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Sea Stories Magazine

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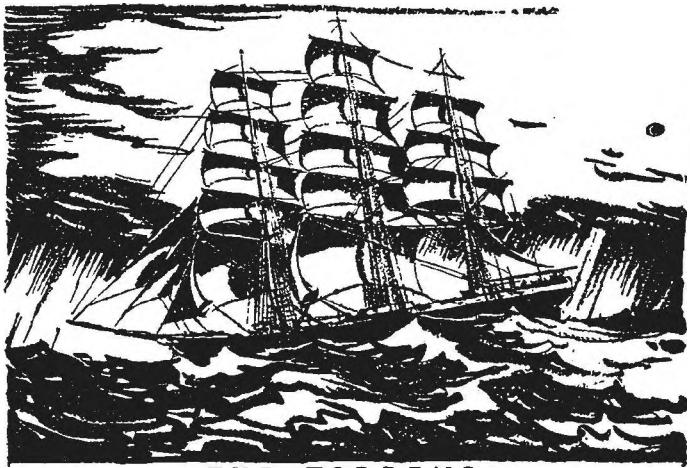

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Sea Stories Magazine

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Jane Hardy, Shipmaster

By Ralph D. Paine

(A NOVELETTE)

Enoch Brent was a tyrant and a scoundrel. But Captain Mike O'Shea could handle him in all ways, with fists and with diplomacy, on sea and ashore.

CHAPTER I.

THE ship chandler's shop on the waterside of Boston reeked of tarred cordage and oilskins, and was flavored quite as pungently with the talk of leisurely seafaring men. It was to the owner's interest to make them feel at home, these masters and mates who must lay in stores for the next voyage. There was always a bottle of prime old stuff in the cupboard, a box of cigars on the desk. Tilting back in a whittled chair was a robust, youthful man, gray-eyed and alert, who scanned the *Maritime Gazette,* and commented:

"Did you read this, Kennedy? 'Tis a wonder the divil didn't get him years and years ago! The old rip! I sailed with him once as a boy, and he was wrinkled and sun-dried then. The last of the old-time Yankee deep-water skippers, says the *Gazette.* Good riddance to them! They made the sea a hell for sailors, and the worst of the lot was this same Owen Crozier."

"There's no killing a barnacle like him," replied the ship chandler. "So you know him, do you, Captain O'Shea? Yes, he's actually got a vessel, a New Bedford whaler that must be as old as he is. He wrote me that he would tow here next week and refit."

"The Chilean Whaling Company has bought her, and he will take her out to Valparaiso. Will he stay in her, do ye think, or is it just for the voyage?"

"He has hopes, but his rough ways will be against him. Sailors are a soft breed, nowadays. They won't stand being kicked and cussed and mauled like when old man Crozier was in his prime."

"Oh, forget him, Kennedy!" quoth Captain Michael O'Shea, with an impatient gesture. "'Tis enough to give your whisky a bad taste to mention the hoary scoundrel. A hard job he will have to find a crew to go round the Horn with him if Boston still remembers the East Indiamen he used to be master of."

"There's sailors' boarding houses where they still drink damnation to Owen Crozier—a sort of tradition," said the ship chandler. "Aye, Captain O'Shea, I'll outfit his whaling bark, and charge him well for it, but he's no friend of mine. And what's the good word with you? For a man without a ship you take life easy and smiling. Anything in the wind?"

"I am taking my time," smiled the other. "My kind of a ship and a voyage do not bob up every day, as ye well know. 'Tis safe to inform you, Kennedy, that there are interests in Boston, big people and most respectable, that would like to see a change of government in a certain corner of South America. They have put money in mines and railroads. They like my references, but we have not fetched beyond the preliminary negotiations."

"Your references!" chuckled the grizzled ship chandler. "They're good enough to hang you anywhere south of Mexico."

"Easy, man, easy!" cautioned Captain O'Shea, his virile features engagingly humorous. "Will ye ruin my reputation as a lawful shipmaster who never dodged a smoke at sea or put a cargo of arms on the beach instead of through the custom house?"

Hearing some one enter the shop from the street, Kennedy quitted the little back room. Captain O'Shea glanced after him quite casually, but his demeanor changed. It indicated lively interest, and, a moment later, the most flagrant curiosity.

The visitor was a young woman. Wind and sun had tanned, not unpleasingly, a complexion naturally fair. Her eyes were as blue as the sea, brave eyes, but in them a shadow of sadness such as dwells in the vision of fishermen's wives who gaze oft at an empty sky line and wait for their own to come back to them. A double-breasted reefer of pilot cloth was flecked with salt crystals that had clung to its rough surface. She had removed a glove while waiting for the ship chandler, revealing a hand strong and shapely, but the knuckles were cruelly chapped. Her carriage suggested a noble physique, trained by experiences upon swaying decks to move with easy, reliant grace.

It was strange how well she harmonized with these surroundings, this essentially masculine place of business. And yet Captain Michael O'Shea, with the Celtic blood in him, intuitively trusting his impressions ahead of his judgments, surmised that she was profoundly feminine, and that her life had known little laughter.

The ship chandler was asking her:

"What kind of a run did you have, Miss Hardy? A rough March, this, and I was wondering only yesterday if your schooner was caught offshore in the easterly blow. What can I do for you?"

"I have made out my list of stores," said she, giving him a slip of paper. "Can you send them aboard to-morrow? Now I wish to look at chain cable, please. I lost ten fathoms and a stream anchor near Pudding Rock Shoals on Sunday night." A slow

smile, grave and sweet, illumined her face as she continued: "Yesterday's gale? Oh, I hove to and rode it out, and never lost my deckload of lumber. The *Speedwell* is an able vessel."

"And Miss Jane Hardy is an able skipper," returned the other.

They walked toward the chain lockers in an alcove, passing from the sight of Captain O'Shea, who promptly forsook the back room, and drifted within earshot. Pretending to examine a row of brass binnacles, he scrutinized this remarkable young woman, who commanded a schooner in the coastwise trade. It was not so much that she stirred his romantic fancy as that she conveyed an impression of thorough efficiency in her calling. That gale of yesterday was wickedly violent. He had been glad that he was not bucking it in a steamer.

He pictured Jane Hardy in streaming oilskins, giving orders to a crew and holding them steady, the laboring little vessel awash, the deckload menacing their lives. He knew why she had smiled at recalling it. She felt the shipmaster's honest pride of achievement of winning against such odds as the landsman never finds in the day's work.

O'Shea heard her say to the ship chandler:

"I had to send my mate to the hospital this morning, Mr. Kennedy. You know him. He used to sail in the *Speedwell* with my father. He is getting on in years, and has been ailing for some time. I need a man to fill his berth for the voyage home. Can you think of any one? I have never shipped men in Boston——"

"Of course you haven't, Miss Hardy," exclaimed Kennedy, his manner paternally solicitous. "You can't sign on Tom, Dick and Harry. It wouldn't do at all. You have always carried nothing but Pine Harbor folks that you know all about. And you have to be mighty particular about a mate. Let me see. You must have him right away?"

"Yes. I need him to help discharge cargo. I do my own stevedoring, you know. And there is new rigging to be rove, and sails to bend. And I am in a hurry to get back to Pine Harbor."

"H'm, a man that I can recommend to go with you as mate isn't easy to put my finger on. You don't want to fool with the shipping offices. Like as not they'll give you a sot that you will want to throw overboard. Let's ask Captain O'Shea. He has a sharp eye."

Miss Hardy turned to look at the young shipmaster, who had been so obviously maneuvering for an introduction that he blushed as if caught in the act. As Kennedy presented him he said, in his pleasant, caressing voice:

"'Tis a rare honor to meet you, Miss Hardy, nor will ye mind if I tell you, as one sailor to another, that we who follow the sea should be proud of the captain of the *Speedwell*."

Her dignity stiffened, and she was a little confused. A New England training had not accustomed her to such florid compliments, and perhaps experience had taught her, poor girl, to beware of men who showed their admiration. Nor could O'Shea help it that he had a dashing air and a dancing eye. So constrained was her greeting that he guessed what lay behind it, and was sorry for her.

Kennedy hastened to assure her:

"You can take his advice as if it was my own. Captain O'Shea has made some wild voyages, and I wish you had time to sit in the back room and hear his yarns. But his friends all swear by him. Can you find Miss Hardy a mate at short notice, captain?"

"And where would I pick up a mate that I would let go with her?" warmly cried O'Shea. "I know only two. One of them is in the China Seas. It will sound comical to ye, but the other one is in jail in Honolulu."

"I should not have troubled you," said she.

The intonation was so colorless, her manner so indifferent, that O'Shea was nettled. As a rule, he impressed women favorably. In this instance he was genuinely anxious to be of service. With a winning courtesy that almost disarmed her, he suggested:

"Does it trouble you to have a few more words with me? Have ye known Mr. Kennedy long? Does it mean anything if he vouches for me?"

"My father traded with him for many years. They were dear friends." She spoke with feeling, and her lip trembled.

"Then will you let me go as mate with you for this voyage?" demanded O'Shea. "I have nothing better to do just now. I sailed in schooners before I went deep water, and I have not forgotten their tricks. A qualified navigator, sober and reliable, Miss Hardy, and ready to sign on at your wages."

Old Kennedy slapped at his knee and shouted gleefully:

"Take him on before he changes his mind, Miss Hardy. You'll never have another chance to carry a mate that dresses as well as a State Street banker, and has bossed it on the bridge of a five-thousand-ton steamer."

Jane Hardy gazed at them in bewilderment, but she, too, had a sense of humor. Her mouth lost its sorrowful droop, and she caught the spirit of the situation.

"I am ready to take Mr. Kennedy's word for it," she said, with a ripple of mirth. I'm sure I don't know where else in Boston to look for a trustworthy mate. Captain O'Shea—*Mister* O'Shea hereafter, if you please—you will get your dunnage and report on board my vessel at noon. She is at the Cambridgeport lumber wharves. If you need an advance to go clear of your boarding master, I can let you have ten dollars, no more."

"That's rich! Give it to him. Teach him his place!" guffawed Kennedy. "Make him toe the scratch."

"Aye, aye, Captain Hardy," humbly quoth O'Shea. "Would ye like to see me discharges and certificates?"

"No, thank you. Mr. Kennedy will inspect them for me. What owners did you sail for last?"

It was the bold shipmaster's turn to look confused. With a wink at Kennedy, he asked appealingly:

"Would ye have me turn State's evidence against meself, Miss Hardy? 'Tis unlikely ye know the firms that have employed me. There was his majesty, the King of Trinadaro, for one. He is dead, poor man, or he would give me an excellent reference. I kidnaped him, but he was very glad of it."

The girl knitted her brows, and candidly surveyed O'Shea from head to foot, as if trying to appraise him. It was apparent that he puzzled her. Certainly he was a very different type of mate from the nautical relic who had been conveyed to the hospital. But his smile was so ingratiating that she could find no good reason to repent of the bargain. When she had gone from the shop he caught the ship chandler by the arm, and dragged him into the back room.

"Sit down, Kennedy, and tell me all about her. Why in the name of Heaven is a woman like that jammin' up and down the coast in a lumber schooner as a master mariner?"

The old man chewed a cigar, summoning distant memories, before he answered:

"It's most twenty years since I first set eyes on Jane Hardy, a long-legged, gawky, tow-headed little thing that used to sit on a beef barrel while her father passed the time of day with me. The mother died early. I never knew her. He took the girl to sea with him, and she was raised in the *Speedwell* except

when he sent her to school winters, and boarded her in Pine Harbor. She lost him two years ago—washed overboard somewhere off Cape Ann. There was nothing left to her but his shares in the schooner. He didn't even own the whole of the vessel. Captain Hardy never laid anything by. A good seaman, but he had a muddling head for business, and was generally afoul of hard luck. Jane was plucky and competent to handle the *Speedwell,* and she was managing owner, though that isn't saying much in the way of profits. She hadn't learned how to make a living ashore. And there you are."

"'Tis a pity," gently observed O'Shea. "A queer life for a woman. Handsome she is, too, but her face is thinner than should be, and there is sorrow in her heart. And 'tis not all mourning for the father that is gone. I want to know what it is, Kennedy. Maybe this is why I am bent on sailing with her."

"I don't doubt your motives"—the ship chandler raised a warning finger—"but you go as mate, mind you, and you're not hired to coax Jane Hardy to tell you her troubles. I was a young man once. Sympathy is a spark that's apt to touch off a flare."

O'Shea rose and offered his hand.

"Thank you for recommending me," said he. "Twas an impulse of mine to help the girl. The mail that comes for me ye will forward to this Pine Harbor. On the Maine coast, is it?"

"Yes. Up New Brunswick way. A week's voyage should fetch you there unless the wind hangs in the north'ard. Good luck. You are a whimsical man, Captain Mike O'Shea."

CHAPTER II.

The new mate of the *Speedwell* lost no time in packing a sea kit and setting out for the wharf in Cambridgeport. His first sight of the schooner pleased him. She was a two-master, old and bluff-bowed, but the white paint on her sides was fresh, the brasswork as bright as gold, and the sails were stowed and covered with the smartness of a yacht. A row of potted geraniums had been set in the lee of the after house to catch the thin sunshine of the early spring day. Their crimson bloom made a brave bit of color. A canary was singing in a cage hung inside a cabin window. The crew appeared to consist of two lumpish lads who were shoving pine boards across the bulwark, and a grandfatherly person whose white apron proclaimed him to be the cook. O'Shea stepped on board and went aft to report. Reluctant to invade the captain's quarters, he rapped on the companion hatch, and called Miss Hardy's name. She came to the stairway, and asked him into the cabin.

The little living room surprised him with its sense of homeliness and comfort. Rag rugs covered the sand-scrubbed floor, and muslin curtains were pushed back from the windows. Bookshelves were built into a bulkhead. There were magazines and a work basket on the table, and beside the chronometer a bit of sewing had been laid down. Jane Hardy was bareheaded, and had discarded the reefer. The white shirt waist and short blue skirt were a costume trimly becoming. As O'Shea beheld her in this pleasant environment, all he could think of was the incongruity of her nautical vocation.

"And where will I stow me things, Captain Hardy?" said he. "And what are the orders, if you please?"

"I shall finish checking up my accounts in a few minutes, Mr. O'Shea. Will you sit down?"

He remained respectfully standing, as befitted his position, while she returned to the papers upon the small desk lashed to the wall. His observant glance noted that a transverse partition

wholly shut off her quarters from the forward part of the cabin space.

"You will not have to use this companionway to get to your room," she explained. "The entrance is from the waist, at the other end of the house. The cook berths with you. You will have your meals with me, of course."

"I will be glad to eat with the men, sir—I mean, ma'am," he laughed at the natural blunder, "if it will be more agreeable to you."

"I don't expect it of you, Mr. O'Shea," and her accents were severe, as if to assure him that she knew sea etiquette. "I want you to keep the lumber moving to-day. You had better hire two or three longshoremen to help. We shall return in ballast."

"I will jump the cargo out of her," he exclaimed. "Ye will find me a driver."

"Please do not be too zealous with those boys of mine," said she, noting his pugnacious jaw and clean-cut, powerful shoulders. "They have had no rough handling."

"'Tis said I am a masterful man at sea, but ye need not worry about the lads, Captain Hardy. I am here to do things as you want them done."

Thereupon, he proceeded to break all records for unloading the *Speedwell.* After supper, instead of strolling ashore, he sat in his tiny room and chatted with the cook, whom he found to be a gentle, low-spirited patriarch, viewing the schooner as a secure refuge from the tribulations common to mankind. It was his habit to croak this Delphic summary of his own vicissitudes:

"I married three wives, and never had t' buy a cradle or a coffin."

Wary of intruding, O'Shea entered the cabin no more than necessary. At meals he sat opposite Miss Hardy at a table set with a certain simple daintiness, and was oddly conscious of the novel situation. Their talk ran to the business in hand, and skirted clear of the personal. It pleased him to find that she respected his abilities, and was grateful for his professional advice.

With his proficient aid the schooner was soon got ready for sea. On a bright morning, with a whole-sail breeze, the *Speedwell* stood down Boston harbor and hauled on her northerly course. A visored cap pinned to the heavy, braided coil of her fair hair, hands in the pockets of the blue reefer, Captain Jane Hardy stood beside the man at the wheel. The industrious mate was at the heels of the other lad and the cook, who were putting things to rights. It was play for him, and he was glad to be at sea again. The offshore wind was brisk and keen. It hummed in the rigging and drove a sparkle of spray across the heeling schooner's deck. Presently O'Shea swung himself up to the poop, and asked, as gravely as if the *Speedwell* carried a crew of twenty:

"About setting the watches, ma'am? How do you divide the ship's company, if you please? And do you yourself turn out at night in fair weather?"

"The men stand four-hour tricks at the wheel," said she, trying to hide a smile at this polite reference to her crew of three. "The cook lends a hand when needed. I take the deck until midnight, and then rouse out the mate. Of course, if it comes on thick or blows hard I don't go below."

Her voice gave him a thrill of pleasure. It had a rich, contralto note that made itself heard without effort, even when she spoke an order to a man at the foremast. To O'Shea she was a woman first and then a shipmaster, and he wanted to tell her to betake herself to her books, her sewing, and her canary, and let him manage the trifling task of carrying the schooner to Pine Harbor. That he should snore in his bunk while she walked the deck through half the night was an arrange-

ment so ungallant that he could not contemplate it without blushing for himself. But her serene independence checked his protest, and he was not ready to turn mutineer.

All day the wind came romping out of the west, and the *Speedwell* took it abeam, making brave progress with topmasts bending to the strain of arching canvas and a wake that foamed white against a heaving carpet of blue. Instead of dying with the sun, the breeze freshened, and O'Shea expected to be fold to snug down to a reefed mainsail. But there was nothing womanish about Jane Hardy's seamanship; and O'Shea, whistling blithely, and eying her with frank admiration, concluded that he could not teach her how to crack on and drive a vessel home.

At eight o'clock she firmly suggested that he turn in and take his allotted sleep. Meekly obedient, he went to his room, with no intention of closing his eyes. Kicking off his shoes, he lighted a pipe, and sat on the edge of the bunk while he gazed with an expression of amused interest at the recumbent figure of Matthew Halkett, the cook. The old gentleman was swathed in a flannel nightgown, and a knitted wool cap was pulled over his ears. Propped against a pillow, he held in one hand a candle, in the other a volume of sermons which he blinked at through steel-rimmed spectacles, and read audibly, in a kind of droning mutter. His seamed, bony face with the fringe of white whisker under the chin appeared less melancholy than usual, and O'Shea was moved to inquire:

"'Tis cheerful literature ye have there, I take it, though the book looks weighty, and too much like ballast to divert a frivolous man like meself."

"This Doctor Increase Merriam was pastor of our Pine Harbor flock more'n a hundred years ago," cheerfully vouchsafed the cook. "A man orthodox from keel to truck, Mr. O'Shea, and brimmin' over with genuine hell fire and damnation. What satisfaction and enjoyment can you git out of religion nowadays, hey? It's slops. Nothin' to it a man can set his teeth into."

Fighting shy of debate, O'Shea returned:

"I have drifted in the Red Sea with a broken propeller shaft, and ye cannot arouse me enthusiasm for a blazing hereafter. Can ye quit licking your chops over that flint-hearted old sky pilot and be sociable with me?"

Matthew Halkett laid down the book and candle and pulled the blanket to his chin.

"Will you tell me another story, as good as the one about your bein' marooned in the Caribbean Sea?" he asked, with childish ardor.

"Bigger and harder to swallow than that," agreed O'Shea. "But first ye will inform me about another story that I have caught a glimpse of on board."

"You mean about my third wife runnin' off with the one-legged tin peddler from Machias that had money in the bank?"

"No doubt it is a jewel of a romance, but 'twas not precisely what I had in mind, Matthew."

The old man looked disappointed.

"It made considerable talk in our village. There was quite a piece in the papers about it. What be you drivin' at, then?"

"'Tis about Captain Jane Hardy and the *Speedwell* and Pine Harbor," ventured O'Shea.

The cook squirmed around in his bunk, dangled his thin shanks over the side, and tucked a blanket about them before he rasped out:

"I ain't got nothin' to say. How do I know but Enoch Brent had suthin' to do with hirin' you as mate of this vessel? He owns part of her. Mebbe you're a friend of his."

