude of what was to come. Another moment, and the tempest broke with all its pent-up fury. Great, forked tongues of lightning played through a sky now black as ink, and with a moan like a stricken thing the *Prince* gathered herself together, and swung slowly around head into the teeth of the hurricane, to begin her long battle with the boiling waters, that tossed her on their seething crests like a cockleshell.

Once, as the lightning for a brief instant lit up the heavens, they caught a glimpse of the black hull of the *Orthon,* far to windward, the storm sweeping them farther and farther apart, and then the blackness closed down upon them again.

Miller came clawing his way to the bridge, and shouted in the captain's ear. It was the tale of the disaster, the count of those that had gone. Eight men and the doctor!

As the night grew on, the storm increased. Two men were at the wheel now, and beside them towered the giant form of Captain Parks, and the slighter, trimmer figure of the lieutenant, their oilskins streaming, their eyes blinded by the spray flung in stinging sheets over the bridge, as great waves reared high over the bows of the *Prince,* hovered an instant in menace, and then their tumbling tons of water crashed upon her decks, shaking her as a terrier shakes a rat.

Twice already, the chart house below the bridge had threatened to go by the board, making the bridge itself perilous and unsafe; and now, at last, it went with a grinding, crunching noise, sweeping into the port stanchions of the bridge, crumpling them like bits of picture wire.

The shock threw Captain Parks bodily back against the after railing of the bridge. As he recovered himself, the quartermaster roared in his ear:

"Wheel's out, sir!"

"Tell Miller to man the stern gear. Quick, man, jump!" shouted Captain Parks. *"Where's Cleaver?"*

The bridge had snapped like a stick, nearly in the center; and, the port

stanchions gone, that end had dropped almost to the deck. It hung, swaying crazily with the tumbling of the ship, sagging like a broken leg from the portion that still remained intact. Caught in the lower corner, where the canvas of the weather cloth made a little pocket, was a huddled heap. As Captain Parks looked, a sea broke over it. Only the quartermaster now remained with him on what was left of the bridge; the other seaman had already gone to carry the captain's order to the mate.

Captain Parks pointed, gripping the quartermaster's arm fiercely, and a black thought took shape and form. Free—if ever they weathered the storm—free! He would make his port, unload his cargo—there would be enough in that to refit—and the *Prince* would still be his—*his!* True, the *Orthon* lost in the storm, Cleaver, as a force, had become powerless; but, as a witness, he would, sooner or later, have to be reckoned with. Now there would be no witness! He laughed aloud as his fingers closed tighter on the quartermaster's arm.

"It's him, God help him!" cried the seaman. "We can't get to him. He'll be pounded to death in a minute—if he ain't already."

Captain Parks' grip on the other's arm loosened, again he laughed, hard and short—and began to work his way along the bridge.

"For God's sake, sir, don't try it! 'Tain't any use, you——"

The quartermaster's words were lost in the singing roar of the wind. Captain Parks, clinging to the shattered wreckage, was lowering himself down to the still, motionless thing below him. Gasping, panting from the fierce body blows that had battered him at almost every foot of the descent, as, swinging like a pendulum, he had been dashed, with the pitch of the ship, from side to side, he reached Cleaver, raised him in his arms, and began to struggle back. Inch by inch, he won his way upward; then the broken end of the bridge swung with a mighty jerk under the lift of the sea, as the *Prince*, without her helm, paid off into the trough of the waves, and he was hurled from his hold and flung back to the bottom. For a moment, he lay, helpless, held only from being swept overboard by the merciful protection of the canvas pocket that had already stood Cleaver in such good stead.

A pain shot through his arm and left shoulder, like the searing of hot iron. Again he picked up the lieutenant, and began to struggle upward. His breath came in short moans, his lips were bleeding where his teeth bit into them; the agony from his injured arm, that he was forced to use, was intolerable. At the end, he remembered only that the quartermaster had gripped and held them both. Then he had fainted.

When he opened his eyes again, he was in his bunk—but it was the morning of the third day before he was able to reach the bridge again. Miller gave him a helping hand as he came up the starboard ladder. Battered almost beyond recognition, the *Prince* was a woebegone, pitiful, broken thing to see. Captain Parks gazed upon the scene with a grim smile. To windward, banks of clouds, low, scudding, with here and there between them a rift of sunlight, heralded the breaking of the storm. There was nothing else in sight.

"Only the upper works. Only the upper works, eh, Miller?" he said softly, to his chief officer. "Below, she's sound, eh? Sound as a bell?"

"Aye, sir; thank God!" replied Miller fervently.

"What's our position, would ye say, Mr. Miller?"

"Well, sir, we've blown a goodish bit down the coast."

"We have, Mr. Miller," agreed Captain Parks, and he laughed as he

clapped his hand on the mate's back. "We have, and it'll be Angra, after all, Mr. Miller. There's a bit of luck left us yet."

"We'll need it," muttered Miller. "That wave didn't wash out all the Jack. Martin an' one or two of the men that are left are touched with it. Though not bad, I reckon. We're pretty short-handed for nice maneuverin', sir. I take it, you mean to work things at Angra same as before?"

"Aye, Mr. Miller, the same as before. We'll manage right enough as far as the men go; but I'd not like to arouse Cleaver's suspicions—not for what he could do now, but for what he'd *know* afterward."

"Lord, sir," grinned Miller, "no fear of him. He's too battered to leave his bunk for a week, if he does then. He's off his head now, ramblin' about some girl, an' him promoted an admiral."

"I'm a firm believer in luck, Mr. Miller. It's like the tide. When it turns, it's all your way."

"I shouldn't think he'd say anything, anyway," submitted the mate, "when he finds out you risked your life for him, sir."

Captain Parks swung suddenly, savagely, on his chief officer, and shoved his fist under Mr. Miller's nose. "If ye, or any one of the lot aboard, open your face to Cleaver about that, I'll bash it to pulp!" he cried fiercely.

"Aye, sir," mumbled Miller, astounded and surprised, stepping hastily back. "Aye, sir; very good."

IV.

For the next few days, the *Prince* wallowed and thrashed her way far down the coast, and then, one afternoon, MacKnight slowed his revolutions, and she lay, lazily rocking with the swell. Far off on the port beam, the land was just discernible, no more than a faint streak.

The night fell black, black as the *Prince* herself, creeping stealthily shoreward, with lights out and the engine-room hatch carefully covered. Inside the harbor, the one boat left, and that looking like a crazy quilt, from its manifold patches in an endeavor to make it serviceable, dropped over the side, and Captain Parks went ashore.

When morning came again, the *Prince* lay, lazily rocking with the swell; and, again, far off on the port beam, the land was just discernible, no more than a faint streak.

Aboard, all through that day, and for other days thereafter, there was much commotion, the cough and sputter of the donkey engine, the grunting of men, the creaking of block and tackle—and the *Prince's* decks lay cumbered with that which the hatches until now had hidden from the vulgar gaze. And each night she crept stealthily shoreward, and the litter of the day's toil went over the side into barges, far up at the northern end of the bay in the harbor of Angra Pequeña.

Then came a day when the *Prince* did not wait for night, but steamed boldly in from sea, reeking with innocence and the smell of burning sulphur—steamed in for quarantine! And the port of Angra Pequeña received her at her face value, treating her with that compassion and tenderness that one in her sore plight and pitiful condition impelled; or, perhaps, the rather striking similarity between the port captain and one heavy-paunched, thickset German, who had superintended the loading of the barges in the dead of night, may have had something to do with it. That, however, is no more than speculation, for one cannot be sure of either face or figure by a dim and flickering lantern light, cautiously exposed and carefully shaded!

In due time, the *Prince* got a clean bill of health, and the authorities gave her her clearance papers, and on the day this took place Lieutenant Cleaver

appeared on deck for the first time—a matter of coincidence!

Captain Parks watched silently as the lieutenant, still very weak and shaky, walked from one end of the *Prince* to the other, peering reflectively down the open hatches into a bare and empty hold. Then he invited Lieutenant Cleaver to his cabin.

Cleaver accepted the invitation, and likewise accepted the tendered glass. Both men drank in silence, and then sat eying each other across the table.

"Where's your cargo?" demanded the lieutenant bluntly.

Captain Parks smiled softly, and shook his head. "The delirium will still be affecting ye, Lieutenant Cleaver?" he suggested politely.