"Now, who in blazes is Enoch Brent?" impatiently demanded O'Shea,

"His name is strange to me. You talk stern foremost."

"What makes you so terrible curious, I want to know?"

"'Tis a friendly interest, Matthew. I will find out for meself when we reach port. I am Irish enough to feel things in the air. Why is the girl running the schooner herself, instead of hiring a master? I cannot quite fathom that."

"Mebbe she can't afford it. She won't scrimp none in keepin' the vessel up. She buys a dreadful lot o' paint. Women has sentimental streaks, even the best of 'em, and the schooner has been Cap'n Jane's home so long that she's awful fond of it. She owns just enough shares to keep control. Mebbe there's somebody that 'u'd cheat her if she didn't keep an eye on the business every minute. Mebbe this same somebody wants to make her stay ashore by fair means or foul."

"And maybe he has a name that sounds like Enoch Brent," observed O'Shea.

"Well, now, how did you guess it? Ain't you real smart! And I didn't aim to say nothin' at all."

Matthew propped his chin in his hand and sucked a long breath between his withered lips. His faded, plaintive eyes searched O'Shea's face, and their quest seemed reassuring. There was not so much querulous suspicion in his voice as he said:

"I guess you ain't strickly orthodox, Mr. O'Shea, but suthin' tells me you're a real friend of Jane Hardy. Mebbe she needs you. The Lord works through queer instruments. I dunno but you was foreordained to come to Pine Harbor."

O'Shea let his pipe go out. He forgot his intention of watching the weather. Something larger than his own conjectures was hinted in the cook's words.

"There is a man ashore, then," said the mate, after a thoughtful silence. "And is she afraid of this Enoch Brent? I have seen that her mind wanders with thoughts that trouble her. Is it to meet him that she crowds on sail like a Gloucester fisherman? Tell me, Matthew."

"Great skeesicks, no! Cap'n Jane 'u'd carry the sticks out of this old packet to get rid of Enoch Brent for good and all. She's a-tearin' home to Pine Harbor to see the other one."

"The other one!" ruefully cried O'Shea. "And so there is no chance for me! But a girl that is sailing home to her sweetheart should be happy, with a smile on her lips and a song in her heart."

"You ain't been to Pine Harbor. You don't know Pine Harbor folks and doin's," the cook muttered. "You are a hold man, Mr. O'Shea. I wa'n't never a hold man, bein' spindlin' and peaked as a boy, and the older I be the timider I grow. Mebbe it's on account of bein' married so derned much. I dunno. But because you're bold, mebbe you can do suthin' for Jane when you land in Pine Harbor."

"Well, by the holy poker, I will have a try at it," and the warm blood colored O'Shea's brown cheek. "Your tale is cloudy, Matthew. It hints at things, and fetches ye nowhere at all."

CHAPTER III.

The schooner lurched and lay down so far to leeward that O'Shea heard the water rush along the deck and sob in the scuppers. He jumped for the door, and raced into the darkness. A flurry of rain hit his face. The stars had vanished, and the sea was impenetrably black. The wind smote the vessel in heavy, cadenced gusts. With a seaman's quick perception he felt the approach of the unseen squall, and knew it meant imminent danger. As he gained the poop, his shoulder

brushed Jane Hardy, and knocked her aside. Flinging an arm about her waist to steady her, he shouted:

"Do you want to capsize the hooker? Throw her into the wind, and let everything go by the run. 'Tis about to blow the hair off a dog."

"That last gust knocked me down," and the girl's voice was as unshaken as his. "Cast off the head sheets, Mr. O'Shea, and I'll tend the helm myself."

He bolted forward, roared at a sleepy sailor who was emerging from the forecastle, and whipped out a clasp knife. The blade slashed at the quivering jib sheet, and it twanged and parted like a great harp string. A moment later the staysail also slatted furiously, and the schooner, relieved of the dragging canvas, slowly swung into the wind, and buoyantly crashed into the beaking seas. Thereafter O'Shea seemed to be everywhere at once. The schooner was magically stripped of canvas, and the bellying folds secured before the squall came screaming out of the night. Its breath was wintry cold, and the rain was turned to sleet.

The tumult of wind and sea made speech futile. It was really unnecessary, for O'Shea and Jane Hardy worked splendidly together. Each knew what must be done, and whose duty it was. The first fury of the squall presently abated. It had swooped out of ambush like a monstrous, evil thing that hoped to catch the vessel unready. The aftermath was a steady blow, strident and powerful, which had no terrors for a well-handled schooner. Under a bit of jib and a close-reefed mainsail, she gathered headway and went reeling off on a long tack to seaward. The thick clouds split apart, moving rapidly, and disclosed here and there a misty star. O'Shea took the wheel, and told Jane Hardy to go below. She refused, and stood, silent and vigilant, clinging to the rail that ran along the roof of the deckhouse.

An hour passed, and the mate dumbly suffered martyrdom. He had rushed on deck in his socks, bareheaded, without a heavy coat, but while the weather held boisterous and the wheel taxed his strength and skill, he had no intention of quitting this indomitable young woman. At length the wind died with curious abruptness. It had blown itself out, and was likely to shift back to the westward before day. Jane Hardy called a seaman, and told him to steer. To O'Shea she said, as he danced upon his aching feet and flogged himself with his arms:

"Please come into the warm cabin before you take the deck. You have lost your sleep, but I will split the morning watch with you."

He smothered an impatient remark. Why in the name of all that was proper and sensible should she give his comfort a thought? What else was a man good for but to take work and worry off a woman's hands? Jane Hardy played her part with a scrupulous fidelity that made him long to scold her like a willful child. His sunny temper a trifle ruffled, he limped after her down the stair. The coal fire burned in the screened grate. The shaded swinging lamp diffused a genial light. The black cat yawned and purred a welcome. The contrast of this pleasing domesticity with the perilous turmoil so recently survived was singularly vivid.

Jane Hardy was trying to smooth her wind-blown hair when she turned to speak to the shivering mate, and observed his distressful plight. He had made for the grate, and was standing upon one foot, toasting the other against the wire screen. With a contrite gesture she ran to drag her father's armchair from a corner.

"Oh, Mr. Shea! You poor, silly man! Are you frozen stiff? Why didn't you tell me on deck? Let me

poke the fire. Then I'll put the kettle on, and make a pot of coffee in a jiffy."

He sprang to help her with the chair, sank comfortably in it, and held his feet in his hands. The posture was like that of a seated Buddha.

"'Twas worth a few sufferin' toes to be rewarded with the likes of this," he said, with a grin. "I have sailed the tropic seas so much that a bit of bracing weather finds me soft. And would ye have had me stop and shave and dress for a party with the vessel so near turning turtle?"

She was tying the strings of a white apron, which feminine procedure he eyed most approvingly.

"A rude man I am to say it, Miss Hardy, but I like ye better in that than in sea boots and sou'wester. Not that you were a petticoat sailor in the big wind to-night."

"Thank you for the compliment," she cried, with a pleased little laugh, and her eyes were as merry as his. "You have discovered the right way to blarney your skipper, Mr. O'Shea. It's most unprofessional, and you must never repeat it, but I'd much rather be praised for my housekeeping than my seamanship."

"Which is what I observed to meself when first I saw you in Kennedy's shop," sagaciously replied the mate.

"How very clever of you! Why, sometimes you are really as wise as you think you are. I have another confession to make. I wonder what you will have to say to this? I carried sail too long to-night, Mr. O'Shea. You know I did. I disdain your pretty compliments about my sailoring. When the sky became so overcast and the wind veered I should have called all hands."

This admission, so unlike her usual self-confidence, surprised O'Shea. It went close to his heart. Their acquaintance had struck a new and personal note. With a frankness to match hers he returned:

"You let your pride get the better of your judgment. You would show me that ye were no fair-weather skipper. You were afraid I would laugh in my sleeve at you. I admired ye for it. It showed you were human, like the rest of us."

"So you take it for granted I was thinking of you," she retorted, with a toss of her head. "You have an excellent opinion of yourself, Mr. O'Shea."

"'Tis too true, Miss Hardy," was the amiable confession. "I have lived on very good terms with meself so far."

"You had a right to be proud of yourself to-night," said she. "With my old mate I might have lost the schooner."

"You would not have cared what the old graybeard thought of you, and ye would have shortened sail sooner," he mischievously persisted. "Tell me, Miss Hardy, do you like seafarin' as a trade? If the fairies give ye a wish would you rather be somewhere else?"

She looked at him in a startled way, pausing at the cupboard with the cups and saucers in her hands.

"Why do you ask me that?" she queried sharply. "Do I seem unhappy and discontented?"

"Not precisely that, Miss Hardy. You are too brave a girl for that. But 'tis natural to suppose that you would sooner live ashore, where the life is not so rough and lonely for a woman."

"Yes, Mr. O'Shea. I wish with all my heart that I could live ashore," murmured Jane Hardy, a shadow of wistfulness crossing her sensitive face, and betraying more emotion than she was aware. He leaned against the bulkhead, a strong, ready man, who enjoyed hazards, and played the game of life zestfully. With his uncommon vitality was a sympathy quick and responsive. Such a personality invited confidences and drew friendship like a

magnet. Until this night Jane Hardy had kept intact a barrier between them, determined that he should know her only as a shipmaster.

He did not mistake this changed, more intimate demeanor for an awakening of sentimental interest. What Matthew Halkett had hinted in his vague, doddering way the girl herself had unwittingly revealed in this last remark of hers. Her love had already found its abiding place. O'Shea needed no more confirmation. Perhaps in other days by other seas a girl had tried to hold him ashore, her face as wistful, her voice as eloquent as Jane Hardy's.

"You wish to live ashore," he echoed softly. "And 'tis not because ye dislike the sea. The sea has been your home so long that to live in a house on the dry land would seem strange."

Patting the arm of the shabby old chair by the grate, she said:

"I learned to walk by holding onto this and making a difficult voyage to the leg of the table. I am fonder of the old *Speedwell* than I can tell you."

"I feel that we know each other better since the squall to-night, Miss Hardy. 'Tis the way of danger and toil to brush nonsense aside. Maybe ye have felt awkward because I am a young man—thirty years I plead guilty to—and am sitting at your dinner table and living under the same roof, as ye might say. I would forget it. I have most tremendously resolved not to fall in love with you, and a sad struggle it cost me. If I do, ye will never find it out."

She laughed aloud. There was no taking offense at this honest declaration. The coffee was ready, and she bade him sit down.

"I will take a look on deck first," said he, "and see that our lights are burning bright. There is only a capful of wind, and 'tis safe to leave the lad at the wheel."

When he returned, Jane Hardy was in the armchair, gazing at the coals. The contour of her body was relaxed and weary, her thoughts somewhere else. She did not hear O'Shea enter until he said:

"If you are dreaming of living ashore, 'tis a shame to disturb ye. I will take my coffee and say good night."

"Excuse me," she stammered. "I'm afraid I was drowsy."

"No wonder. And ye saw things in the fire that made you look happier than since the voyage began."

With a lovely tide of color, she replied:

"Now I am sure you have the gift of second-sight. Yes, I'll admit that I was happy, and that I was thinking of Pine Harbor. I suppose you will go back to Boston at the end of this voyage. Such a quiet little town as ours will seem very stupid to the great Captain O'Shea that ran away with the King of Trinadaro, whoever he is."

"'Tis a finer berth to sail with you, Miss Hardy. But you will not be needing me as mate again, I presume. I have a notion that there may be diversion for a two-fisted man in Pine Harbor. And what are the schooner's plans?"

"She must be hauled out. The seams forward have worked open, and leak in a head sea. After that I expect to load with lumber for Boston."

With a wicked twinkle O'Shea commented:

"If you are always in such a tearin' hurry to get home, no wonder ye have to haul her out for repairs."

The girl was discomfited, and, regretting the jest, he added, with a mien very manly and serious:

"Tell me this, as one shipmate to another: Have ye need of a friend that will go through hell and hot water for you and count it a favor? Do you mind if I stay in Pine Harbor and take soundings, as ye might say, till you

are ready to sail again? Let me boss the work on the vessel. I have a reason for asking."

To his utter amazement, her proud reserve was broken as one snaps a piece of twine. A woman tested by the stern and unexpected crises of the sea, her aspect disclosed a tragic helplessness so poignant that O'Shea was conscious of a sense of indelicacy, of stumbling into matters which she desired to keep inviolate. Her agitation was pitiful as she exclaimed:

"What do you mean? What have you heard? I don't know what to say. What can you do for me? What can any one do for me?"

It might have been a brother speaking as O'Shea replied: "Good night, Miss Hardy. You are tired, and you must not come on deck before morning."

"I will stand my watch, of course," she declared, with a flash of her wonted spirit.

"Then I will fasten the hatch and keep you below. 'Tis not the first vessel I have been obliged to navigate without the skipper's consent."

He went to find his shoes and warmer garments. The cook slumbered noisily, his lineaments suggesting a weather-battered gargoyle. Pausing to glance at him, O'Shea murmured:

"You silly old pot-wrestler! I have a mind to prod ye awake and extract some information. Who is this fearsome Enoch Brent that you talked about? And who is the other man she was dreaming of by the fire? And what is the cloud that hangs so heavy over Pine Harbor? But maybe I have stirred up trouble enough for to-night."

CHAPTER IV.

The sea had subsided, and the west wind was returning to blow the *Speedwell* home. The rain squall had washed air and sky wonderfully clear. O'Shea too, was eager to make port and fathom why Jane Hardy should feel both gladness and sorrow. He shook out the reefs and hoisted all sail. It seemed to him that he had plainly heard the call when first he beheld her in the ship chandler's shop, the wistful sadness in her eyes that were as blue as the sea. And so a bold man was needed to banish this trouble and make her in love with life, as God meant a fine girl to be.

"I will splice the ends of this puzzle," was his emphatic conclusion. "And the business of mine in Boston must wait."

When Miss Hardy came on deck after sunrise she greeted the mate with authoritative crispness, very much the master of the vessel.

"A fine morning, Mr. O'Shea. You are getting a good eight knots out of her. What lights have you seen?"

"Only one—white, with a twelve-second red flash. It bore dead abeam of us at four o'clock. I had no trouble in finding it on the chart."

"The course is still west-nor'west, then," said she, glancing over his shoulder at the heaving bowsprit. "You had better turn in after breakfast and sleep until noon, Mr. O'Shea."

"Very well, Captain Hardy," dutifully replied the mate, wondering if this could be the same young woman who had come so near to weeping in the cabin. He inferred that she repented of her weakness, and wished him to forget it. There must be no more of his persuasive sympathy. They were to be strictly master and mate during the remainder of the voyage. The courageous quality of her pride both touched and amused him.

That chronic timidity to which the cook had confessed afflicted him more grievously than ever. He evaded O'Shea's questions or pretended to be hard of hearing. Possibly he had been summoned to the cabin and scolded for gossiping with the beguiling mate. On

the last day at sea, O'Shea discovered him sprawled against the heel of the bowsprit while he eased his rusty joints and hummed snatches of hymns sternly orthodox. The gift of a cigar mellowed him somewhat, and he was maundering gently along about the weather and the need of a new galley stove and the merits of baking powder versus saleratus when O'Shea glowered at him and growled:

"What do you mean by refusing to answer civil questions? Did ye think I would overlook it? I have fried sea cooks in their own grease before now."

The ancient one, his hearing restored, raised his hands as if to ward off a blow.

"Don't look so fierce at me," he faltered. "I scare awful easy, and git trembly fits. And when I have one o' them trembly fits I drops dishes and breaks 'em. Cap'n Jane Hardy always speaks easy to me. It saves her buyin' new dishes. Will you lose your temper and git vi'lent if I don't tell you suthin'?"

"Yes, Matthew. And the last time I lost it there was three men buried at sea next day," gravely replied O'Shea. "All stitched up in their hammocks and shoved over the side in a row."

"I want to know! Wa'n't that dreadful?" Matthew pensively observed, now more curious than alarmed. "Mebbe you'll tell me a story about it when we turn in."

"A blazing whopper of a yarn. 'Twill make your eyes pop out like onions. Listen to me! I would not pry into Miss Hardy's affairs. 'Tis not becoming of me. But I am determined to stand by, Matthew. And is there not something more ye can impart to me about this Enoch Brent? The kind of a man he is?"

The old man nervously plucked at his chin whisker. His face was greatly troubled. Grasping O'Shea's arm, he confided:

"I'm scared of Enoch Brent worse than anythin' in the world. Says I to myself, feelin' all timid and goose-pimply: 'What if that man ever gits wind of it that I talked against him?' But all of a sudden I'm real brave, so I be. My hand ain't trembly a mite—is it, Mr. O'Shea?"

"Steady as a rock, Matthew."

"I'm a thousand times obliged to you. It chirps me up wonderful. But most the hull village of Pine Harbor is scared o' Enoch Brent. Not that he's rampagin' bad and desprit. He jest gits the best of everybody. I'm prayin' he won't git the best of you, but I dunno."

"So he is the big trouble that ye think I am foreordained to bump? One man? Pshaw! I thought it might be an army or an epidemic. And will it make Captain Jane Hardy happy if I wipe him off the map?"

The cook raised a hand aloft in a gesture like that of some Hebrew prophet calling down the fires of heaven.

"Jane Hardy 'u'd bless you. Pine Harbor folks 'u'd bless you. I ain't a blasphemin' man, and I never used no wicked swear words like most seafarin' men, but I wish the Almighty would strike Enoch Brent dead in his tracks."

It was such a tremendous outburst for Matthew Halkett that O'Shea felt something like awe. Presently recovering himself, he said, with his careless laugh:

"Enough! I could get no stronger impression of the man if we discussed him for a week. Thank you, Matthew. Now, remember, no more trembly fits. Ye must take my words for it that you are a brave man."

Soon after daybreak of a morning gray and almost windless the *Speedwell* moved in past the headland that sheltered Pine Harbor from the sea. So faintly breathed the air that the tall sails hung limp, and the wake was no more than a tinkling ripple. The tide which swirled by the weedy ledges and

sobbed against the channel buoys swept the quiescent schooner toward her anchorage. White and spectral she was against the water and sky that blended in a silvered, misty monotone. Sunshine would have made the landward prospect more friendly, less hard and cold. The bay was set in a rugged coast whose granite ramparts shelved steeply to the surf. From the inner shore the ascent was by no means so abrupt, and here the village sprawled beside its ancient wharves. Beyond it were brown, windy hills framed in stone walls, patches of woodland now leafless, and an occasional farmhouse.

O'Shea perceived that Pine Harbor had once been busier and more prosperous. Only one wharf showed signs of recent repairs. Beside it was moored a small steamer. Down to this wharf ran the main street between stores and dwellings which looked old and shabby for lack of paint. The by-streets were irregularly laid out, some of them no more than rambling lanes, whose low-roofed cottages were set behind small yards and picket fences. A place of several hundred souls, with a weather-beaten, picturesque flavor, it possessed the humble yet substantial dignity of a century of existence. To a stranger there is something melancholy in the aspect of a seaport town whose commerce has ebbed.

Because this was home to Jane Hardy, she saw it with different eyes. Nor was this a bleak, inhospitable coast to her who had known no other. Awake and on deck long before dawn, she descried the familiar landfall with an enthusiasm bright and girlish. From the outer bay into the harbor she stood at the wheel, and coaxed the drifting schooner through the deep-water passage. It was so gracefully done that the gallant O'Shea could not forbear to say:

"You may disrate me for impudence, Miss Hardy, but 'tis a handsome picture ye make, and a proper sailor's daughter you are."

The young woman who had been such a martinet for discipline at sea smiled at the compliment. It was no longer necessary to keep the mate in his place. Twinges of jealousy disturbed the region of his heart that another man was waiting to welcome her home to Pine Harbor. Going forward to free the anchor, he said to himself:

"'Tis not her sweetheart, whoever he is, that I should be troubling about, though I have an unholy wish to punch the head of him. My business is with the man that has made sorrow for her —the bogy that has put the shadow of fear in the town—the one they call Enoch Brent."

Pine Harbor was not yet astir when the *Speedwell* swung to her cable. The galley stovepipe was smoking early, and presently the cook ambled aft with a tray of breakfast dishes. Jane Hardy and the mate went into the homelike cabin and sat down at the table. The black cat rubbed against O'Shea's leg and yowled as though its emotions were deeply moved.