"Oh, chuck all that!" retorted Cleaver. "What's the use of beating about the bush?"

"None," returned Captain Parks promptly; "though what gets me is how ye should get it into your head we ever *had* any cargo. I put it to ye like this: If we'd had any, ye know we couldn't have got rid of it neither before nor during that blow, eh? As for afterward, we made this port, where we've lain in quarantine, and any one of the port officials'll give ye an affidavit that we came in as empty as we are this blessed minute. How *could* we have had any cargo?"

"You can't squeal out of it like that," snapped Cleaver. "I, and, for that matter, every one aboard the *Orthon*, can prove the difference in your water line. You were infernally deep, Captain Parks."

Captain Parks grinned through the smoke of his black cigar. "'Twas a miragelike effect, maybe."

Cleaver scowled. "Where's your papers? You said you were bound for Cape Town. Perhaps that's a mirage, too!"

"Papers!" repeated Captain Parks, removing his cigar, and staring at the other in well-simulated surprise. "Papers! Lord, man, if any one knows where they are, it's yourself ought to. The last thing ye saw before ye went and smashed yourself to sleep was the chart house going by the board. I always kept ship's papers in the chart house, from habit, like. Papers, my eye!"

"I'd give a year's pay and my chances of promotion to know how, when, and where you landed that cargo," said Lieutenant Cleaver.

Captain Parks closed one eye slowly, and squinted with the other at the lieutenant. "'Tain't enough, sonny," he chuckled. "Ye'll have to raise the ante."

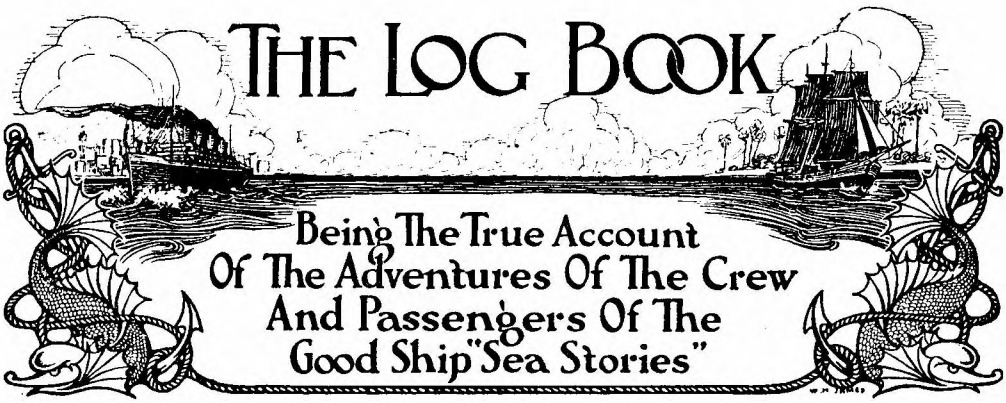
Cleaver drummed on the table with his fingers, and stared with puckered brows at the floor.

"I'm getting under way in half an hour or so," remarked Captain Parks nonchalantly. "Going to put in at Cape Town to refit, and pick up a cargo—if trade ain't too bad. Ye can go ashore here, Mr. Cleaver, or ye're heartily welcome to keep on down the coast with us."

Then Lieutenant Cleaver looked up—and then he laughed. "I'll go ashore, Captain Parks. I suppose we can count ourselves lucky if you don't lodge a complaint against us with the American consul at Cape Town for piracy, or something like that, on the high seas, eh?"

"'Twould be in reason," said Captain Parks solemnly.

A quarter of an hour later, Captain Parks, from his partially rehabilitated bridge, waved his hand to a figure in naval uniform standing up in the stern sheets of a small boat that was being rapidly rowed shoreward; then he turned, and, calling down the engine-room tube, politely requested Mr. MacKnight to set his unmentionable species of a junk shop in motion.



SEA STORIES is making a quick voyage toward big circulation, and the port of ultimate success. So many letters of appreciation have poured into the editor's hands that it is impossible to quote from even a small percentage of them.

It is the sentiment of the majority of readers, however, that SEA STORIES MAGAZINE, as it is, is about right. Some ask for stories a trifle different in subject than those we have published, but every one expresses satisfaction with what we have given them. This cheers us on to greater effort.

We know that some of the stories which have found their way into the purser's safe on board the good ship SEA STORIES are going to produce not only satisfaction, but real enthusiasm on the part of an already satisfied body of readers.

It was rather coincidental, but since the appearance of SEA STORIES MAGAZINE on the news stands, there seems to have been a general revival in interest in things nautical. For example, several newspapers in the larger cities, as if by common consent, have published editorials on the works of W. Clark Russell, Robert Louis Stevenson, Herman Melville, Joseph Conrad, and all those, who, by their splendid craftsmanship, have built a real literature upon a wonderfully firm foundation.

While the skipper of SEA STORIES cannot possibly aspire to the publication of work by such well-known authors, he does firmly believe that he has certain men, who know the sea, who know how to write, who are producing stories for him, and who in time will become recognized as the Stevensons, the Melvilles, and Russells of today.

Editing SEA STORIES MAGAZINE is a fine, clean job, and to say that the skipper is duly impressed, and that he likes it, would be putting it mildly.

All of the old salts who know the writing game, with whom he has come in contact, have been most kind. They have told him what errors to avoid in navigating a ship so large, and bound on such a long voyage, as SEA STORIES, and the skipper hereby acknowledges the debt he owes to the older and more experienced editors of nautical papers.

Who Knows?

"I wonder if any of your readers recognize the following verse, and can tell me the name of the author.

" 'The perils and dangers of the voyage past,
And the ship to Portsmouth arrived at last;
The sails all furled, and the anchor cast,
The happiest of the crew was Jack Robinson.
For his Poll he had trinkets and gold galore,
Besides of prize-money quite a store;
And along with the crew he went ashore,
As coxwain to the boat, Jack Robinson.'

"This scrap was published in a story which appeared in an old serial paper, some years

ago, and I would certainly like to have the rest of it, if there is more to it."

FRED G. WELLS.

Portland, Ore.

Interesting.

"In the Log Book published in a recent number of SEA STORIES MAGAZINE, you ask your readers to submit chanteys. How many old salts aboard SEA STORIES recognize this halyards chantey which we called 'Reuben Ranzo?'

"'O do you know old Reuben Ranzo?
Ranzo, boys, Ranzo;
O do you know old Reuben Ranzo?
Ranzo, boys, Ranzo.

"'Old Ranzo was a tailor,
Ranzo, boys, Ranzo;
Old Ranzo was a tailor,
Ranzo, boys, Ranzo.

"'Old Ranzo was no sailor,
Ranzo, boys, Ranzo;
Old Ranzo was no sailor,
Ranzo, boys, Ranzo.

"'So he shipped aboard of a whaler,
Ranzo, boys, Ranzo;
So he shipped aboard of a whaler,
Ranzo, boys, Ranzo.'

"'But he could not do his duty,
Ranzo, boys, Ranzo;
No, he could not do his duty,
Ranzo, boys, Ranzo.'

"I have heard forty hands roar this at the top of their voices while making sail, and what it lacked in sense it certainly made up in volume and gusto."

RUSSELL M. STUART.

Savannah, Ga.

Unusual.

"I am glad to contribute a bit to the Log Book and in entering these lines, I wish to say that I am pretty sure that very few of the readers of SEA STORIES MAGAZINE have ever heard the 'Hand over Hand' chantey which I quote:

"'A handy ship, and a handy crew,
Handy, my boys, so handy;
A handy ship, and a handy crew,
Handy, my boys, away ho.

"'A handy skipper and second mate, too,
Handy, my boys, so handy;
A handy skipper and second mate, too,
Handy, my boys, away ho.

"'A handy Bose and a handy Sails,
Handy, my boys, so handy;
A handy Bose and a handy Sails,
Handy, my boys, away ho.'

"In forty years of experience at sea, I was on but two boats, both of them square riggers, where the crew sang it. In both cases, the chantey-men were artists."

JOHN F. COLLINS.

Boston, Mass.

Ole Captain Kidd!

"Will you please publish in the Log Book, the words of the old pirate song, 'Captain Kidd?' I have searched for it a number of anthologies, but have been unable to find it."