"The intelligent beast knows it is my last meal with you," said he. "Cats are sound judges of human nature, they say, Miss Hardy. This one approves of me, and would have me sign on for another voyage."

"But you don't want to, I'm sure. It has been a joke to you to take orders from me."

"I have tried to do me duty, and I trust ye will give me a decent recommendation," was the demure reply. "What is there for me to do to-day? I have no wages coming to me till the schooner is hauled out."

"As soon as there is breeze enough we shall tie up to the wharf, and discharge ballast. After that the vessel will go in tow to the marine railway on the other side of the bay."

"I will manage the ballast business,"

he assured her. "Do you go ashore right away, and enjoy yourself."

"Thank you, Mr. O'Shea! I have an aunt, my mother's only sister, who is crippled, poor soul. She will be waiting for me as soon as she sees the *Speedwell* in port."

Being a person of candor and unused to guile, Jane Hardy dared not meet the whimsical eye of the mate as he made comment:

"Such devotion does you credit. Seldom have I seen the like of it, for a girl that is master of a schooner to crowd on sail and risk blowing good canvas away to get home to a crippled aunt."

"I shall be pleased to have you call and meet her," was the extremely dignified reply. "She may think your jokes funnier and in better taste than I do."

With this the penitent O'Shea was left alone to stare at his plate. Soon the boat was shoved overside, and the two seamen scrambled in to row Miss Hardy ashore. The mate helped her embark with such solicitous care that she forgave him and called up:

"Don't be too anxious to get the ballast out, Mr. O'Shea. I'll come aboard before noon, and let you knock off for a good rest."

Bereft of Jane Hardy, the schooner was so lonely and forlorn that he heaved a most sorrowful sigh. Before the morning was much older he was delighted to see a breeze come rippling across the bay. Hoisting anchor, he let the vessel gather way, made two or three short tacks, and then cleverly shot her into the wind and laid her alongside the wharf. The seamen removed the main hatch, and he climbed into the hold with a lantern.

He was still below when some one jumped heavily from the wharf to the deck, and halted near the open hatch to say in a jovial, resonant voice:

"*Speedwell,* ahoy! Hello, there, Matthew Halkett, you sanctimonious old rooster! What kind of a run did you have? Where is Captain Jane? Gone ashore so early?"

O'Shea started up through the hatchway, his view eclipsed by the coaming, and saw only a pair of legs and brown clothes. A voice like that would belong to a man stalwart and big-hearted. Oh, ho! perhaps this was the lucky man who had won the love of Jane Hardy, thought O'Shea. It was a plausible surmise. He heard the cook reply:

"Fine a voyage as ever I see this time o' year. Cap'n Jane went off at six bells."

"She did, did she? I missed seeing her ashore. What orders did she leave?"

"You'll have to ask the mate."

"Where is the old codger?"

"He was took sick, and Cap'n Jane had him lugged to a hospital in Boston."

"A new mate, eh? I'd like to have a look at him."

"'Twill cost you nothing," exclaimed O'Shea, emerging from the hatchway and springing to his feet. He confronted a tall, heavily built man, a trifle too fleshy to be in the best of trim, whose years were edging on toward forty. The broad, smooth-shaven face, very ruddy, had a suspicion of a double chin. It suggested boisterous good nature. O'Shea's quick scrutiny was not conscious of details, but he was disappointed. At sight of him the other man stepped back, taken by surprise, and his black eyes hardened with suspicion which he tried to conceal as he said in his large, breezy way:

"Glad to meet you. I don't know your name. Your first voyage to Pine Harbor? Younger man than I expected to find. Quiet, old-fashioned town. I don't believe you'll like it."

"My name is O'Shea, Captain Michael O'Shea," was the crisp reply. He had begun to bristle with dislike. "I expect to stay in your town for some

time, and if I find it quiet 'twill be me own fault."

"*Mister* O'Shea, while you're mate of the schooner," and the sonorous voice was perceptibly testy. "What did Captain Hardy tell you to do this morning?"

" 'Tis her business and mine, and we can handle it, thank ye kindly."

"Look here! I am part owner of this vessel. My name is Enoch Brent."

"The divil you say!" murmured O'Shea, grinning with pure enjoyment. "I mistook ye at first for a more deserving man. I have heard of Mr. Enoch Brent. And 'tis my hope and expectation to know ye much better."

CHAPTER V.

On the schooner's deck Captain Michael O'Shea and Enoch Brent gazed hard at each other during a small silence. It was easy to read that the Pine Harbor man perceived this virile mariner, so clean-cut and carelessly sure of himself, to be most unlike any one who had hitherto sailed with Jane Hardy. Where had she found him? How had he impressed her? What did he mean by saying he intended to stay a while in Pine Harbor? Was there a covert threat in this easy assertion that if the town was too quiet for his taste it would be his own fault?

For his part, O'Shea had decided to play a waiting game, to flatter this consequential person, and get to know him better. Each was trying to take the other's measure. It therefore befell that a mutual curiosity, a sort of watchful neutrality, made the conversation less aggressive than at first.

"When will you be ready to take a tow from my steamer yonder?" asked Brent. "Miss Hardy sent word that the schooner must be hauled out. I own the marine railway, you understand."

"Ah, yes, I see that you are an important man," was the suave reply. "I will see that ye are notified as soon as the ballast is out of her. Will you come into me room for a cigar and a nip to take the edge off the morning air? I would ask ye into the cabin, but when a woman is master of a vessel a man feels that the quarters belong to her."

A nice feeling prompted the remark. The cabin was Jane Hardy's home. It would be something like profanation to let this man enter it. As owner of forty shares in a hundred of the *Speedwell*, Enoch Brent may have thought the mate's scruples far-fetched, but he affably returned:

"Why, certainly. Very courteous of you."

O'Shea and the cook had lived in the tiny stateroom without uncomfortably crowding each other. When this visitor sat upon one of the bunks he seemed to fill the cramped space, to convey much more strongly than when out of doors an impression of bulk and grossness. His flamboyant jocularity was laid aside. His mind was busy with speculation, his uneasy surmises near the surface. He poured a large drink of whisky into a tumbler, and O'Shea took a much smaller one.

"Risky stuff to get too fond of," said Brent, having tossed down the fiery ration unblinkingly. "But I never let it get the better of me. It's like other things. I manage to keep the upper hand."

Frowning at the empty tumbler, he paused and looked up quickly from beneath heavy, black brows. His temperance dictum may have suggested it to him to say:

"You were very particular to have me call you *Captain* O'Shea. You are a shipmaster, then? Looking for a ship, were you, when you happened to find the schooner shy a mate? A run of hard luck? I know seafaring men. Spend all their money ashore. Lots of temptations."

To Michael O'Shea, clear-eyed and athletic, shunning dissipation because he would keep mind and body at the fighting edge like a good sword ready for instant service, the inference was amusing. It suited his purpose, however, and he replied:

"A man will take any job that offers when he is stranded."

"But of course you don't intend to stay in this little schooner. I should say you're a deep-water man by the cut of your jib."

"I have sailed to foreign parts, 'tis true." O'Shea hesitated, and added, with a slight air of reluctance: "Well, maybe you know how it is—a master gets in trouble with a ship—perhaps 'tis no fault of his—and the lies and gossip about him spread from port to port."

"Sounds as if you might have got in wrong with your owners. I like your honest way of putting it." Brent beamed with sympathy. "I see you're an open man like myself. I'm afraid you will find nothing to do here. Miss Hardy will want a Pine Harbor man as mate. The lumber and granite trade out of here is pretty dull just now. Not many schooners in it."

"The *Speedwell* is a pleasant vessel, with a fine, capable skipper," pensively sighed O'Shea.

"I suppose you got pretty well acquainted with her during the voyage," smiled Brent. "High-spirited girl. She ought to quit this foolishness of going to sea and live ashore."

"Indeed? But I suppose she knows her own business."

The slightest touch of frostiness was in O'Shea's voice. He felt an acute disinclination to bandy words about Jane Hardy. Steering the talk away from her, he said:

"I will quit the schooner, I suppose, as soon as she is hauled out. Is there a hotel in the town?"

"Yes. A nice, clean little tavern. It's my property, but I hire a man to run it."

"From talk I heard dropped on the wharf I concluded that ye owned most of the town, Mr. Brent."

Brent removed his hat and passed his fingers through his rumpled black hair before thoughtfully observing:

"It wasn't talk that you heard on the schooner? That crack-brained old cook wasn't spilling nonsense into your ear? I had some business dealings with him several years ago. He defaulted interest on a mortgage, and I had to foreclose—nothing more than a house and barn, and a little grassland. Perfectly straight, simple transaction, but he nurses a grudge about it. He has no business sense."

"Matthew Halkett holds ye in the greatest respect, as far as my knowledge goes," O'Shea gravely assured him. "I am a man with an eye to business meself."

"You look it. An eye to the main chance, eh? Let no sentimental drivel stand in your way, eh? A man of just your kind doesn't often drift into this port. By the way, do you know the Canadian waters to the north'ard of here?"

An eyelid fluttered on O'Shea's cheek as he laid a hand upon Brent's knee, and confidentially answered the question:

"My dear man! Will I guess what's in your mind? You and I will get on better than looked at first. Ye wondered why I wanted to hang around Pine Harbor. A bold man who knows his way about need not be idle anywhere. You are not far from the Canadian coast. 'Tis a shame that so much good money should go into the pockets of the customs people. A fast schooner and an enterprisin' master now——"

Brent looked alarmed, and hastily interrupted:

"Not so fast. You jump at conclu-

sions. I was thinking of lumber from Nova Scotia to New York."

"Of course you were. But ye will not take it amiss when I say that when I first clapped eyes on you I sized ye up as a man of my own breed."

"What do you say to having supper with me at the hotel?" was the cordial invitation. "We can have a sociable chat with nothing to rush us."

"A pleasure that I cannot refuse, Mr. Brent."

O'Shea opened the door as he spoke. The overlord of Pine Harbor rose from the side of the bunk with a kind of lumbering deliberation, and made his way to the wharf. O'Shea's smile was inscrutable as he gazed after him and said to himself:

"The fresh air tastes good. I feel as if I ought to be fumigated."

Matthew Halkett was toddling in the direction of the galley with suspicious haste. O'Shea summoned him, and sternly asked:

"Were you eavesdroppin' outside my room, you old sinner?"

"I jest stopped a minute to take a hitch in my galluses," confessed the cook, and never had he appeared so lugubrious. "Mebbe some words come floatin' out. You was a-talkin' with him as sociable as two pups in a basket, Mr. O'Shea. You actually said you was goin' to eat a meal of vittles with him at the tavern. He's got the best of you already. It's a dreadful setback to me. Be you goin' to tell him what I said about him?"

"Nonsense, Matthew!" laughed O'Shea, but those reproachful old eyes disturbed him. "Would ye have me knock the man down the minute he set foot on deck?"

"I cal'lated you would," was the mournful response. "But I ain't got nothin' more to say."

"I will deal the cards and play them me own way," said O'Shea. "Do you live aboard the vessel in port?"

"No, sir, but Cap'n Jane expects me to cook for you till you quit to-morrer. She visits with her aunt, Miss Ellen Titherbee, that broke her hip three years ago come this January. Folks do say that Cap'n Jane provides for her, and pays the hire of a girl to look after her. I put up with my Brother William that's a ship carpenter by trade. We git on real well together for folks that's so near o' kin."

The two seamen had led the hoisting rig to a winch on the wharf, and all hands bent to the toilsome task of emptying the hold of ballast. It was perhaps an hour later when O'Shea straightened his aching back and idly gazed in the direction of the town. His eyes chanced to follow a road that dipped from sight just beyond the more thickly settled part of Pine Harbor, then reappeared and climbed along the close-cropped russet hillsides. At the top of a long slope was a small cottage, as white as paint could make it, against a background of pointed firs.

A woman came out of the front door and turned into the roadside, walking briskly toward the town. Distant though she was, O'Shea's farsighted vision recognized the pliant figure and graceful carriage of Jane Hardy. Presently she halted and stood as if waiting for some one. A man was hastening to meet her around a turn of the highway.

An unblushing spy, O'Shea dodged into his room, and came out with a pair of binoculars which had cost him fifty pounds in London. On certain unlawful occasions he had found them worth much more than this. They enabled him to behold the meeting of the twain with a sharpness of outline that made him more envious and unhappy than he would have supposed. In truth, something more than the binoculars was brought into focus—namely, a realization that his heroic determination to be nothing more than a friend

in need to Jane Hardy was in danger of shipwreck.

That audacious young man on the hilltop had fairly run to cover the last few yards of road between him and Jane Hardy, his hands outstretched to grasp both of hers. Thus they stood for a moment, then turned, and more sedately walked back toward the grove of solemn fir trees.

The favored suitor was not at all the description of man that O'Shea had expected to see. He was slender, and only a trifle taller than the girl herself. Against the sky line his boyish figure moved with an animation volatile and restless. It was possible to know when he was speaking, for his gestures had a dramatic quality. Of a certainty the young man was temperamental.

Before they passed from view behind the trees, O'Shea saw them pause again. The young man's attitude betrayed discouragement. His head was bowed, his shoulders sagged, his hands were jammed in his pockets.

It was like watching a scene in a pantomime. Jane Hardy laid a hand on his arm. She was bidding him take heart. Her pose was almost maternal. It made her appear the older of the two. Presto, he was himself again, head in air, shaking his fist at misfortune, striding on ahead as if defying the world. Then the firs hid them, a dark-green curtain thrust across this outdoor stage.

Captain Michael O'Shea slowly replaced the binoculars in the leather case, and said to himself:

"I might as well have been listening. 'Twas indecent of me. He is a lad of spirit, but I had a notion that Miss Jane Hardy would fancy a man more like—well, there is no harm in mentioning it—a man a bit more like meself, strong and upstanding, with a punch to him. And she picks a slim-jim youngster that I could spank over me knee. But Cupid carries a lee helm, and steers a queer course. 'Tis the nature of women, God bless them all, to go contrary-wise. Well, well, I have seen a moving-picture show that was most unusual. And I will sleep no better for it."

It was long after noon when Jane Hardy returned to the schooner. The delay had made O'Shea anxious and distraught. She nodded absently, and was about to hurry into the cabin when he asked, a little wistfully:

"Did you find things all right ashore? I hope so. There is nothing here that ye need bother your head about."

"Thank you, Mr. O'Shea. I shall be here to look after things until sunset. Would you like to take a little time off?"

She looked so careworn that he found it hard to hide his solicitude. With a smile and a sigh, he said:

"I should like to buy a package of pipe tobacco and some socks, if ye can spare me as well as not."

He shifted into his well-fitting shore clothes, brushed a stiff hat, and picked up a pair of dogskin gloves. It was an uncommonly smart and prosperous-looking mate of a Pine Harbor schooner that strolled along the wharf with just a touch of swagger. On the beach near by a row of fishing dories had been pulled above high-water mark. Seated in them were several elderly, amphibious idlers, among them Matthew Halkett, who appeared to relish the gossip of this club of superannuated salts.

O'Shea walked over to them, and good-naturedly inquired:

"Where is the leading emporium? I have shopping to do."

"He means a store. He wants to buy suthin," piped up a withered worthy in hip boots and overalls.

Matthew was glum and querulous.

"Bein' as you're so friendly with Enoch Brent, I guess you'd better go to the old store, Mr. O'Shea. They

were jest tellin' me that folks say *he's* bought it out. It's town talk, anyhow, though he says it ain't so. The other store is a heap sight nicer to trade with, Hamilton Elbridge's, but don't let Brent know if you go there. He wouldn't like it so much, and mebbe he wouldn't ask you to eat with him at the tavern."

"There ain't a brighter, more up-and-comin' young man in the county than Ham Elbridge," volunteered another. "And I ain't scared to trade with him."

"Most folks is," said Matthew, and subsided, his information as fragmentary as usual.

CHAPTER VI.

O'Shea turned on his heel, and left the company to discuss him with the interest befitting a stranger in the town. Presently, rounding a corner of the main street, he discerned a grocery store, so bright and spick and cheery and modern that it projected itself against the general dinginess like a startling surprise. No critic is so quick to detect sloveliness or disorder as your efficient shipmaster.

Halting admiringly in front of one of the show windows, O'Shea paid the store the highest possible tribute:

"It could be no more shipshape, if I was in command meself."

He sauntered inside, glancing at the varnished counters, the gleaming cash register, the attractively burdened shelves, the tall towers wondrously built of gayly labeled cartons, the pyramids of oranges, the speckless glass cases of candy and cigars.

Out of a storeroom in the rear came a slender young man who moved with a quick, light step that suggested unflagging activity. Lithe, vivacious, just a dash of olive in his cheek, there was doubtless in his blood some strain inherited from sunnier climes than this. Without being foppish, his dress had a fastidious, careful air, even in working hours, as though a man should be as well appointed as his business. There was something immensely, joyously youthful about him.

O'Shea was older by no more than five or six years, but this Hamilton Elbridge gave him a sort of ripened, fatherly feeling, as if a generation lay between them. The impetuous grocer was charming, no doubt of it, and O'Shea ungrudgingly acknowledged it. In a village store of the Maine coast he seemed a brilliant exotic. With a captivating smile that showed very white teeth he eagerly exclaimed:

"My dear Captain O'Shea, is it not? Miss Hardy has told me about you—what a bully sailor and friend you've been to her. By George, she didn't say much about your looks. I'm afraid I'm going to be jealous. I had made her promise to let me pick out the next mate of the *Speedwell*."

"You are not slow at the blarney yourself," laughed O'Shea. "But I like the frank way of ye."

"I say what I think. She says I say it before I think it. What can I do for you?"

"A four-ounce packet of cut plug, please. You have a jewel of a store."

Hamilton Elbridge flew behind the counter, and whisked out the desired merchandise with such incredible speed that it was like a feat of prestidigitation. The fascinated O'Shea demanded an encore and bought three more packets, one at a time. Then he was plied with suggestions, with enticements irresistible, until his arms and his pockets were laden with bundles.

"Hold on, my son," he cried. "As a salesman you are the divil and all. Do ye think I have chartered a schooner to fill her with your truck? You could sell spectacles to a blind man and make him praise God for the bargain."

Elbridge was instantly apologetic. It was most ungentlemanly of him to im-

pose on the good nature of a friend. With one of his ardent, dramatic gestures, he declared:

"I forgot myself. Business is a romance to me. I suppose this sounds crazy to you. But you like your own game, don't you?"

"I can imagine meself doing nothing else," was the earnest answer. "I perceive that you have fetched imagination into the grocery trade."

"Captain O'Shea, I once dreamed of being a poet," was the solemn assurance, "and now I am sublimely contented to be a grocer. That sounds like a riddle, doesn't it? Not at all."

"I will not try to guess the answer, my lad, but any man as lucky as you should be sublimely contented."

"I know that very well," said Elbridge, and his mobile features glowed with such fine rapture that O'Shea turned away to look at something else. He bethought himself of his real errand in the store, and launched one swift question after another.

The ingenuous grocer needed only a spark to set him ablaze. He was not one to suffer and be silent. He talked with headlong gusto. The tame, prosaic story of a struggle after business success was colored with the bright hues of adventure. The picturesque O'Shea, who had wooed the goddess of chance with a soul of a dreamer and the temper of a buccaneer, listened attentively. His first feeling had been one of dismayed surprise that Jane Hardy should have given her heart to a village grocer. It was an anticlimax, in a way. But this was no ordinary country grocer. The fellow had a way with him.

He had drudged through boyhood as errand boy and clerk in an inland city, indefatigable, aspiring. At night he scribbled and read every manner of book he could lay his hands on. He had first come to Pine Harbor as a cheap place in which to spend a week's annual vacation. It was wholly fortuitous, but of course he viewed it as the hand of destiny. Managing to upset himself in a dory, Jane Hardy's schooner had fished him out of the bay. This was the inglorious circumstance of their acquaintance. Shortly after this a distant relative had left him two thousand dollars. The windfall, together with his savings, enabled him to embark on the great adventure. Of the two grocery stores in the town, he had bought the stock and good will of the larger and more flourishing.