GEORGE W. PARKER.

Newport News, Va.

The authorship of the ballad about Captain Kidd is very much in doubt. It is very ancient and there are about twenty-five verses. The words of the first two stanzas are as follows:

My name is Captain Kidd,
Captain Kidd.
My name is Captain Kidd,
Captain Kidd.
My name is Captain Kidd,
And wickedly I did;
God's laws I did forbid,
As I sailed.

My topsails they did shake
As I sailed.
My topsails they did shake
As I sailed.
My topsails they did shake,
And the merchants they did quake,
For many did I take
As I sailed.

It is sung to the very excellent tune of "Samuel Hall" by some sailors. We remember having heard it in New Bedford, Massachusetts, some years ago, on board one of the old whaling ships there, which was manned, strangely enough,

by West Indians, every man jack of whom spoke with a Yankee accent.

Wants Speed!

"I'm an ex-gob, myself, and I would surely appreciate it if you would run a few navy stories, and I know that thousands of others would enjoy them as much as I would. I have been reading your 'scuttle butt' news since it first started, and here's hoping you 'light off all four cans and the galley range,' and show some speed on those navy stories."

J. F. Lockner.

Visalia, Cal.

The skipper and his crew are speed artists. None of the passengers has expressed a wish which has not been gratified by us with all possible dispatch. Shipmate Lockner wants a navy story. Well, he is going to get it, and if he does not like "With the Aid of the Marines," published in our July number, we are going to firmly and respectfully ask him what sort of a navy story he does like—and will try to give him that.

From a Sailor.

"Have read Sea Stories from cover to cover since you started publishing this crack magazine, and want to congratulate you on the excellence of your stories.

"Any man who has ever followed the sea for any length of time (I am proud to say that I am one), will appreciate Sea Stories. It fills a long-felt want.

"By the way, skipper, were you ever on a pogy boat. No? Well, a pogy boat is short for a Portuguese fishing vessel. The United States government took some of them over during the war and converted them into mine sweepers. They are sturdy vessels, only about 200 feet long, little, but oh my!—how they can ride the seas. Have been out in some of the toughest weather in one of these pogies, but she went right along like your little Ford over a country road.

"They are a sure cure for seasickness, for even in the smoothest sea a pogy boat will roll terribly, and if a fellow can sail on a pogy, he can sail on almost any kind of a craft.

"We had a nice friendly bunch of rats on board one that I was on. Did you ever wake up about 2 a. m., and find a big fat rat crawling around in your bunk? Oh, boy! It's a grand and glorious feeling—Not!

"Well, hope I have not taken too much of your time. Wish you lots of luck and you can count on me as a regular reader of your interesting magazine.

"P. S.—Give us some stories of the Spanish Main, and pirate days of 1812."

M. B. Stone.

Hartford, Conn.

If you have any doubt about the fact that the writer of this letter has been to sea tell us whence it comes. The postscript of his letter opens a most interesting question. Do you want period stories—stories laid in the period when pirates bold, and buccaneers bolder, sailed the Spanish Main, and assailed Spanish galleons? If so, say the word, and we will see that you get a red-hot pirate story of the olden days, as soon as it can be written.

Hats Off!

"I have just finished reading The Log Book, and I see that all the contributions came from men.

"Well, I am a girl, and a lover of the sea, and sailors. I have lived, until three years ago, in both the port of Cardiff, Wales, and Belfast, Ireland. Now I live in an inland town, and cannot express with what joy I pounced upon your first number on the news stands. It brought the salt dampness of a port town back again.

"I have accompanied my father who is a skipper in the British mercantile marine on a good many voyages, and know about every nautical term in a sailor's vocabulary. I married a boy who served in the United States navy, and would greatly appreciate some navy stories.

"I would like to hear from some interested girl readers, through your magazine."

An Interested Reader.

New York, N. Y.

Every gallant sailor doffs his hat to one of the fair sex, and when she is a real, true-enough sea girl, the courtesy is extended with even more enthusiasm. If there are any other girls who read Sea Stories let us hear from you.

From Another Real Salt.