Success seemed as certain as daylight. Why not? He was young, extraordinarily industrious, and he knew his business. No moldly, old-fashioned methods for him. Pine Harbor looked down at the heel, but there was money in this town, a surprising amount of it. And there was still a good deal doing in fish, lumber, granite, with a considerable back-country farming region which had no other convenient trading center. The beginning was auspicious. He held the old customers and attracted new ones. The other store could not beat him by fair competition.

As he explained, with a kind of flashing vehemence, he was wide awake, and on the job fourteen hours a day.

"Every morning, when I came down, the world seemed bright and brand-new, Captain O'Shea. There was such a pleasant excitement about it. To meet the different kinds of people and win their regard, to wonder about them, to feel that this was your town, too, and that you would become more and more a part of it. And to make your store attractive, to put yourself into it, to see something more than barrels and bins and jugs! Why, it is like a bit of 'The Arabian Nights,' if you stop to think of it, that a store like this gathers its goods from all the strange, distant seas and lands—China, and Brazil, and Ceylon. You long to visit them. You build lovely air castles."

"Yes, I know," said O'Shea. "A man had better be dead than find no joy in his work. And is it as much fun to ye as it was a while ago? I misdoubt it."

Hamilton Elbridge lost all his sparkle. His emotions were apt to veer to extremes. He smiled no more. No, there was no more fun in it. Tragedy held sway. Several months before this, the tide had turned strongly against him. Trade diminished. His credit became impaired. The air was full of unfavorable rumors about him. On the surface he could find no reason for it. But, by Heaven, he wasn't going to knuckle under without making a fight of it. This was his great chance, the supremest altitude of his ambition. Never again would he have enough capital to set up in business for himself. He aspired to cut no great figure in the world.

"I was stupid not to suspect," he cried. "But I am the kind of fool who has a confounded lot of faith in human nature. I wear my heart on my sleeve."

"The trouble began after a miracle of good fortune came to ye? You know who I mean?" quietly suggested O'Shea.

"Yes. It was after—it was after I got to know Miss Hardy well," simply answered Elbridge. "Oh, I saw the motive at last. It was to smash me and chase me out of Pine Harbor. But I never dreamed that Enoch Brent was infatuated with her. He is so much older——"

"So people quit trading with you? What kind of a strange hold did he have on them?"

"All kinds. They were afraid of their jobs, afraid of their debts, afraid of their shadows. I can't explain it to you, but in a little old New England town like this almost everybody is afraid of something or other. They wouldn't feel comfortable without it. The good men go away. Those who stay behind are shy of gimp and backbone."

"And Brent was wise enough to see that he could be the big toad in this puddle, and make all the little toads hop when he said so."

"That's it precisely, Captain O'Shea. He works in the dark. There's nothing you can put your finger on. Stories about him? Yes, plenty; but you can't piece them together. The ugliest is about a girl that left the town a long while ago. She died a year or so later. He gets hold of more and more property. There is no bank here, and he lends money on notes. And he carries the county politics in his vest pocket."

"I would call him an unhealthy influence," was O'Shea's brief verdict.

"But how can I get at him? Suppose I tackle him with a club and give him a licking. He'd hammer the life out of me, and then clap me in jail. I wasn't going bankrupt fast enough to suit him, so he buys out the rival store, or stands behind it with capital. Why, everything has been marked down below wholesale cost, going for a song. Of course, he is back of it. I can't last a month longer against such dirty tactics as these."

"Is that all of it? Get the woe out of your system," advised O'Shea. "'Twill make you feel better."

Elbridge groaned and put his hands to his curly head. He was carried along to make a clean breast of it by sheer momentum. He would have continued talking to a lamp-post. Surcharged emotions had burst their bonds. Nor could he have found a confidant more responsive and sympathetic, a stranger and yet a friend who had no fear of Pine Harbor opinion.

"Oh, Lord, I wish it was all of it," faltered the hapless young grocer. "*She* says I can trust you. I didn't think I could trust anybody but her. Well, when I needed more working capital, when things began to go against

me, she insisted on coming into the business as a silent partner. I tried to argue her out of it. But she generally has her own way. You may have noticed it. Her faith in me was something beautiful. Everything would work out swimmingly. Meanwhile, she must keep on going to sea in the schooner until I got on my feet and we could afford a home ashore. So she raised some money, borrowed it on her shares in the schooner from an old friend of her father, Squire Markle. That money is gone, Captain O'Shea. I can't pay it back. My business is a wreck, with no salvage. And she has her disabled aunt, Miss Titherbee, to care for."

"A total loss?" murmured O'Shea, with a whimsical smile. "Dear me, but ye have upset the whole kettle of fish. And the large, genial Enoch Brent is responsible!"

"I'm sure of it. But he makes a mistake if he thinks he has got rid of me."

"'Tis his kind of tragedy, me lad. He has had his own way too long. He knows only one game to play. Maybe we can convince this Mr. Brent that he has a whole lot to learn."

A tall, heavy man in brown clothes had crossed the street and entered the store with a tread surprisingly light for his weight. For once caught napping, O'Shea had failed to perceive him. Enoch Brent examined the cigar case for a moment, and then his jocund laugh prefaced the greeting:

"Well, how's business, Ham? You and the other store seem to be cutting each other's throats. Glad I steered clear of the grocery trade."

"You big, sneaking——" passionately cried Elbridge, but O'Shea cut him short and replied in his stead:

"'Tis an interesting business, this, Mr. Brent. And how do ye find yourself this afternoon?"

"How are you, Captain O'Shea?" exclaimed Brent, his hearty cordiality of manner not a whit abated. "Don't forget your engagement for supper with me, will you?" Six o'clock. Since my cozy little visit with you this morning I have thought over your suggestion. About finding a berth for you in one of my vessels, remember?"

"I recall it, Mr. Brent," was the very curt reply. "I shall be pleased to discuss it at supper, thank you."

"Fine! Good afternoon, Ham."

With this Brent swung out of the store. O'Shea's glance followed him with a certain admiration. The man was no fool. He had seen the opportunity to stir up trouble, and seized it instantly. O'Shea knew what to expect as he turned to face Hamilton Elbridge, who leaned against a counter—pale, troubled, perplexed. His silent scrutiny was so disquieting that O'Shea spoke hastily, as though annoyed:

"And have ye seen your great-grandmother's ghost, or what is it? Had you not wit enough to catch the man's intention? 'Twas stupid of me not to sight him coming into the store. He heard enough to want to set you against me. A smooth article is Enoch Brent."

Elbridge was still harassed by grievous doubts. It cost him an effort to say:

"You are a friend of his? You have asked him for a job? Why didn't you tell me so? If Miss Hardy were not so sure of your loyalty——"

It was an awkward situation, just as Brent had meant it to be. O'Shea perceived that his campaign in Pine Harbor would require the most careful maneuvering. From the bottom of his heart he pitied Elbridge, but all he had to say was:

"Well, 'tis my advice to take Miss Hardy's word for it. I must choose me own way to fight the divil with fire."

With his boyish smile, the grocer impulsively returned:

"Why, of course. I suppose I am just naturally turning suspicious of al-

most everybody in Pine Harbor. Brent was trying to make mischief. It wasn't true that you have been friendly with him. But I wish he hadn't said those things. I—I——"

Giving it as an excuse that he must return to the schooner, O'Shea left the young man still leaning against the counter in an attitude of bemused introspection.

Jane Hardy was on the schooner's deck, and the two seamen were swinging out buckets of ballast. She brightened at sight of the mate, and asked:

"Did you meet Hamilton Elbridge? He was hoping you might drop into the store."

With a humorous twist of the mouth, O'Shea confessed:

"We met with delight, and we parted in sorrow. A very fine lad he is, and 'tis a generous man I am to say as much."

"Why, what happened? I found him really very nice about it, Mr. O'Shea. He didn't show a bit of—well, I really can't say it."

"Jealousy, ye mean, Miss Hardy. It was not that, though I would like dearly to give him cause for it. His mistrusts me in another quarter. He has a notion that I will tie up with Enoch Brent."

"How perfectly ridiculous, Mr. O'Shea! But you will overlook it, won't you? Mr. Elbridge has had a great deal to worry him. Poor boy, he is not like himself. Nobody knows what it is to have the feeling that a sinister, powerful enmity is working night and day to ruin you. He told you what it is?"

"Yes. You don't doubt my friendship, do you, Miss Hardy?"

"Oh, can you ask such a question!" she said, so unwaveringly that he flushed with pleasure and tried to hide from her the adoring tenderness that suffused those steadfast, gray eyes of his. It was safer for him to talk of something else. He urged her to go ashore forthwith, and he would remain on duty until the seamen knocked off and went to their homes. She consented, and he observed at parting:

"If you happen to stop at a grocery store on a bit of an errand for your aunt, please give him me regards."

CHAPTER VII.

Promptly at six o'clock, Captain Michael O'Shea, blithe and debonair, strolled into the low-studded office of the hotel, and found Enoch Brent lounging comfortably before a fire of hickory logs. No reference was made to the afternoon's interview until they were in the dining room. The supper was excellent, and deftly served by an apple-cheeked, bustling waitress who dimpled whenever O'Shea happened to glance that way. The room was quaintly, tastefully appointed, old-figured wall paper, a claw-footed sideboard, cupboards of Canton ware, quite the atmosphere of an ancient seaport tavern. Yes, he had done the old house over, Brent admitted. He preferred to live in it.

"I own several very good colonial houses," said he. "Families died out or moved away. Running one of them is lonesome business for a bachelor."

"A rich man like yourself is single from choice," murmured O'Shea.

For once Brent's train of thought was obvious.

"By the way," said he, "how did you like young Elbridge? Hard-working fellow, but flighty. Has an idea that he can't make his store go because people don't like him. Morbid on the subject."

"Oh, I made allowances. Tell me, Mr. Brent, have you really a vessel in mind that might give me a berth as master? I am not flush enough with money to hang around too long."

"Well, no. I'm sorry to disappoint you. I received a telegram not an hour ago that the schooner I was thinking

of had piled up on the rocks off the mouth of the Kennebec, and will be a total loss."

O'Shea knew he was lying—that he had turned wary. Brent became inquisitive, trying this tack and that, to discover how far O'Shea had joined cause with Hamilton Elbridge and Jane Hardy. It was all very cautiously and adroitly done, but, having made one disastrous slip, O'Shea was on his mettle to thwart a cross-examination. This round was a draw. They fell back on story-telling, and successfully entertained each other until Brent suggested adjourning to the log fire for a cigar.

The long windows of the office looked out on a piazza which abutted the street. Hamilton Elbridge, passing that way, saw the two men sitting by the ruddy glow. He heard Brent's sonorous laugh, and the mellow chuckle of O'Shea. It was a picture of intercourse friendly and familiar. All the young man's doubts and fears came surging back. How could he believe in the integrity of this Captain O'Shea? No decent man who knew the truth would behave like this with Enoch Brent. Had O'Shea sold himself? Would he be so brazenly open about it? Jane Hardy was confident of his unselfish loyalty. But he was a self-confessed adventurer. Sane and clear-eyed as Jane Hardy was, his dashing air and his blarney might have tricked her. Or else—— A thought so dreadful stabbed him that he quivered as if in physical pain. He despised himself for it. Jealousy is a frenzy so cruel that it spares not even one's heart's desire. He was young, wildly in love, and excessively emotional.

By noon next day the schooner was emptied of ballast, and Enoch Brent's steamer took her in tow. O'Shea persuaded Jane Hardy that he was competent to put the little vessel on the marine railway and see that it was properly blocked up. She therefore remained in the village, promising to inspect the finished work. The shipyard across the bay had been a busy place when many a stout coaster was launched from its ways, but now the sheds were idle and the machinery rusted. Several of the workmen's dwellings, which had formerly comprised a thrifty little settlement, were untenated. A tidal creek near by flowed through a wide area of salt marsh.

To float the schooner over the submerged cradle on the marine railway so that the falling tide would let her rest upon the keel blocks required nice calculation. O'Shea thought it advisable to tie up at the adjacent wharf until early morning, and then warp her into position at slack water. He would spend the night on board. Matthew Halkett had been told to go home and talk theology with his brother, William, but there was food in the galley, and O'Shea was competent to cook his own supper.

He was glad of a leisurely evening to write certain letters touching his own affairs, which had been left at loose ends. Making bold to enter the cabin, he seated himself at the captain's desk. From a hook inside it hung Jane's blue reefer, flecked with salt crystals, and the visored cap she wore at sea. The schooner was rocking gently to the wash of the waves from the harbor mouth, and the familiar garment, swaying to and fro, brushed O'Shea's shoulder like a caress. The touch of it troubled him. His pen was idle and his thoughts adrift. With a kind of affectionate deliberation he took the reefer from the hook and laid it upon a locker. He wished he had kept out of the cabin. The shabby armchair, the table, the dead coals in the grate, addressed him eloquently. The canary and the black cat had been conveyed to Miss Titherbee's cottage.

With the expression of a man whose emotions were much disturbed, he turned to the desk and drove himself to the task of writing. Progress was slow and fitful. Business details that concerned fitting out an armed steamer and slipping to sea in defiance of the United States authorities were not as keenly interesting as of yore. At length it occurred to him to write to his friend, the ship chandler in Boston. He began:

DEAR KENNEDY: A quick passage and a safe arrival. When I am as old as you, maybe I will be as wise. You warned me against coaxing the girl to tell me her troubles. Of course I flew in the face of your sound advice. I am in the thick of it as volunteer life-saver and general disturbance. Not for myself, if you will believe it, Kennedy, but to make her happy with a slip of a grocer lad. She doesn't want anything else. A stormy day it was for me when she came into your shop. She is a wonderful girl, and there is only one flaw in her: She has not the good judgment to prefer me to the poetical young grocer. The two of them are living the miracle that comes but once. And if I cannot have her, then I would sooner see her smile than sigh. This is a sign that I am hard hit, you will say to yourself. You have lived your life, Kennedy, and you will understand my confession.

There is a villain, a real one. He might have amounted to something as a bad man on a bigger stage. Here he is no more than a pompous slippery dog with a rotten heart and the soul of a peanut. Do you recall the beefy, rosy chief officer of the *Haverdale* steamer, him they called "Smiling Harry," the one I broke the nose of in Pernambuco for kicking a cabin boy when he thought no one was looking? This Pine Harbor sundowner is much like him. The villagers have never found him out. He looms big on their horizon. This is their whole world, understand? He is crazy to marry the girl himself. You can read it in the greedy eyes of him. He thinks he can do it by setting her hard and fast on the lee shore of misfortune and breaking her spirit so that she will have to turn to him. He is all wrong there, but it is his way of doing things. He doesn't know anything else, and——

The sound of the water outside, the grinding of the hull against the wharf, all the little, creaking noises that pervade the brittle fabric of a sea-worn vessel, made O'Shea unconscious of the thump of tholepins and the splash of oars, nor did he hear a quick footfall on deck. He did not look up until the heels of Jane Hardy's shoes clicked on the brass-bound companion stair. Startled, he jumped up, and was in time to catch her as a rug tripped her impetuous descent. Swaying to a cushioned locker, she held a hand against her breast, while her breath came painfully between lips from which the color had fled. O'Shea feared she might faint, and hovered anxiously near.

Never had he seen her look so winsome and girlish as now. A scarf covered her hair. Rallying a little, she unbuttoned the long gray coat, as if its warmth was oppressive, disclosing a waist of some soft white stuff, a bit of lace at the throat.

"Please don't look so worried," she panted, her smile brave but tremulous. "I ran most of the way—through the back streets—and down to the beach—and I jumped in the first dory I found—and rowed across the bay. I'll be all right in a minute."

"You broke in on me like a lovely ghost," said he, greatly tempted to sit beside her, and offer his shoulder as a prop. "I had just mentioned ye in a letter to old Kennedy. And you 'materialized' yourself, as the spook doctors call it. Rest a bit, now. Then you will tell me what is wrong. I have never seen you all dressed like a lady."

Shipmaster and yet a woman indeed, was Jane. Her urgent errand must wait while she naïvely glanced downward to satisfy herself that a pair of slim, patent-leather ties and an inch of silk stockings were discreetly revealed.

"I am so glad you like my clothes," she said, with alluring candor. "Dear me, what *am* I talking about, Mr. O'Shea?"

"About what I would expect from any right-minded girl, Miss Hardy. Come and sit in the big chair till you

get your wind back, and can tell me why you came flitting through the night."

With a grateful nod she crossed to the armchair, O'Shea steadying her while his fingers thrilled to the touch of her firm, rounded arm through the thin texture which covered it.

"How silly of me, to be so used up!" she exclaimed. "I thought I was strong enough for anything. I came to tell you that you mustn't stay alone in the schooner to-night. The girl who takes care of my aunt went to the hotel this evening to see a friend who waits on table—another Novia Scotia girl. It seems that Enoch Brent had two men there for supper with him to-night. I know them. They work on his steamer, rough customers from down Portland way. Something was said about an Irishman who wouldn't last twenty-four hours longer in Pine Harbor. Brent shut the talk up with one of his big laughs. It meant you, Mr. O'Shea. Our Eliza hurried back to the cottage to tell me. She had heard me talking about you to Miss Titherbee. There was no one else to bring you the message. So I came down the hill as fast as I could. I didn't dare take time to look for Hamilton Elbridge. It was after ten o'clock, and he had gone home. My aunt thinks it improper for him to stay later. It distresses her very much that I don't carry a chaperon at sea."

"Was there ever a loyal shipmate like you!" warmly cried O'Shea. "I cannot thank ye enough. But what kind of talk was this at the hotel to scare a grown man? 'Tis not like Brent to attempt rough work, is it?"

"I think he is desperately afraid of you," she replied. "He may be already convinced that you mean to fetch him up with a round turn, to uncover his schemes and punish him."

"I was getting on his blind side," sighed O'Shea, "but I made a bad blunder in the grocery store yesterday afternoon. He smelled a rat. Did Mr. Elbridge tell ye about it?"

"He won't say much about you, Mr. O'Shea. I have never seen him so absent-minded and silent. It troubles me. No, Enoch Brent is not apt to do you bodily harm, but I am sure he would not hesitate to hire his men to do it. It is a lonely place over here at the shipyard. And you are all by yourself in the schooner. If you were asleep in your room, wouldn't it be easy to stun you and throw you overboard? This may sound very wild, but I just couldn't rest until I brought you warning. Your kind of a man has never come athwart Enoch Brent's course before. There is no telling what he may do."

"Right you are, Miss Hardy. If the man intends to fight back it will increase me respect for him. I will stay in the schooner to-night, of course. 'Tis a pity I left my gun in Boston."

"I have my father's revolver on board. I keep it loaded," said she, rising and opening the door of a cupboard in one side of the grate.

He stood close to her as she picked up the heavy weapon, unlocked the cylinder, and tried to throw out the shells by snapping the ejector, in order to be certain that it was ready for service. The sea air had rusted the mechanism.

O'Shea was about to take the revolver from her when a vigorous effort caused her hand to slip. The sharp edge of the hammer caught and cut it painfully. Ordinarily she would not have flinched, but the day had been crowded with wearing episodes, she was utterly weary in mind and body, and her nerves were at the extreme tension. She looked at her bleeding hand, felt the sharp sting of it, for the gash, though small, was deep and ragged, and began to sob like a grieving child.

O'Shea had caught the injured hand in his, and was fumbling for a handkerchief. The provocation to kiss her

tears away was almost more than he could withstand. But in the finest interpretation of the phrase he was a masterful man, whose code of honor was as simple as it was inflexible. Keep clear of another man's sweetheart! And yet he would have been a wooden thing to stand there dumb and unfeeling. He held fast to her poor, limp fingers, and murmured consolations that sounded like endearments in that caressing voice of his. It was a situation which might easily have been misconstrued.

It was terribly misconstrued by a slender, olive-cheeked young man who appeared in the cabin at precisely the wrong moment. He was there instantaneously, as if shot through a trap. His approach had been unnoticed. Like one in collision with an invisible object. he rebounded a step or two, and stood, dazed, shaking like a sail in the wind. Incredulous, broken-hearted, Hamilton Elbridge wrestled with emotions so poignant that his mouth twitched, and the words would not come. The two victims of blind circumstance, it were most unjust to call them culprits, stared back at the accusing figure, and wondered why he should be making high tragedy of it.

O'Shea was first to break the silence:

"Loosen up, Elbridge, and quit the loony business. 'Tis not a theater you are in. Sit down. We are glad to see ye aboard."

"You're a liar, you blackguard!" cried the tempest-tossed young man, the blood rushing back to his face.

O'Shea understood. Resentment, fierce and indignant, possessed him. Not for himself, but for Jane Hardy, so outrageously insulted and condemned. He was in motion as he said, not loudly:

"Take it back, Elbridge, or I will hammer the words down your throat. So help me, I have killed men for less." But the girl had swiftly interposed herself in front of him, all her native poise and resolution returned.

"Wait, please, Mr. O'Shea. I insist. I want to know what he has to say for himself."

Her tones were low and even. It was strange to hear her speak so quietly after the passionate outcry of Elbridge.

O'Shea would have thrust her aside, but she held him fast by the sleeve, and he could not bear to use her roughly. Tense and alert he stood, with lowering visage.

Elbridge showed no fear of him, and addressed the girl, his mood changed instantly from wrath to sadness ineffable:

"I tried so hard to put this thing out of my mind, Jane. You were all I had to believe in absolutely. But when I met this dashing mate of yours, I couldn't see how you could help liking him better than me. It was always too wonderful to be true that you cared for me. I accepted it as I did the sunrise and the spring. You needn't say anything. Blast the day I ever saw Pine Harbor!"

Jane Hardy moved nearer him, watchfully keeping between the two men.

"Do you expect me to forgive you for this, Hamilton?" said she. "You are in a fog of wild, wicked jealousy. Where did it begin? Why did you come to the schooner?"

"Where did it begin?" he cried, pointing at O'Shea. "He was smooth and double-faced. There isn't a straight hair in his head. He coaxed me into confiding in him, and he was laughing at me in his sleeve."

She glanced fearfully at O'Shea, but he growled, with a shrug:

"I will hear his silly oration out. 'Tis my turn later."

The girl's grave, unfaltering demeanor, as though she were the one to sit in judgment, sobered Elbridge.

With stumbling haste he went on to explain:

"When I went back to my room tonight I didn't feel like sleep. So, after a while, I walked down Main Street, and out on the wharf. Two or three of the crew of Brent's steamer were awake, and talking on the lower deck. One of them had just been to the beach, and couldn't find his dory. Another laughed, and said he guessed the Hardy girl had taken it to row across the bay to her schooner. He had seen her running to the beach. I couldn't believe it, Jane. I had left you at the cottage a little while before, and you told me you were going straight to bed. I wondered what was wrong, and I came to find out. And I—and I—I found a pair of lovers in the cabin. You stole out in the dark, late at night, to meet him. I can never, never think of anything else as long as I live."

O'Shea had been tractable long enough. Jane Hardy tried to speak, but he was thundering:

"Not a word! The addle-headed boy that would dream of your breaking faith with him should be triced up and flogged to ribbons. I will stand no more of it. And he is lucky to get off with a drubbing."

A menacing figure he was as he jumped nimbly past the girl. Elbridge had caught sight of the revolver upon the table. The others had forgotten it. He snatched it up with one of his wonderfully quick motions. Heaven knows what his real intention was. Jane screamed, and tried to grasp the weapon. O'Shea lunged forward too late.

There was a detonation and veiling smoke which slowly drifted to the skylight. Captain Michael O'Shea was lying across the hearth, his stalwart frame curiously relaxed. He raised an uncertain hand to his head, and his fingers found the bullet wound.

With a long suspiration he closed his eyes and was still.

CHAPTER VIII.

In the white bunk of Jane Hardy's stateroom lay the bold Captain O'Shea. With never a thought of flight, the mad young grocer who did the deed had helped the girl carry him thither from the cabin. She took command as though the *Speedwell* were in a storm at sea. Bidding Hamilton Elbridge go and fetch a doctor, Jane tore clean cloths from a sheet. Then, with a shrinking timidity that fought against her courage, she bent over the inanimate figure in the bunk, a candle in her hand, and hoped against hope that he still breathed.

The brown hair was matted and wet, concealing the mark of the bullet. She wiped a red smear from the forehead. Otherwise the tranquil features of Captain O'Shea were unmarred. She was left alone to wait in an agony of impotent impatience. It was like a very dreadful dream. Possibly Hamilton Elbridge had taken to his heels in panic in order to save himself from the gallows. The wretched girl felt herself responsible for the tragedy. She was a bringer of misfortune to those whose dearest wish it was to make her happy.

The doctor was an interminable time on the way. It is plausible to assume that Captain O'Shea, as dead as he was, had too nice a sense of the courtesy due a lady to leave her longer in this dismal, solitary plight. At any rate, he opened his eyes, groaned, and was evidently trying to comprehend why he should be stowed away in the sweet seclusion of Jane Hardy's stateroom. She cried out in an ecstasy of joy and terror commingled, uncertain whether this was a convalescence or a resurrection. It was even more disconcerting when, weakly but stubbornly, this stricken hero hauled himself to a sitting position and inquired, with a smile:

"And where did I get such a divil of a thumping headache, if ye please?"

"Oh, dear, you mustn't talk!" she exclaimed, wringing her hands. "I am expecting the doctor every minute. A man who has been shot through the brain is not supposed to behave like this."

"Shot through the what?" His voice grew stronger. "Ye flatter me, Miss Hardy. A bullet would bounce off this teakwood block of mine. Oh, ho! I begin to remember. 'Twas the wild-eyed Elbridge that turned loose the gun."

"Are you really alive and talking to me?" tearfully implored Jane Hardy, gazing at him with the most absorbed fascination.

"I trust you mourned me loss. Sorry? Yes, I know." He winced and sighed. "But the look in your eyes would not bring a dead man back to life. Have you explored to see where the bullet went in?"

"I didn't dare to."

"Then fetch a hand mirror, and we will hold a survey. If I am actually drilled through the intellect I want to know it."

Between them they soon discovered that the scalp had been furrowed, stunning the owner thereof as if he had been dealt a heavy blow. Jane deftly clipped away the hair, and applied a compress. Then she commanded the patient to lie down and be quiet.

"If you are the least bit mutinous, Mr. Mate, I shall have to put you in irons."

"But I am full of delayed conversation, Captain Hardy. Why mind a crack over the head? 'Tis a trifle to what has been done to me."

"That sounds natural. The great Captain O'Shea is himself again."

"A braggart, eh?" said he. " 'Tis not manly to hit me when I am down."

The doctor presently arrived. Pallid, incoherent, Hamilton Elbridge had told him the patient was beyond mortal aid. A moment later Elbridge himself came below, peered in at the bunk, and discovered that O'Shea was chatting in the most matter-of-fact manner. Slumping into a chair, he covered his face with his hands, and sat there, unnoticed, crying his heart out for remorse and thanksgiving.

"Will he get well?" he asked at length.

"Of course," said the doctor. "The man is as strong as a horse. He must lay up for a few days. What about it, Miss Hardy? You are his employer."

"He will stay in the schooner to-night. To-morrow I shall find him quarters ashore."

"Are you going to sit up with him till morning, Jane?" timidly ventured Elbridge.

"Certainly. If Enoch Brent's men saw me come off to the vessel, as you say, there is no danger of their making a visit."

"May I stay with you? You need a man aboard. The first thing I shall do to-morrow, Jane, is to give myself up to the sheriff. I suppose I will have to serve a long term in jail for attempted murder."

O'Shea made himself heard once more before drowsing off:

"You will do nothing of the kind. 'Twas an accident, and I will swear to it on a stack of Bibles as high as the mainmast. You have come to your senses, and will suffer enough. I bear ye no ill will. 'Tis a matter between the three of us."

The schooner became silent. Jane Hardy stole into the stateroom, and waited until O'Shea was in heavy, slow-breathing slumber. Then she returned to the cabin and sank into the armchair. Hamilton Elbridge was moodily huddled upon the locker. He suspected that he had committed the most frightful blunder of his life. Jane Hardy had been given no chance to explain. As for Captain O'Shea, it was so noble of him to call the shooting an accident

that it was difficult to believe him a scoundrel.

"What do you mean, Jane?" he asked beseechingly, "about Enoch Brent's men coming to the schooner to-night?"

"They meant to do mischief to Mr. O'Shea," was the weary response. "I came to warn him. But I can't discuss it with you now, Hamilton. I want to think. This is the first real spring night—and we thought it so wonderful up on the hill with the stars and the fir trees. But I feel so cold and tired. Will you please build a fire in the grate?"

"Why don't you take a nap? I will stand watch and wake you if he needs anything, or has fever?"

"I can't sleep. My head hurts, and my hand throbs. I cut it just before you came in."

"I didn't notice, at first, that it was tied up, Jane. And that was why he was holding it? And telling you he was sorry? It's the truth. Of course it is. There was never in the world such a miserable fool as I have been to-night. I had to make a thorough finish of it in Pine Harbor. You are done with me, Jane. But don't tell me so now. You are a million times too good for me. I didn't deserve you."

Her sensibilities were benumbed. She could think of nothing she wished to say. The ship's clock on the wall tinkled the passing watches of the vigil. Toward morning Elbridge made tea, and Jane roused herself to talk a little, commonplaces, nothing more. Now and then the unhappy young man went on deck and walked restlessly. To sit inactive and look at the silent, sad-faced girl in the armchair drove him frantic with self-condemnation.

As six o'clock Matthew Halkett came on board, and, not finding the mate in his room, pottered to the cabin. Jane met him on the stair and explained:

"Mr. O'Shea has met with an accident. What makes you look so trembly?"

"I woke up last night," and heard suthin' like a pistol goin' off," mumbled Matthew. "My brother's house ain't more'n two stuns' throw from the shipyard. I was dreadful scared and worried. It wa'n't aboard the vessel, was it?"

"You are to ask no questions whatever or I shall hire another cook. Mr. O'Shea's head hit something hard."

"Of all the exasperatin' information, Cap'n Jane! Can I stay and help you?"

"Yes. I must go back to Miss Titherbee's this morning. Do you suppose your brother William would be willing to take Mr. O'Shea in for a week? William's wife is very capable. And the house is near by."

"I'll run over and ask 'em, if you'll wait, but I ain't particular friendly with Mr. O'Shea myself. Him and me had a fallin' out."

"Nonsense! Do as I tell you," and Jane stamped her foot. Matthew trembled violently, and fled to obey. As soon as O'Shea awoke, she told him of the plan. He was quite like himself as he vehemently protested:

"I have made trouble enough. 'Tis mortified and disgusted I am. Let me stay in my room in the schooner, with Matthew to wait on me. I will not mind the noise of the calkin' mallets while she is hauled out. And I can see that the job is done right. I will be on deck in no time."

He was a hard man to argue with, and Jane had to consent. Said she, with a grateful smile:

"Very well. I give in for once. You have tried to help me in every way you could, Mr. O'Shea. But your business is to get well and take command of a fine, big steamer, where you belong. Forget us Pine Harbor folks. We are no more than a queer little episode in your life."

"Which means that I have made a

sad mess of trying to help you, Miss Hardy. 'Tis true enough. The big talk is knocked out of me. I was going to twist this town by the tail, and look at me now. Nothing but worry and sorrow have I made for you."

She bade him a bright good-by, and went on deck where that abject slave, Hamilton Elbridge, was waiting to row her across the bay. It was her purpose to return later in the day and assume charge of the work of taking the *Speedwell* out of the water.

CHAPTER IX.

When Jane Hardy came in sight of her aunt's cottage she was dismayed to see Enoch Brent walking to and fro in front of the gate. Hesitating, she felt inclined to retreat toward the village, but her pride rebelled at showing fear of him. Bulky and bland and important, he advanced to meet her.

"Good morning, Captain Jane! Miss Titherbee said she was expecting you, so I concluded to wait. Been across the bay?"

"Yes. My mate was hurt. Nothing serious. Your men probably reported to you that I went aboard last night." She looked him squarely in the eye, and his gaze shifted. "Have you anything to say about it, Mr. Brent? If so, better here than behind my back."

"Bless you, no," he chuckled. "It's no business of mine. What about hauling the schooner out?"

"I shall attend to it myself."

"You look sort of white and played out, Miss Hardy." His hand touched her elbow, and she moved quickly away. "Too much work for a woman. I came up to have a little talk with you. Shall we go in the house and sit down?"

"I prefer it out here, Mr. Brent. I haven't had time to finish the accounts for the last voyage. Will to-morrow do as well?"

"The profits from my shares don't make me lose any sleep. Pshaw! take your time," and he beamed the friendliest interest. "I took those forty shares over to oblige your father, when he was in a hole, remember? It was a favor to him."

"I remember very well," said she. "He was always hoping to be able to buy them back. And I'm quite sure you cheated him out of them."

The air was cool, but Brent wiped his face with a large silk handkerchief, and his self-assurance was perceptibly shaken as he resumed:

"I'm interested in your welfare, Jane. I never did approve of your going as master of the schooner. Last night I sent for Squire Markle to come and see me at the hotel. You borrowed some money from him recently on your sixty shares in the vessel. I heard he had been caught short of cash since he made that loan to you. I've done a good many political favors for the Squire. He listens to what I have to say, like most folks in Pine Harbor. Well, to cut it short, I made him see it was good business to turn that debt of yours over to me."

"You did what?" she gasped. "You bulldozed Squire Markle into giving you my shares of the *Speedwell?* Then you hold every dollar of her?"

"I hold the collateral, Jane. The schooner is all mine unless you want to pay the loan and release the security."

"But I can't pay the money. Squire Markle might have let the vessel earn it a little at a time, and perhaps pay it off, but you——"

"You think I'm a pretty sharp business man, eh?" smiled Brent. "See here, Jane, don't look at me that way. You're a sensible, level-headed girl. What if I do own the *Speedwell* outright?"

"I wouldn't sail as master for you if I had to starve on the beach!" she passionately exclaimed. "It was bad enough to have you part owner."

"You won't have a chance. I think too much of you. I intend to hire a man to run her. You are high-spirited, but you won't fly in the face of reason. And now that you have quit going to sea, you will come around to my way of thinking. I never pestered you with sentimental talk, Jane. A girl that can navigate a vessel isn't apt to be that kind. But you can marry me whenever you say the word."

She did not appear to be listening. He chewed his lip, the massive head cocked, the hard, black eyes studying her face. Egotism and a will unchallenged had so warped a judgment otherwise shrewd that his plans were built upon the theory that, in the end, Jane Hardy would choose the path of least resistance. Her demeanor puzzled him, and he laughed uneasily.

"Thinking it over, are you, Jane? That's right. I know what's best for you. I'm considered a pretty able man. I should hate to see you trying to earn your living as a hired girl. But I don't know what else you are fit for ashore. No vessel owner'll want a skipper in petticoats."

Jane Hardy spoke slowly, musingly, her manner detached and impersonal.

"What a fool you are, Enoch Brent! Oh, what a wicked, simple-witted fool!"

"You're a great girl," was the good-natured reply. "Well, I'll call round again. You needn't bother with hauling the schooner out. That's my affair now."

"But Mr. O'Shea is sick aboard," she cried anxiously. "I will have him moved at once."

"Do as you like. I won't disturb him. Good day, Jane."

It was Hamilton Elbridge who carried the news to O'Shea that afternoon. The penitent grocer was in the throes of an immense reaction. He no longer hated O'Shea, who had refused to let him go to prison, who could forgive him for his incredible folly. As for Jane Hardy, he had not yet found courage to visit the cottage and further protest his unworthiness. And now Enoch Brent had taken the schooner from her. It was already talked about in the village.

Elbridge found a crew of Brent's men on the *Speedwell,* and instantly took alarm. He peered into the mate's room, a contrite, diffident young grocer, and exclaimed at sight of the bandaged head on the pillow:

"Do you know that Brent has sneaked the schooner away from Miss Hardy? Great Scott! Captain O'Shea, I'll have you carried over to William Halkett's house right away. This is no place for you."

"Hello! And how is the human firecracker?" was the unconcerned reply. "Old Matthew told me. He went on strike as soon as he heard it—refused to set foot aboard again. I found a boy to wait on me. I will not move quite yet. My head spins like a top, and 'tis more homelike to me here than ashore. Brent? Pooh, how can he touch me now? 'Tis his shipyard and his schooner. His watchman will be on duty at night. Brent is openly responsible for my safety. He would not dare trouble me."

"But I feel responsible, too," cried Elbridge. "You know very well what I mean."

"The argument we had in the cabin? Forget it! And what about your own plans? They are in a worse snarl than ever, thanks to me."

"I don't know what to do, Captain O'Shea. I might as well shut up the store and go away. I suppose Miss Hardy will never forgive me."

"I disagree with you there, me lad. But it might be wise to go away from her for a while. Absence has healed many a hurt. And you do yourself no good moping in the town."

"Perhaps you're right," sighed El-

bridge. "I wish I had waited for your advice in the first place. You told me you had to fight the devil with fire. That should have satisfied me that you were playing straight. Oh, what a criminal idiot I have been!"

"Tut, tut! No more of that!" O'Shea vigorously declared. "It comes to me that I have a good friend in Boston—Kennedy, the ship chandler, the salt of the earth. He may be needing a fine young man to break into his business. He is getting old, and his trade is large. I will drop him a line, if ye like. 'Tis a suggestion for you to chew on."

Elbridge was effusively grateful. The coals of fire were scorching his curly head. Presently he became abstracted, and O'Shea, quick to fathom his thoughts, spoke up:

"I will be going away as soon as I am fit. Maybe we can go down to Boston together. And I never expect to see Pine Harbor any more. Being laid by the heels this way has spoiled any schemes I had to put a crimp in Enoch Brent. Me own business will be waiting for me when I get well and on me feet."

The young man overwhelmed himself with reproaches. But he must talk no more. He called himself an unfeeling brute. Captain O'Shea looked pale and exhausted. Thereupon the visitor departed with his accustomed velocity. The doctor appeared a little later, bringing a note from Jane Hardy. She was so fagged that her tyrannical aunt had put her to bed. Mr. O'Shea was to be taken from the schooner at once, and she had arranged for him to have the best of care. He gazed long at her handwriting, and then slipped the note under his pillow before he said to the doctor:

"My thanks and compliments to her, if ye please. There is no other answer. 'Tis unlikely I will see her again. I will stay where I am."

CHAPTER X.

The schooner stood high and dry in the shipyard next day. Enoch Brent directed the men, and was on board several times, but he did not venture into the mate's room. A guilty conscience explained this odd behavior to O'Shea, who sent word that, with the owner's kind permission, he would like to stay until he felt well enough to go ashore. The invalid was glad of the chance to be alone. It seemed as though the wound had wrought some subtle change in his temper. For hours at a time he lay staring at the ceiling, paying no heed to the boy who attended him. When he spoke, all his good-natured banter was gone. He was sharp, irritable, almost surly. His sleep was fitful, and many times during the night he roused up to light his pipe.

The broken head was mending rapidly, and gave him little pain. One day he felt strong enough to get into his clothes and sit on deck for a little while. The tap, tap of the mallets had ceased. The men had begun painting, and the schooner would soon be ready for sea. O'Shea felt the good salt wind in his face, and saw the blue water roll beyond the outer bar. It called him, but he turned away, and looked longer at a brown hill behind the village. The cottage was invisible, but he found a landmark in the grove of firs.

Presently he beheld Enoch Brent climbing a ladder that was set against the bow. With a scowl and a shake of the head, like one clinching a decision, O'Shea beckoned him aft. Brent summoned a friendly smile, and shouted a greeting. He perceived that a change had come over the wounded man, and he somehow coupled it with the so-called accident in the middle of the night. The thing had smelled of mystery. There had been no real explanation. Jane Hardy and Elbridge had been estranged since the affair. All

sorts of theories had occupied Brent, and curiosity now overcame his distrust of O'Shea.

"I didn't want to bother you," said the Pine Harbor magnate. "Of course, you were welcome to stay aboard as long as you liked. Hard luck. Slipped and hit something, I suppose. Perhaps you forgot the main hatch was open."

"A man gets careless," replied O'Shea, speaking slowly. "See here, Mr. Brent, you laid a scheme to get rid of me. But your work was course, my dear sir. 'Twas too much like an amateur at the rough game. Now, don't look flustered. I have no grudge. Give-and-take, says I."