"Having read all three of your issues of SEA STORIES, I am entitled to sign myself 'Constant Reader,' but I won't. However, to get down to cases—

"Was very much amused at your saying that one man wrote in to tell you that a steamer has no main brace to splice. Had he been a deep-water sailor, he would have known that 'splice the main brace' meant the tot of rum that usually followed the calling out of the watch below, or an 'all hands job.' Also, the man who wanted stories of real sailors, meaning *navy* men, was amusing in itself.

"Reverting again to the subject of magazines—I once had a queer experience, which, no doubt, has happened to many sailing-ship men. On an Italian full-rigged ship, *Drumpark*, I had got from a seamen's mission in New York, a lot of books. In one magazine I read the first installment of a two-part story called, 'The Octopus.' I never knew who wrote it, but it sure did please me. Upon my return home, about two years later, I tried to get the remaining half of the story, but did not know the year or month of the magazine.

"About three years later, I joined a lime-juice tramp in Valparaiso, Chile, coming to Charleston, S. C., stopping for coal at Rio, and again at St. Lucia. I was boatswain, and one night while waiting in the mate's room for him to come off watch, I idly picked up an old magazine, one of a bundle that came aboard from the mission in Valparaiso, and lo!—also behold!—there was the second half of my story! Needless to say, I didn't wait for the mate, but saw him in the morning, returning his book then. Few things have given me as much pleasure as that story.

"I'll bring this up with a round turn. In case you print this, and any of your old shell-back readers see it, it may bring to mind a similar coincidence."

ALFRED B. HENDERSON.

Asbury Park, N. J.

The coincidence of hitting upon the second half of a two-part story three years after the first part reached him is really remarkable. It tends to demonstrate, however, the tenacity of life of the fiction magazine which, as a rule, is considered ephemeral at best.

We once heard from a reader of one of our magazines who said that while in the Australian desert he saw something sticking in a rabbit hole, and, upon investigation, found it to be a much-thumbed copy of a magazine. He read it, and, upon his return to Melbourne, ordered as many back numbers from Gordon & Gotch, the news dealers there, as they had. So, you see, it is hardly possible for any one to commit anything to a printed page, and be certain just where the channels of distribution will lead the product of his printing presses.

Our July number is going to be a real treat. The complete novel is by Robert Welles Ritchie and Grant M. Overton. Its action takes place on a four-hundred-ton schooner, *Polly Parks*, and after you read it you will be of the opinion that, as a sea tale, it is a real Simon-pure article.

Walter Archer Frost has given us a short story about a sailor (?) lad who is strangely helped by a shipmate he never knew he had, in a manner that is mighty humorous.

There is another installment of "The Devil's Pulpit," by H. B. Marriott Watson—one of the most interesting of this tense, dramatic serial.

Frank L. Packard has given us "The Purging of the *Galway*," a mighty good Mr. Simpson yarn. You will like it.

There is a particularly fine navy story by Kenneth Gilbert entitled "With the Aid of the Marines." You readers who have wanted a story by real gobs or baggy-jacks, as they are called, have a treat in store for you in this story. The action is serious enough, but it is written in such a bright and breezy manner as to evoke hearty laughs from the reader as it progresses.

There are many other features, too numerous to mention here. We aim to make SEA STORIES worth your while, and if you do not think that the July number is such a magazine, write and tell us wherein we have failed.

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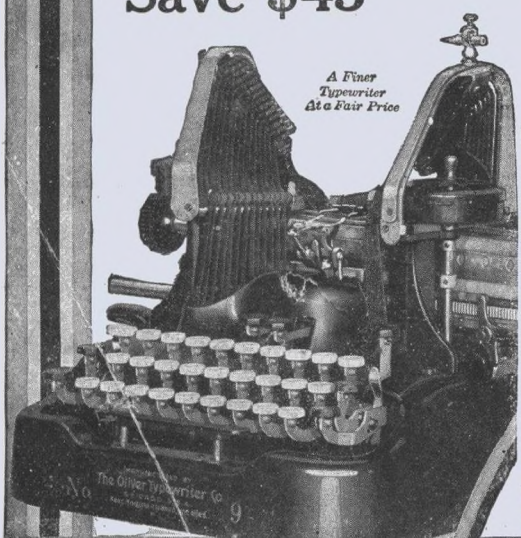

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