Brent was flustered, indeed, and his denial was stammering. O'Shea made no comment, and a long pause ensued. Then he looked up, and said, with heavy emphasis:

"I have had lots of time to think, twiddlin' me thumbs and feeling the wheels go round in my sore head. I have decided to tell ye that 'twas no accident. Young Elbridge shot me."

"Oh, ho! I guessed something was in the wind!" and Brent rubbed his hands together. "Why in thunder do you want to tell me? Want me to help you put him behind the bars? Delighted!"

An unpleasant thought occurred to Brent. It took him quite aback, and he was a trifle less ruddy as he exclaimed:

"I never dreamed young Elbridge was that kind. Why, he's dangerous. Liable to go gunning after me next. You see what I mean. He's all worked up over—er—certain business transactions. And now that I've taken the schooner——"

"Crowd a jealous, ruined, hair-brained man too far, and he will take the warpath," was O'Shea's grave assurance. "He ran amuck with me. And he has more reason to pot you. *I* am no rival of his. God knows I want to get clear of this town and all in it."

"But the girl has thrown him over."

"The more reason for him to be desperate, Mr. Brent. But you fool yourself. She will stick by him. This will blow over. I know ships, and by the same token I know something about women. Ye have made an unholy mess of trying to get rid of the lad."

Brent was impressed. O'Shea's stronger personality influenced him more than he realized. He felt bungling and provincial. And here were arguments that had the right ring to them. This briny gentleman of fortune talked logically. His motives were no longer fantastic. He knew on which side his bread was buttered. Enoch Brent was the man to join cause with.

"I thought I was going to get rid of him in pretty clever style," and Brent glowered. "But you're right. So you hate him, too? No wonder. H'm! I guess I had just as soon see you disappear, along with Elbridge. Going away, sure, are you?"

"Sure. As one business man to another, ye might hasten my departure. I am not flush of funds. As for the lad, it could be done Do ye catch the hint? It could be done. You want a clear field, and I want to square me own account with him."

The scheme was carefully worked out. O'Shea demanded his price, and it was a large one. But this was a business arrangement between men who had no use for "sentimental drivel."

It was on the night before the schooner was ready for launching that O'Shea received a telegram from Boston. He gave it to Brent, and said:

"Read that. 'Tis from Kennedy, the ship chandler. Captain Owen Crozier is in port, he says, fitting out his old whaling bark. This was all I asked Kennedy to wire me. He and I were talking about the old rip when I was last in the shop. Now the rest of it is plain sailing, Brent. I know Owen Crozier. Leave it to me."

"But are you sure you can get Elbridge aboard the bark without any slip? It sounds risky."

"Just because it sounds old-fashioned to shanghai a man for a deep-water voyage? This Captain Crozier is an old-fashioned skipper, and a hellion if ever there was one. I take your schooner for the run to Boston, with lumber. 'Tis easy for you to give it out that you are hiring me for a trial voyage as master. Give me a couple of your own men to work her. I want no mate. I will have them ashore when the job is done. And you appear in it nowhere at all."

"And you're sure that Elbridge will go along with you? Will he trust himself in the schooner with you?"

"I will handle that. 'Tis part of the bargain. And he will not come back to bother you, Brent. A few hundred slipped to Owen Crozier, and there will be a man lost overboard on a stormy night betwixt Boston Light and Valparaiso. He would drown his grandmother for five hundred."

Brent appeared shocked, and said:

"No more of that. I take your word for it. But five thousand to you is a staving lot of money. You earn it pretty easy."

"Then engineer it yourself," hotly returned O'Shea. "And a fine bungle you would make of it. Whose brains worked it out? Who takes the risks? Is it worth the price to you?"

There was no reply to this. Brent gazed at his shoes, and then glanced up, shrewd, calculating, suspicious.

"How do I know that you'll deliver the goods?"

"Because Elbridge shot me when I was unarmed. Is that reason enough, Mr. Brent? But suit yourself, you are a business man."

"Well, suppose I go to Boston by rail, not direct, but leaving here for Nova Scotia. Can't I slip aboard the schooner—after—after—the job is done? Then I can satisfy myself that the bargain is carried out, and you and I can have a settlement."

"A careful man you are. And ye trust nobody. Of course you are rich," O'Shea indignantly exclaimed. "Well, have it your way. Come aboard in Boston, if ye must. Watch the *Speedwell*, and I will hang a light in the main rigging."

CHAPTER XI.

When the schooner was floated and towed across the bay to the lumber wharf, O'Shea was able to take command. Hamilton Elbridge come down to see him, and was much perplexed and disturbed. It did not harmonize with his chivalrous ideas of Captain O'Shea to find him acting master of the *Speedwell*, in the employ of Enoch Brent. However, unhappy memories made him cautious of his judgments, and he was open to explanation. O'Shea was ready for him. It was adroitly conveyed, without saying so, that the voyage was really in Miss Hardy's interest. He accepted gladly when invited to sail to Boston and interview the ship chandler in company with O'Shea.

On sailing day the new master of the *Speedwell* received from Miss Jane Hardy a spirited letter, inclosing a small sum of money. What she had to say was this:

DEAR SIR: Here are the wages due while in my employ. No wonder you didn't care to come and say good-by to me. That you should sail in *my* vessel, hire yourself to the most despicable man in the world is totally beyond me. This is the pitiful end of all your fine talk. You were not the successful shipmaster you pretended to be. I cannot understand why Mr. Kennedy recommended you to me. I shall write him at once. I suppose your blarney deceived him also. "A loyal friend." You have turned out to be anything but that. I will confess that it is a great disappointment to me. And to sell yourself so cheap. Poor old Matthew Halkett was right. Enoch Brent got the best of you.

Instead of tearing this insulting letter in bits, Captain O'Shea tenderly stowed it in his pocketbook, and folded the money in a sheet of paper to be laid among his treasures. His comment was uttered with much feeling:

"There speaks Jane Hardy, shipmaster, a girl that knows her own mind. And I love her for it."

The tide served at nightfall, and the wind was blowing half a gale from the northeast. The *Speedwell* went thrashing out to sea in a white smother of foam.

It was five o'clock of an afternoon when the *Speedwell* crept wearily past Boston Light, and threaded a course among the anchored shipping until O'Shea sighted a dumpling-bowed, wall-sided little bark whose stumpy masts and high bulwarks gave her an archaic appearance. He hauled the schooner to and let the cable run out within a short distance of the ancient New Bedford whaler. Fidgeting about the quarter-deck was the spare, bent figure of Captain Owen Crozier, last of the old-time deep-water skippers who made the sea a hell for Yankee sailors.

Calling Hamilton Elbridge aft, O'Shea said to him in a pleasant voice:

"The schooner is well battered up, and I will be some time making her snug. Ye are sick and tired of it, and have not eaten enough to fatten a sparrow. Go ashore and stretch your legs. There is mail waiting for me at Kennedy's place. Get it for me, if ye please, and then have supper ashore. Come off about eight o'clock this evening. I will have leisure then."

Elbridge was delighted. As soon as the boat had returned from setting him ashore, O'Shea jumped in to pull over to the whaling bark for a sociable chat with Captain Owen Crozier. Half an hour later these two appeared on deck, and climbed into the boat, which returned to the schooner.

As they sheered alongside, Captain Crozier showed a very shining set of false teeth, and cackled:

"Hee, hee! Ain't so spry as I was. You'll have to lend me a hand. But I manage to make 'em stand round, though."

You would have expected to hear the old rogue's bones rattle as O'Shea hauled him on deck, he was so wizened and sharp-featured, wagging a goatish beard streaked with amber juice.

"You made them stand round on the voyage I sailed with you years ago," said O'Shea.

"I recollect," giggled the other. "You tried to lick my third mate. He stretched you with the brass knuckles. I nearly died a-laughin'. I've kept track of you since, Cap'n Mike O'Shea."

"A bit of supper while we talk business? The man I spoke of is ashore just now. I wanted him out of the way for a little while."

They went into the cabin, and Captain Crozier cried in his shrill, jerky accents:

"Fixed up fine! Hee, hee! Looks like a woman's room. Well, I guess you have a soft snap. I ain't findin' it so. Great guns, Cap'n O'Shea! I've been scrapin' the water front to get sailors to man my old bark. Soft-shell swabs! They'd rather go coastin' in lumber boxes like yourn."

"Then you are in great luck to have me give you a man, and a fat bonus with him," softly spake O'Shea.

"Five hundred dollars is more'n my wages for the voyage." Captain Crozier licked his lips. "It's an act o' Providence. Is this a teetotal ship? Talkin' is dusty work."

A bottle was produced, and they conversed in low tones until the cook came in to set the table for supper. Then O'Shea sent the boat ashore on an errand. When it returned, he gave the crew liberty until midnight. Shortly

after seven o'clock he hung a lantern in the main rigging.

Enoch Brent was waiting for the signal, and he came promptly. Knowing that the *Speedwell* would anchor close to the old whaling bark, he had been watching and waiting in a dingy little seamen's hotel of the opposite waterside. O'Shea met him on deck, and perceived that he was nervous and afraid of being found out.

"But I don't want the youngster to see me," said Brent. "I take no chances of his turning up later to put me in jail. Suppose the bark was stranded or dismasted at sea, and all hands rescued? It might happen before she works clear of Cape Cod."

"Stay on deck in the dark, aft by the house here," O'Shea replied. "The skylight is open. You can hear everything that is going on. 'Tis easy enough for you to keep out of sight while the lad is bundled aboard. Now, come below, and have a drink with Captain Crozier, and size him up for yourself. I will hear Elbridge's boat when it scrapes alongside. He will hire a waterman to bring him off."

Brent laughed, and complimented Captain O'Shea for his clever tactics. They went into the cabin, where old man Crozier was burying his beak in a glass of rum and water, this tipple thoughtfully provided by O'Shea, who guessed that the skipper of the whaler would bring with him a simple, old-fashioned thirst. He turned a rheumy eye on Brent, and chirruped:

"The friend you spoke of, hey, O'Shea? He's helpin' you to throw a little business my way?"

O'Shea nodded, and Brent took a chair—a sleek, prosperous figure, whose appearance curiously contrasted with that of the aged, dilapidated little scoundrel from the whaling bark. As if to convince Brent that he was the man for the job, Owen Crozier piped in his cracked voice strange, forgotten tales of voyages when seamen jumped overboard to escape the brutalities of bucko mates, of decks that were like shambles, of such incredible horrors in stately clippers under the Stars and Stripes that slavery has no blacker pages. The old man giggled, and his false teeth clicked as he told them. His was a candor naked and unashamed. He was of the old school. To him a sailor was a dog.

O'Shea listened, and observed that Enoch Brent was properly impressed. Dispelled was any lingering doubt that Captain Owen Crozier would hesitate at kidnaping the young grocer for a price. It was a rare stroke of fortune to find the whaling bark and such an unregenerate skipper as this, surviving from another age of the sea.

At length, Captain Crozier jerked out his watch and cried:

"Hee, hee! Where is the man, O'Shea? I want to get action and see the color of my five hundred."

Captain Michael O'Shea leaped to his feet, formidable, truculent, his intrepid face quivering with a very blaze of passion. His finger was within an inch of Enoch Brent's face as he shouted:

"Where is the man? *Here is the man.* Aye, here is your man, Captain Owen Crozier—this big, oakum-headed swine in the chair!"

CHAPTER XII.

Enoch Brent's broad, jovial countenance turned as gray as old canvas. His fleshy hands took hold of the arms of the chair as if to save himself from falling, and the knuckles were white. Otherwise he sat motionless. Wide-eyed, unwinking, he stared at O'Shea, and the only sounds were his slow, wheezing breath, and a senile chuckle from the surprised Owen Crozier.

O'Shea threw back his shoulders and laughed. It was his own mellow, vigorous laugh, good to hear. Discarded

was the hateful part which he had played so well. His voice had the lilt of a capstan chantey as he rolled out:

"Oh, ho! Enoch Brent! I tricked and I gulled and I played with ye. A grand man you were, and nobody could get the best of ye. And you took the bait and swallowed the hook like a booby fish. And 'twas your poor, silly notion that you were a match for Captain Mike O'Shea, that is known from Rio to Hongkong. A flabby, comical party you are, sitting there with your mouth open and all the strength gone out of ye. Sit there a bit longer."

Owen Crozier had wriggled around to look at O'Shea, and he shrilly rasped out:

"Here, what's all this play actin' about, hey? Are you jokin', O'Shea? Is this really the man you want me to take to sea? What about my five hundred dollars? You are the most amusin' cuss."

O'Shea bent over and plucked from the coat of the nerveless shape in the chair a distended leather bill book. Opening it, he stripped from the roll five one-hundred-dollar notes. The wallet, its contents scarcely shrunken, he carelessly dropped into his own side pocket. Tossing the money to Owen Crozier, he exclaimed: "There is your price. But ye need not get rid of the man at sea. Haze him. Work him up. Show him what a hard ship is like. He is overfed. Hammer the beef off him. And then kick him ashore in Valparaiso. And if ye are the shipmaster you used to be, Captain Owen Crozier, this same Enoch Brent will wish he had never been born. The five hundred will make ye interested in him. See that you earn it."

"Well, of all the entertainin' performances!" grinned the other. "You've certainly slipped something over on this fine, big, corn-fed lubber, but I ain't askin' questions. Payin' off a debt of your own, hey, Cap'n Mike? Bet you there's a woman in it. There always is. Hee, hee! Your man looks funny, don't he? I'll wake him up and make him step lively when I get him to sea. Will he make a holler when I dump him ashore? What about the American consul in Valparaiso?"

"Old Graydon, ye mean? He knows me well. I stayed with him when he had yellow fever. I will write him at once. And he will take my end of the story. And when Brent works his way back to this country he will keep his mouth shut. 'Tis clear sailing for ye, Captain Crozier."

Enoch Brent showed signs of reanimation. His face was mottled instead of gray, and he lurched forward in an attempt to rise. Choking, as if his neckband were constricted, he swore terrible oaths.

"What—what do you mean?" he growled. "You don't dare——"

O'Shea thrust him back into the chair, slapped his face, and savagely retorted:

"What do I mean? I watched you in Pine Harbor. I heard what people had to say of ye. And I planned to give you the kind of a dose ye deserved. Would I harm a darling of a lad like young Elbridge, whose little finger is worth more than your carcass? Would I allow you to insult a girl like Miss Hardy by breathing the air of the same town with her? Elbridge was plucky enough, but it took Captain Mike O'Shea to play the game with you."

A wordless bellow came from Brent, and he flung himself forward in a fury, but O'Shea dodged the clumsy attack, and let fly a fist which landed behind the ear. It was a jarring blow, and Brent staggered back, whimpering.

"Oh, stow all this rumpus," irritably observed Captain Owen Crozier, pulling out a pistol. "Here, O'Shea, bang him over the head with the butt, and put him to sleep. I'll whistle for my boat, and have him dragged aboard the

bark right now. Nobody will think anything of it. Only another drunken sailor."

O'Shea grasped Enoch Brent, and hurled him in the armchair. "A bit of business comes first," said he. "I would welcome an excuse to empty your gun into him, Captain Crozier. 'Twould not shock ye, I am sure. Now, Mr. Enoch Brent, the bogyman, listen to me! You will not want to go back to your town at all. The bargain you made with me will prevent it. How do you know but I had a witness or two hid in the schooner while we threshed it out night after night? Your lawyer at home has a power of attorney to handle your business. I found it out. You will write a letter telling him you are going away for your health, and he is to wind up your affairs. Instruct him, if ye please, to sell out the piratical grocery store of yours to Hamilton Elbridge at the lad's own terms. Also to turn over to Miss Hardy the forty shares ye own outright in the *Speedwell*. You bunkoed her daddy out of them, I am sure. If you helped him out of a hole, you first put him into the same. Her own sixty shares that ye hold as collateral will be released to her if she pays off the loan you took over from Squire Markle. Do ye get that? I am displaying the wisdom of a judge."

The quaking wretch found courage to ask one question.

"What about my five thousand dollars? Are you going to steal it, or what?"

"I fear you have no sense of humor," and O'Shea's eyes were dancing. "'Tis in me pocket, where it was meant to go. 'Tis my price for getting rid of a man, just as was agreed betwixt the two of us."

Then Captain O'Shea showed how much strength was in his compact, deep-chested frame. He hauled Brent to his feet, cuffed him several times, and hustled him toward the stairway like a bale of merchandise. Captain Owen Crozier was snarling and shoving, amazingly active, a vicious terrier of a man. On deck Brent attempted to make an outcry, but a hard hand was clapped across his mouth, and Owen Crozier pounded him between the shoulders with the pistol butt. A few minutes later a boat came from the bark. Brent suffered himself to be dumped into it, making no more resistance than a child. So inertly did he sprawl upon the bottom boards that O'Shea disgustedly remarked:

"The big coward has fainted. The heart of him is no more than mush. He will give you no trouble, Captain Crozier. Shut him up in a spare room till you go to sea."

"Aye, Cap'n Mike, and then I'll bring him to. Hee, hee! Much obliged. Hope I can do you a favor some time. You're an enterprisin' man. All the ginger ain't gone from seafarin' yet."

Waiting until the boat had reached the bark, O'Shea returned to the cabin, and carefully put it in order.

At length he took from his pocket the corpulent leather bill book of Enoch Brent. After looting the contents he tossed it in the fire. Counting the money, he assured himself that the total was five thousand dollars. This he wrapped in a sheet of white paper, and neatly tied the packet with a bit of twine. Then he wrote upon it:

A wedding gift to Captain Jane Hardy. From the mate of the *Speedwell*.

"'Twill be enough to put the grocery business in shape," he soliloquized, "and make the schooner all clear. There is no need for them to know whose money it was. I will take the credit of being a plutocrat in disguise. My conscience rests easy. 'Twas me duty I do as I did."

At the sound of oars he stepped to the bulwark, and helped Hamilton El-

bridge climb on board. As they entered the lighted cabin he saw that the young man was downcast.

"Well, me lad, how did you enjoy the big city? And was my good friend Kennedy in the shop?"

The boyish smile was troubled as Elbridge answered:

"Yes. Here are some letters for you. I met him, and sort of hinted at a possible business opening. I'm afraid there is nothing doing. His nephew has come in with him, it seems. The big city? Oh, I don't like it very well. I was happiest in Pine Harbor, of course. It's no use, Captain O'Shea. I can't do anything unless—until—well, there is only one thing in the world that counts. I have tried going away, but——"

"Come out of your dreams for a minute, lad," said O'Shea. "I have news that will take me from here at once. 'Tis good-by to you. A steamer is waiting, and I must go to sea. Old Kennedy will find a man to carry the schooner back to Pine Harbor."

"Whew, this is sudden! I'm terribly sorry. I was hoping——"

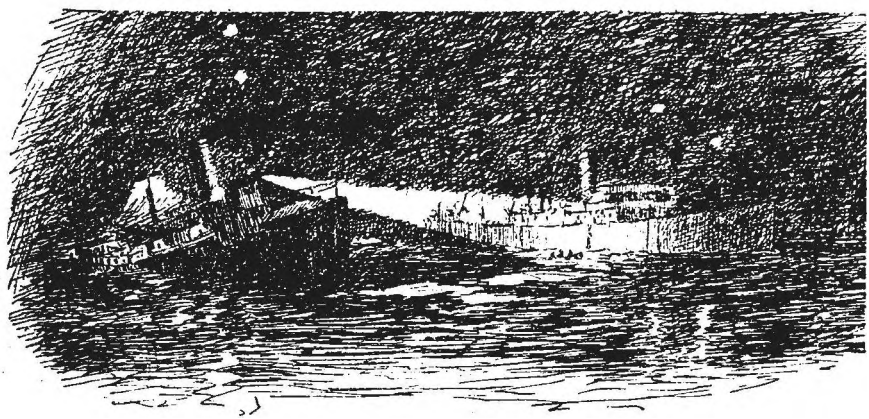
"That I would stay long enough to get the best of Enoch Brent?"

"Not so much that, Captain O'Shea, but I hate to have Miss Hardy misunderstand you."

O'Shea took the packet from the desk, and said:

"Give her this for me. 'Tis a trifle in remembrance. All I ask, Elbridge, is that ye make her happy. You are all she wants. As man to man, if I thought otherwise, 'tis straight back to Pine Harbor I would go. Well, 'I'm bound away.'"

He turned quickly and went on deck. The boatman had been told to wait. As they shoved off, Elbridge ran to the side, and shouted something in farewell. Seemingly Captain Michael O'Shea did not hear, for he made no reply. He was looking long at the white schooner. The night gave her a beauty gracious and serene, and her tall spars were delicately threaded among the stars.



A Strange Adventure

By T. Jenkins Hains

Far out in the south Atlantic, close to the line, St. Paul's Rock rises sharply from the water, for many years a strange sea monument. Few have explored its interior or, indeed, known it had an interior. And fewer still would venture near a second time, had they had as ghastly and harrowing an experience as did the group of whalemen in this story.

IT was my watch on deck in the morning. I had gone on at four—eight bells—and now the sun was just beginning to show light in the east.

The breeze, which I hoped would prove the edge of the southeast trade wind, was very light. It failed fast, and the warm smell of the southern ocean, damp and balmy with the sea wind, came softly athwart the vessel and mixed with the odor of coffee from the galley. The "Doctor" was busy with breakfast.

Oh, those tropic mornings! They make a pleasant memory to a seaman, whose life has so much deadly monotony—the damp, warm wind, the salty smell, and the brine drying upon the pins and rails, the sluicing down of the decks, wet with the night dew, the bare feet of seamen splashing through the salt flood as the head pump floods the deck, the clean, warm sea water flushing plentifully over the planks, and that followed by the smell of the coming breakfast to end the long hours of that morning watch from four. A sailor lives a life in that last hour.

And, as the day broke upon the equatorial ocean, I watched for the last time the now widening horizon lighting up with the day. To the southward, a ragged, toothlike point arose from the quiet sea. It lay almost dead ahead, and, as I focused the glass upon it, I saw it was the old friend of the windjammer or deep-water sailor—the St. Paul's Rock. Rising out of the middle

of the south Atlantic from an immense depth, the ragged tooth shoved its granite head pointed and clear of the blue sea.

Right in the track of ships, six hundred miles east of Cape St. Roque, and almost on the line, it lay, and I was glad it was daylight. No light is on this lonely outlier of both continents, and many ships pass it going around either Cape Horn or the Cape of Good Hope. It looked as if we would be in sight all day, and I felt glad we had not run wild during the night.

Slade was a good sailor, but he had worked hard in the midwatch during a heavy squall, when he had the vessel running off with wind enough to keep him clewing up his kites for some time, and then setting them again as the wind fell. We could go, under pressure, and had run at times a full thirteen knots, before I had turned in. With blackness all around and a rolling sea astern, we might have come on the rock soon enough without any warning except our dead reckoning, which was never very accurate.

"How does she head now?" came a remark from the companionway. The skipper had turned out to have a look around before breakfast. He must have smelled that rock.

"South three quarters west, sir," came the response from the man who held the wheel spokes.

"You can let her come up half a point—if she'll make it," he said to me. "I don't want to skim them rocks too close. Lemme the glass."

"It's the St. Paul's all right, just ahead, sir," I answered, giving him the glass.

"Wind fallin', hey? Seems like we're losing the trade—fierce luck. Tell Joe to get to work on that new topsail right after breakfast—something fierce—something fierce——"

"Aye, aye, sir," said I, and the head ducked below.

I was left alone on deck and knew I would not be disturbed again until seven thirty, when the sun would be nearly in the prime vertical and I would take the sight for longitude. I slipped out a furtive pipe for a stolen smoke and lounged on the rail watching the rock. I was curious, and my curiosity grew. Keeping off half a point would bring us close aboard, and why not get a good look at the place? I was not coming back. It would be my last chance. I slipped to the helmsman, who was a good man.

"Nothing to windward." I smiled and gave him a slow wink.

"Nothing to windward, sir," he answered, gazing right ahead. He knew what I wanted, and steered stolidly with a set face, but the vessel came slowly on line with the peak, or almost to it.

By the time I had taken the sight, we had pulled close aboard. I found that, according to our chronometer, we were just fifteen miles west of the rock, and, grinning at my poor navigation, I blamed it on the timepiece. The skipper came on deck and made some remarks as to my fitness to run a ship in tight places, but I knew he was playing with me, for he was even worse than myself when it came to figures.

The location of the St. Paul's was well known and carefully located on the charts. There was no sense of taking a sight with the rock in plain sight. It was merely routine. The second mate relieved me, and we went to breakfast.

When we came again on deck, the rock was close aboard. A belt of white surge showed around its base where the swell of the southern ocean broke and roared and foamed eternally. The sea was a deep azure, and there was now no wind at all. It was smoothing out into a mere undulating sheet, showing that the calm was far-reaching and would last. By nine o'clock, not a riffle showed, and we grew a little nervous

at the too close proximity. Gravity attracts all things, and a vessel, without steerageway, was not safe too close to a mass of land rising out of a couple of miles of water.

"Seems to me you run her closer than you ought for this kind of weather," said the skipper.

"Oh, well, I think we'll clear her all right. If we don't, we'll put out a whaleboat and pull off easy enough. We can tow her in a dead calm," I answered, feeling guilty.

"An' that'll be your job," snapped the skipper sourly.

In an hour I saw that he was right. We drew closer and closer. The roar grew louder. The men began to look askance. Clark looked at me queerly as he passed on deck. I knew he wanted to ask me how I came to run the vessel so close, but, of course, he would not do so. I never explained anything. It would not do for a chief mate to tell his thoughts. I started the men working at various jobs on deck, but saw that several were not too busy.

"Well, I guess we might as well get a boat over and take a pull, sir," I suggested as I passed the skipper.

"Yas, you can git a boat over when you're ready—nice cool morning for a pull," said he with a sour grin.

"All right, bullies, get the starboard after boat over. No whale gear in her—just the oars," I sang out to the men on deck. Then I turned to the Old Man. "Maybe you'd like to run over and see the blamed place while we're here, sir?"

There was no answer to this sally. He suspected what I had come in for, but would not accuse me openly. We had sailed together too long for argument. In an hour, we had the vessel moving slowly off the rocks and steerageway on her, while six men sweated and swore at the extra work. She was a small but heavy vessel, and she towed hard.

After we had worked away from the rocks, I hauled in the towline to go alongside. I came up, and the skipper looked over at his heated men.

"If you don't mind, sir, I'd like to row over and see what's on the peak," I said. I knew the men would like to go for the adventure. It would be something to break the monotony of the long days. It would pay for their hard pull.

"Go ahead if you want to, but don't be gone long," he granted.

Bram pulled stroke oar and grinned at me. James, who had been at the wheel, had snitched a bit. He had tended the towline, but he was sitting quiet now at the bow oar, and Johns, who sat next, shielded his face. Samson sat stolidly, while "Bahama Bill," the biggest, and Nate, another West Indian, pulled midship blades. With the powerful crew, the boat shot away as if she had a powered gas engine in her. Twelve horse would not have made her go faster. I sat comfortably at the tiller near Clark, my harpooner, and cast my look ahead to see what kind of a place we were about to explore

The rock rose bare, brown, and gigantic in the sunlight. The highest part was as high as our masthead, but of course seemed lower, the points stretching up, ragged and bare like monstrous fangs protruding from some submarine giant below. I looked down over the side of the flying boat, and the blue depths were clear as liquid air. We drew nearer and the snore grew loud and savage. Not a sign of any life, vegetable or animal, showed on the barren sides. While I swung the boat's head away to coast along the edge, a solitary Mother Carey's chicken flew away, skimming over the quiet sea toward the ship. That was all.

"Easy on the oars a little," I ordered, and the boat drifted a few fathoms from the rocks.

"Queer place all right," said Johns,

looking over his shoulder. "I heard tell there were ghosts of lost sailors on this here rock, sir."

I gazed down over the side again to see if the water shoaled at all. Nothing was visible. The peak seemed to point upward from immense depths. The chart showed twenty thousand feet, or nearly four miles of clear water below us. While I gazed, something did show. It at first looked as if I had made out some rocky spur way down deep. Then it wavered and grew plainer little by little.

A gray shadow flitted in the depths, twisting grotesquely. It rapidly grew in size. The boat drifted ahead slowly and showed that the thing was not stationary. Then up rose the form of an enormous shark. He was a monstrous specimen. He came up within ten feet of the boat's keel and lay still. We could see his eyes. He was not less than twenty feet long, and his broad jaws were fully three feet wide.

"Sho is a big boy, sare," grinned Bahama Bill.

"Sort of amiable companion for to receive us, hey?" I said as I saw John's face tighten.

"He's big enough all right," said the seaman.

"An' not too scary at that," said Nate. "He's big enough to upset the boat if he had sense enough."

"He's no good," sneered Bahama Bill. "If we had a lance, I'd show you what he is, all right."

"Give me the boat hook," I said. "Now see if he winces."

I jabbed the metal point savagely into the broad back which I could just reach. For answer, the monster rolled sidewise and, with amazing quickness, backed close enough to seize the shaft. The jaws opened and snapped, shearing off the iron point as clean as if done with a saw. It was not even wrenched from my hands. Then he rolled back and lay quiet below the keel, keeping his position as though he wished to be in the shade of the bottom above him.

"I reckon we'll leave him alone. Next time this boat goes out, she'll have a lance or iron in her. Nice thing for whalers to be gallied by a bum shark," I said bitterly.

We rowed ahead again close to the ragged edge, and I kept my gaze below, not wishing to run upon a sunken ledge with the grim inhabitant of the place waiting under us and following persistently in our wake. When we reached the middle of the mass, I suddenly saw another shadow below, and stopped rowing to get a look. Soon the mass took form.

Just beneath, and about fifty feet from the rocky cliff, a knifelike edge stuck upward. It was a solid ledge all right. It came close to the surface and reached north, parallel to the cliff. The eye could follow it down and outward where it sheered down into the awful chasm toward the bottom of the ocean.

I was satisfied that we could see fully six fathoms down that wall of stone before the light failed and the gray blended with the blue of the sea. It gave one a queer feeling. It was as if we were right upon the brink of a precipice which reached miles down into the ocean bed, and there was a feeling as if it was not too safe, that we might drop over. There was nothing to prevent it but a half inch of cedar between us and the abyss.

While we gazed and lay quiet on the sea, we became gradually aware of a strange noise. It sounded like the breathing of some imaginary giant, colossal in magnitude.

Bahama Bill gazed at me questioningly. I sat listening, and a creepy feeling drew along my spine in spite of the great heat.

"There ain't no whistlin' b'oy out here, hey?" asked Clark, grinning.

"Shut up and listen," I ordered.

The deep sigh came again and again,

at regular intervals. Below, the giant shark lay motionless.

"Row ahead slowly," I said, trying to follow the sound. "Row easy; just make her drift. Funny sound, all right."

The men were now silent. The sound seemed to have a queer effect on them. As we drifted along the ragged wall, I noticed great rifts and breaks. Some slits seemed to run back quite a distance where the sea for ages had beaten and washed upon the ledges. Suddenly, we opened a large rift in the ledge, the wall gave way in places, and ragged teeth poked upward at intervals, leaving an opening farther in. The sun was now high and the heat intense. Not a breath of air stirred on the rock, and the sound of the breathing grew louder. It made my hair creep on my head in spite of the heat.

"Sink me, that ain't a whale, sir," said Johns.

It appeared to be in the air about us, without fixed position.

"Ghosts, sir, that's what it is," said James solemnly, and no one laughed.

"Steady on the oars—back, port—give way, starboard," I snapped quickly. I had seen something, and the men, with strained faces, jerked to their work. A deep cleft in the wall showed right ahead now, and the boat headed straight for it.

"Row easy and stand by for quick work," I said quietly as the whaleboat shot into the shadow of the cleft and was swallowed up in the wall.

The cut ran in a curved channel which turned so quickly that it was not noticeable from a distance. I watched the water beneath for rocks, and saw the shark still following, deep below. The water was evidently very deep, too deep to see bottom. The cut suddenly narrowed to fifty feet in width, then, suddenly twisting back upon itself, it ended in a solid ledge.

"This is strange," I muttered. "This must be the end of it. I reckon we better turn her back and get out."

But we waited a moment. The swell from outside still rose and fell in this cut. The sea swelled, then lowered, and the heat was awful. The sun streamed down on us and the men were sweating profusely.

Suddenly, the whiffing breath of the sea whirred loudly. I fairly jumped as a giant sigh ended in a startling gurgle. I gazed at the wall ahead. Then the sea fell again, and I saw a black line growing larger and larger, until the top of a cavern showed clear of the sea for an instant. Full twenty feet across the top it was, and I gazed into its depths. Then the swell rose again, and, with a mighty sigh, the opening closed from sight. The air blew out furiously.

"There's your blamed ghost," I said to Johns, pointing. All were intently looking.

"It's blamed queer all right," assented Bram.

No one seemed to want to move.

"I'd sure like to see what's inside," said Bahama Bill. "Might find somethin' worth havin'."

"It's a queer place, all right. Maybe there's a passage running right into the mount'in an' full of solid gold," said Johns, grinning sheepishly.

"Solid rock like your head," I said. "At the same time, we might get a sight just to say we saw it. That'd be something."

The boat's head was swung close up to the hole, which strangely seemed to grow larger and larger at each succeeding sea. The water showed no bottom near. Looking down, we saw that the hole was submerged, but was fully ten feet high, and, if the tide would fall, we might enter. The black opening was plain below us. The air blew fiercely in our faces when the sea filled it, but each moment it appeared not quite to fill with the swell.

"Mighty like the rocks of Easter

Island," said Johns. "I was there whaling oncet——"

I knew the skipper would not approve of my keeping the boat out. It was not safe to be away too long. But the mystery of that hole was overpowering. We all wanted to see inside. The tide fell slowly. It seemed to stop at times, and twice I was on the point of turning about and going back to the ship. The men were tired and so hot that they sank down on the bottom boards and took turns throwing water on one another. No one would chance a swim with the monster lurking right below us.

Ocean rise and fall were not marked at this point. We were waiting for a bare chance, and the establishment of the St. Paul's was entirely unknown to us. It might be three feet, and it might be ten or more. The probability of it not being great was in my mind, for most tides in the ocean are not great unless reached by continental influence.

"She's coming clear now, sir," said Clark. "We'll be able to enter soon, but she'll fill again as soon as the flood makes."

"Oh, we'll leave long before that," I said. "I'll chance a run in anyhow, and see what's in there."

I now noticed that there was a strong flow from the hole. The sea seemed to flow from it with force.

"Easy now," I said, when we were able to get our heads beneath the dripping archway. "Keep your oars ready for quick work. No telling what we'll hit in there, so stand by for real work."

We slewed the boat's head fair into the entrance. No sooner were we inside than it raised away so high that we could not touch the top in the darkness.

I looked carefully over the side for rocks and saw the shark slink away out the channel. He would not follow. This looked bad, but I had decided to go in anyhow, even without a shark for a pilot. I did not relish his company very much, and was glad the brute refused to follow. Afterward, I thought of his sagacity.

"Way enough—let her slip along slowly."

We were going pretty fast now under the impetus of many hands along the side wall. I had no fancy to strike a ledge in there and knock a hole in the whaleboat. Turning, I saw the glare from the entrance growing dim. Then we turned a curve and it died out entirely. We were in total blackness. We pulled slowly ahead, and I took out my matches and struck a light.

We were in a cut, so narrow that the oars could not be used. It was hot and damp, and smelled strong of brine. Above us, the top showed a few feet distant. The interior was all covered with sea growth, weed, and a sort of kelp. While drifting, we became aware of a sibilant murmur of considerable volume. This grew, and Bram's voice boomed querulous and loud.

"Where are we going, sir?"

It was startling. I grew nervous. Bram was not ordinarily a nervous person, and, behind a flying whale, he was the coolest man I had ever seen.

"I think we done gone fur enough, sir. What?"

It was Bahama Bill, the giant, who spoke softly. Bill feared nothing, and, when he showed anxiety, I felt that perhaps we had trespassed far enough upon the domain of the rock. Several grunts of approval to Bill's query made me angry. The men did not question my authority, but I brooked no encroachment upon it and I kept on. Murmuring broke out.

"Shut up." I ordered savagely. "Keep the oars out, try to feel the sides and see if there's room to swing them."

A sudden crash told me that those to starboard had struck something, and the heeling of the boat and curses of the men told that they had been caught aback. The shock showed we were still

going at a fair rate of speed. The boat was thrown violently against the wall of the passage and scraped along until she stopped.

I ordered the men to shove her ahead and we went slowly into the black void again. Suddenly, we opened a wider stretch, and the boat shot ahead easily. The whispering grew louder. A glint of light showed ahead, and the whispering grew into a low murmuring roar. In the dim light, I saw the passage open out and the outer sunshine glint down between two peaks that rose fully fifty feet, straight upward.

The gloom gave way to daylight and, right ahead, I could see the water pouring over a ledge as if over a dam. The rush caused the low roar like a breaker, only lower and softer. The oars shot the boat ahead, and she swung around a slight curve, heading straight for the open.

"Easy on the oars—we're through," I said and watched the sunken ledge to see if there was water enough to cross.

It showed a foot deep on the rock, and the men gave way to shoot her over. She went across, scraping her keel, and was immediately in a basin, surrounded by steep walls of granite. Between the walls and over the ledge the sea poured as the tide fell, but we were now safe within the inclosure.

"Some close shave," whispered Johns.

"And some snug harbor," said Clark.

"Yes, and I believe we are the first who ever entered it," I said with some pride. "It shows that it's a good thing not to quit too soon on a venture. There's plenty of water in here, and I'm going to take a quick survey of the place to report it. I believe we have a few minutes to do it in."

"Better not stay too long, sir," said Bram. "That tide is falling fast."

We rowed around the crater, for that is what it was—the extinct crater of a volcano. At least it looked like it, as the walls were sheer up and down, and polished as if at some time a stream of fire and earth had driven up, as from a gun barrel. Not a fissure showed anywhere, and the pool was perfectly round.

The ragged peaks of the top edges shone in the torrid sunshine, and the rays made the inclosure like a furnace. It was awful. There was not a breath of air save that which came over the top. Not a sign of breeze could enter there.

The water lay still and blue and must have been of immense depth, perhaps miles deep. The eye could follow the sides of the pool downward fully fifty feet or more, and they were straight as a wall. Along the sides, however, were ledges of coral, like platforms, which overhung the sheer fall below. This platform was wide enough to walk on in places, and was clear of the sea, but would probably cover at high water.

At the mouth of the cleft was a lip, a ledge of coral, forming a dam over which the sea ran, and the murmur was now a low roar as the tide fell fast. It would evidently become bare shortly, and I hurriedly rowed the boat around the circumference of the pool, or crater, to make the most of it and take the tide out.

It was fully a thousand feet across the crater, but it looked much smaller on account of the stillness and depth of the water within. We came to a broad ledge, and I ran the boat's head on it and sprang ashore. Johns followed, stuck an oar in a crevice, and made the painter of the craft fast to it.

Then all hands jumped ashore to make a quick exploration of the ledge. Some turned toward the east and some west, intending to make the entire circuit and pass each other back to the boat before leaving.

I started toward the east side and walked fast to lose no time. I peered down now and then over the edge to see what was below. I noticed several small

fish dart out from beneath me into the blue void. I was aroused by a shout from Bahama Bill, who had gone around the other way. I looked and saw the men running toward him. A few hundred feet lay between us, and I hastened to see what was the matter.

Bill was bending over a small square object, partly covered with marine growth, but still showing that it was the work of man. Quick hammering upon it with an oar butt cleared it enough to show that it was an iron chest, a couple of feet square, and too heavy for the giant negro to move from the ledge. The top of it had been clear of water and only the lower part had been submerged.

Clearing the rust and débris from the top, we saw it was bound with huge iron bands which encircled it. Four of us tried to lift it, but we could not. It was set firmly in the ledge.

"Get another oar. Get something and break it open," I said. The men crowded about the find and did not wish to leave it an instant. Finally Bram and Nate, the negro, went for tools.

But there was nothing in the boat to use to break the heavy iron. It resisted all our efforts either to move or open the top. It was as firmly set as though it had been part of the mysterious mountain itself.

"Stan' clear," growled Bahama Bill, taking the butt of an oar and aiming it at a place near the band.

With mighty strokes he banged and crashed upon it, striking the blows exactly in the same spot. Nothing happened for a long time, and the huge diver panted with the heat. He struck and drove on at the top steadily, and, after fully ten minutes, something seemed to give under the impact. The band moved a little. Bram took up the oar Bill dropped in disgust.

For ten minutes more, he struck and drove the heavy end upon the hand, and it finally showed signs of giving way. The excitement of the men and their mutterings of glee at finding a treasure caused all to forget the flying minutes. Time and tide were not waiting for us. We had found an immense treasure and we forgot everything else. We wanted to tear the box loose with our bare hands.

All grasped it and pulled and hauled. It was no use—the thing was too large and heavy. The chest must have weighed fully a ton. But that it contained something of value we were sure. It had the look of a treasure chest, and we were half wild.

Meanwhile, the tide fell, and the lip of the crater came clear, shutting us off from the outside world as clearly as though we had been marooned upon some other planet.

The pitiless sunshine and furnacelike heat were forgotten for the time while one after another strove to break that iron band. We only succeeded in smashing up a perfectly good oar which, had we been sane, we would have remembered the Old Man would make us pay for and pay for heavily.

Men such as formed our crew would not be denied. Their united strength and determined efforts finally won out. The iron band gave way with a loud crack. The men tore off the lid with hands so eager that it fell over the side of the ledge and sank.

Shouts and exclamations drowned out my cries to stand clear. I shoved them aside, and there before us lay an immense mass of metal bars, chunks and ingots. We grabbed them and felt their weight. They were mostly silver. Below, a yellow glint, dull from age, showed gold. There were masses of it.

Yes, there were bars of gold and silver packed carefully in the iron box, and we had found them. We yelled, we sang, we danced about that dangerous ledge like wild men. The tide was forgotten. We cared nothing for tides. We were rich men.

"Some pirate's cave," yelled Clark, pulling out the bars and dropping them upon the ledge. We cleared the chest, and at the bottom lay a small brass-bound box. It was but a foot long and a few inches thick. Thinking it might contain gems, I carried it to the whaleboat and pried it open. The men crowded about me.

"I knowed a fellow what found some kale on the Jamaica coast——" began Nate.

But, as I tore off the lid, there showed nothing but papers. They were yellow with age, but were all dry, and, with the sweat rolling down my face in streams, I took up one and tried to read it in the strong light. It read as follows:

Sept., 1567.

Herein Ye Wille finde the Ship's treasure intacte. These moneyes are true Belongings of Ye Barque *Seawinde* and they should be sente to Messers Johns and Smithe, 168 Strande, London, Eng. They are Ye true Earnings of Ye trade with Ye natives of Peru and Ye West Coast. They are Honestly gotten and moneyes gallantly earned in trade. I hide them here as Ye Spanish Fleete is near and I fear me they will be loste. In token of which I set my hand and seal——

Here followed the scrawl, hardly legible, of Master William Smithe, in the employ of the firm that had sent ships with the Frobisher fleet to the west coast of South America. Whether they were honorably gained or not was a matter that concerned us not at all. We had them, and there was a lot of money there, if the gold and silver bars and chunks were not too much alloyed.

It was no pirate's treasure, but just the honest earnings of some hard-working skipper who used this mysterious crevice for a hiding place from the marauding Spaniard in the offing. That he had expected to become a victim of the Spanish guns showed from his request that the money be sent to the address given. Still, the age might make some difference. Messrs. Johns and Smithe might have left no heirs.

"We cannot keep the stuff," I announced. "It belongs to these folks here in this paper."

Loud grunts of disgust came forth. The men scowled and cursed loudly. Bill and Clark kept silent, but eyed me seriously.

"S'pose they're dead—that money's been here a long time," said Clark.

"Nothing doing. They have children and grandchildren. We are not pirates or robbers. Put the stuff in the boat, and we'll let the Old Man settle it when we get aboard."

"Findin's keepin's, I says," growled Bahama Bill ominously.

"Same here," said Nate and Bram. "We all git some, law or no law, an' Bill, what found it, gits the biggest share."

"Nix on that line of talk, men," I snapped. "You'll do as I say. Put the stuff in the whaleboat, pile it in the bottom carefully, and the Old Man will sure settle it right. Of course, I'm with you as to getting what is coming to us. What do you think I came into this place for—fun?"

I tried to read more of the ship's papers and made out that the *Seawinde* was a bark which had rounded the Horn three hundred and forty years before in the Peru trade, when there was plenty of money to be made in that unknown region of the west coast. Evidently silver was common in those days, for the bulk of the metal was silver, darkened from oxidation and age. Still, there were several hundred pounds of clear gold, an immense fortune in itself for such as we were.

The treasure was carefully loaded in the whaleboat's bottom. We hurried, knowing that we were now too late to get across the lip, but still anxious to try some way of getting clear without waiting for the next rising tide, which would be several hours and would also

put a head current against us when passing through the cavern. We sank the boat down a good half foot with the extra weight of the metal, but we headed for the lip which now showed, hoping by some means to ease her across.

There was nothing to be done. We could not make it anywhere. The lip was quite smooth, worn by the sea pouring over it through countless ages, but it was now about bare. It was low water, too, from the looks of the tide marks on the walls. We would not have to wait very long. The sun was already slanting a little, and my watch showed that it was two bells in the afternoon.

We hugged the west wall close, to get what shade would come from the slightest slant, for the heat was terrible. I lay out at length and watched the side of the crater as it fell straight down into the bottomless abyss. It seemed as if I saw a dark spot below, a few fathoms from the boat. It might be another great hole, and I watched it, wondering at the strange formation of the mysterious rock.

The men dozed or slept, lying about, burning with the heat. The boat was perfectly still, and I gazed down through a medium that was like air. There was not a ripple to distract my sight. Then I thought I saw a movement way down in the dark spot below. I gazed again with greater interest. Yes, I saw some movement, as if the side of the mountain had come to life and slid a little.

My hair suddenly tightened upon my scalp. A cold chill crept up my neck in spite of the terrific heat. I yelled out with a choking cry. Two monstrous eyes were looking straight up into mine.

"Great snakes! Have I got 'em? Have I gone mad?" I yelled, thinking the sun perhaps had gotten me at last. "Great Lord, look!"

Clark sprang up and gazed over the side. I saw his face pale. Others looked over, but the sudden motion caused the boat to make ripples that affected the sight. Bahama Bill, who had the best eyes of all except myself, looked over. Then he looked at me. His face was a study, but he said nothing.

"What the——"

Clark saw, Bahama Bill saw, then all saw what I had seen—two immense eyes, as big as dinner plates and about three feet apart, gazing straight up at us with a fixed stare. I shivered.

"What is it?" I whispered. "What do you fellows make it?"

"Just eyes, that's all. Ghosts don't have nothin' but eyes, sir," said Johns.

"Ghost, nothing! That ain't no ghost," said Clark. "That's the devil himself."

Far down, fully twenty feet, the eyes stared up at us, and they seemed to draw away from the cleft in the mountain.

"That's a devilfish, sir," said Bahama Bill. "Better slide away, sir. Them big fellows don't do to git mixed up with. They's dangerous."

"Right," I assented. "You men to starboard swing her around. We'll take a pull over to the other side of the pool."

As I spoke, there was a scraping sound beneath the boat's keel. Then something like a huge rope rose over the rail and fell with a coil about Johns' waist. With the yell of a madman, the sailor drew his knife and cut wildly at the tightening coils. Bahama Bill grabbed him, and he cut clear just as that big seaman saved him from going over the side. The piece fell in the boat and wriggled like a gigantic worm.

"Shove off! Pull for your lives!" I screamed.

The men did so. At least they tried to do so. They hove on the oars, and, expert whalemen that they were, the boat never moved. Something held her. I could not get a sight of the horrible thing, but below her I knew the monster was holding, holding hard.

"Back her off! Back her off!" I yelled, again and again.

The men were wild now with excitement and fear, the nameless fear of something that cannot be quite seen or understood. I noticed that Johns was bleeding where the powerful suckers had touched his skin.

"Quick. All hands ashore!" I yelled.

Then the boat swung, under some unseen power, and another long, ropelike arm curled over the side, feeling for something to seize. Nate, the negro, waited not a moment. He was near the bow and jumped frantically for the ledge, made it, and ran along down the crater's side toward the south. As the boat came closer with the sinister pull beneath, Samson jumped, followed by Johns, who barely gained the ledge.

They both fled along the ledge, which was just awash with the rising tide. Clark ducked the wriggling arm and jumped also. Bill followed him, taking a blow from the tentacle that almost knocked him overboard. He stabbed at the arm viciously with its knife and cut it badly. Bram and myself were the only ones left in the boat, and we were too far aft to jump and make a landing. An arm shot up, and Bram jammed his knife into the soft, slimy thing.

He drew backward under its force. I slashed furiously, cutting deep and savagely, but it still remained wriggling and feeling about for me. While I cut and yelled, something suddenly seized me from behind. It coiled about my waist and suddenly crushed me with appalling force, squeezing my breath out. Bram cut at it with frantic energy. Suddenly it parted, severed by his knife. I drew my breath.

"Heaven, what a thing!" I panted. "Run forward—jump. It's our only chance."

A huge parrot's beak rose over the side, a gigantic beak of solid bone, dripping with sea water. Two enormous eyes looked right at me as the monster hung to the boat's side and keeled her slowly over at a dangerous angle. Bram jumped ahead, slipped, fell, sprang up again, and struck furiously at arms that tried to encircle him. Hitting one here, cutting one there, he managed to avoid their embrace and, by a miracle, he gained the ledge.

I was so fascinated by the struggle and the goggle eyes staring at me with their strange, ugly steadiness and glare, that I found it too late to run forward. Yelling and panting, I stood almost helpless for a moment. Then the sudden horror of the ending that was close to me, the ending I must endure, paralyzed me. A flitting thought of how I would feed the foul mass, be absorbed in it, drove me frantic. I reached forward and howled at the grisly shape.

"You fiend. You—you——" I was screaming.

Then I struck furiously at the eye near me with my knife. I drove the blade right into the eye clear to the hilt. An arm struck me violently. I sprang backward, turned, and took a flying dive overboard. Then I swam madly away from the boat and its terrible captor. I reached the ledge, and Clark dragged me up. Then we ran a little before we turned to look at the monster.

That last stab seemed to reach a part of the creature that had feeling, for the monster squirted a stream of inky black substance over everything about, and this was certainly not blood. The bony beak snapped upon the gunwale and tore out a piece clear to the water line.

The stern of the boat settled, and we saw that some of the arms were still holding onto it. Gradually the water poured over the sides. She sank slowly, turned partly over, and disappeared in a swirl and lashing of tentacles.

I stood dripping and shaking with the terror of the fight when the rest of the crew came up. All hands had watched the boat go, with the staring eyes at a

level of the gunwale. The boat was our only chance to get out of that hole, and it had gone down.

How long we could keep upon that ledge with the devil feeling for us was the thought that was uppermost in all our minds. We looked at each other in plain dismay. We had a distance to run to be sure, and we felt we could run faster than the thing could swim. Still, it was a precarious footing at that. We made our way to the other side of the pool and awaited the attack. We had our knives, but it would never do to get mixed up with those tentacles upon that slippery ledge, where a sudden pull would end matters by dragging the victim down into the abyss.

The thought made me shiver. I was almost faint. The ledge ran around the pool, but it did not cross the opening where the lip shut off the cavern. That was it. If the monster should follow us slowly around and push us to the end, gradually we would be forced to reach the end of the ledge. Then what? We could never pass those arms on that narrow ledge. He would get us one by one at his leisure. Clark saw what I was thinking and spoke.

"Sure looks bad, sir, don't it What'll we do?"

"Stick together and fight like hell. He'll get us one at a time if we don't. There's no getting away, now the boat's gone. He'll chase us round and round until he gets us to the opening. Then he'll——"

"Damn!" said Johns with a shake. "Don't you think they'll come for us after we don't show up, sir?"

"We've been gone half a day already," said Clark. "The Old Man'll be mad enough to send in a boat——"

"Suppose he does. Will they find us down here?" I asked, knowing the chances for that were next to nothing. "They might climb the peak and look in and see us. In that case we'll get out fast enough. The tide has turned and is running over the lip. The sun is slanting away, and it's three o'clock already."

"It would be fast work if that fellow started chasing us. I knows that," said Bill. "But I don't see no way climbing up that wall—slippery as glass and right up an' down. Mebbe I could try a bit. We got time, I reckon."

"I rammed my knife right into his eye. Maybe that'll hold him a bit," I said.

"It's the onliest thing that will," said Nate. "I heard tell of a man what got eat by one of them devils in the Marquesas. The eye is the onliest place they feels anything."

"Then let's get an oar and lash a knife on it. We can make a sort of whale lance and jam it into his other eye if he crowds us," said I.

No one wanted to go near the floating oars and boards from the foundered boat, but when I started along that way, the rest came willingly behind. An oar floated near the ledge, and James reached it. He seemed less afraid of the creature than the rest. He peered over the edge and gazed down for an instant.

Below, he called out, he could just make out the form of the thing near the deep submarine hole. He lost no time getting away from the vicinity. The monster had trouble in seeing, that was certain. I narrowed down the blade of the oar and lashed the knife I had to the flat side, making a fairly serviceable spear. I could thrust a full ten feet or more. We edged away to the farther side of the crater and waited anxiously for what might turn up.

Warm as it was in that hole, we were not thinking any more of the heat. That thing with its deadly arms had taken all thought of the heat out of us. The boat and treasure were mourned, but the treasure was thought less of than the boat. That craft represented life. The treasure was gone. I was badly shaken.

It was so uncanny, so horrible—those eyes and that beak. I had no thought for gold.

If all the gold in the world could have gotten us out of that place just at that moment, I would have given it gladly. That beak, twice as big as the largest loggerhead turtle's, was terrible to think of. It was fully a foot in length, and the sides were streaked and seamed as by great age.

I had noticed several huge barnacles growing up on the part near the head. Its power was evident from the way it sheared that whaleboat, like a knife through cheese. Oak gunwale and cedar planking had been cut through easily with the giant snap. It had been a slow snap, a crunch and tear, as though the giant was used to working slowly and powerfully.

"They say those things live forever mostly, and always go slow like they didn't have much life," said Clark. "Cold-blooded. That fellow might be a thousand years old. Who knows? He might have been here when that box was put ashore. Sink me, he was a good watchman all right. Don't need no police with one of them things about, I'll say. I heard tell of one they brought up from the bottom near Taihui——"

"Cut it out," I said. "I don't want to hear about them. We'll find out soon enough what one will do. If this fellow is a fighter, he'll be back for trouble."

But I thought of the men who put the chest in this hole. Had that thing been alive and in here then? That might have explained how the treasure had remained here all these years, for it was fair to assume that, if the ship got away from the Spanish, they would certainly have come back. Spaniard or sea devil had done for them years ago. That was certain. And now the curse of that luck had fallen upon innocent whalemen.

There must have been something sinister connected with the place, some evil thing watching in solitude over the peaks for more than three hundred years. I felt guilty for having brought the men and boat into the place. I had been given permission to explore, but I had taken too many chances. It had been my fault. I was responsible. I wondered if I would ever get out to take the blame.

The Old Man would be severe, but he might get anxious at the delay we were causing the ship and send in a boat to search the peak. At present, there was no indication of any wind, and he certainly would not think of leaving us there without some attempt to find us.

"The passage isn't more than a couple of hundred feet long. How about it?" I asked Bahama Bill. He was a wonderful swimmer and had been the best diver on the Bahama Bank. "You could get clear, climb up on the outside, and yell for help."

"Dat's a right smart shark layin' outside, sare," said the big fellow. "I done see him plain. I dunno. I might make it."

No one else offered their services. It was a desperate thing to do. Still, it might save all hands.

"Better stick together," said Clark. "I reckon we'll stand him off until a boat comes."

"Something moving yander," said James.

We looked and saw the shadow of a huge body moving along the edge of the ledge. The mass was so immense that it appeared almost intangible in the water. It seemed as if the whole side was moving along—some piece of the crater itself. But it came slowly toward us, and we backed around the edge with the hope it would stop before it jammed us at the lip of the opening.

I held the spear, and Clark was at my elbow with his knife, while Bahama Bill and the rest were ready right behind us.

We backed away slowly. The monstrous shape came nearer. Suddenly an arm shot up. Like a flash it came dripping and whirling. It struck the ledge and held fast with the sucking disks. It missed my feet by a yard, and I rammed the spearhead frantically into it, again and again.

The steel sank in easily—so easily that it was almost like spearing a piece of jelly. But it had no apparent effect on the arm at all. It seemed to have no nervous feeling, no tension, as the knife sank in time after time, six inches or more. Clark fell upon it and cut to separate it.

The end reached him and, like lightning, seized him and pulled him to the edge. Bill grabbed him by the jumper and hauled him back as the arm was severed. He carried the piece along with him, still sucking and holding fast. It was as big as a five-inch hawser. Cursing and panting, Clark fell behind me, his eyes fairly bulging from their sockets. Then we fell back again and retreated slowly.

"Lord save us, the thing will back us clear around to the edge of the lip and get us yet," panted Clark. "The tide is rising, and we can't wade over it with the rush. We'll get knocked off for sure. That thing knows it——"

It seemed uncanny the way that monster's intelligence fought us along that narrow edge of the gulf. A little quick work and all of us would have been in the water, but it came slowly, very slowly, and just as sure as the sun.

"I'll go, sare. I'll try an' make it. We're lost here."

It was Bahama Bill who spoke. He was looking at the rip where the tide was rushing over the lip and making the low roaring sound of a small waterfall. There was no comment. It looked like certain death, but death seemed likely anyhow. If he could get clear and upon the rock outside, he might signal to Slade to come in with a whale line and drop it over the crater in time.

"I'il go, sare," he repeated and dropped off his trousers, standing naked, like a huge bronze statue. He was six feet three. No one offered to accompany him. He was out of our class, and would go alone.

"Go if you wish to," I assented. "Take a try at it. You'll be just as well off outside as in here. Watch out for that big shark."

"Aye, aye, sare," he said and ran around the edge of the pool.

When he reached the rip of the fall, he waded in and was almost thrown off his feet by the rush of water. He wavered a few moments, and, in that time, the monster must have seen him. It was fifty feet to the lip of the cavern, but the huge mass of the monster was clearly seen to move rapidly toward it and throw out its remaining arms in a great threshing as Bill gave a wild yell and disappeared headlong into the cavern mouth. Then there was silence. The only sound was the deep murmur of the pouring sea over the ledge, as the tide came higher and higher. Bill was gone.

"Did he get him?" asked Clark.

The question was on the lips of every one. But no one saw him come back in those snaky tentacles. I trusted the black a lot, as I knew him too well to think of failure.

"I believe he got him," said Samson. "I wonder now if he's in a hurry for the rest."

This did not appear to be the case. The monster did not change his position from the mouth of the crevice, but seemed to be watching the entrance of the cavern. He appeared to know that nothing could get through against the tide, which was flooding now at full height.

We awaited in absolute silence. Not a move was made to attract attention, and we began to hope we would be left

alone for a time. Just the splash had awakened the monster to action in Bill's attempt, and he appeared to be more interested in that black man's getting away than in us. Evidently he expected to get us whenever he wanted. He was sure of his game. Certainly he would not hurry. We were not too long in doubt.

It seemed to be half an hour since Bill went under before we noticed signs of movement again. Then a monstrous shadow showed close to the side of the pool, and the monster was coming slowly back. He had given up trying for the diver, or he had been eating him. We were not sure which had happened.

An arm shot up and fell close to us, backing us away and around toward the other side. It would be a long way around to the other side of the crater, and we were glad of the respite it gave us. We could keep clear until we were jammed at the other side of the lip or entrance. A tentacle fell close to my feet. I stabbed it and Clark slashed it.

Other arms came up, and we were afraid to get too close. We had to keep clear of their grip. Slowly we gave ground, fighting and slashing, each relieving the other and standing ready to haul a man out should he get wrapped up in a coil. Once, Samson was seized and dragged almost over in a grip, but we cut and tore him loose in time to save him.

It was a strange fight all around that walled space. We backed off slowly, then rushed in, slashed and cut desperately, retreating out of the way again as the monster pressed us backward toward the other end, where we knew we must make our last stand. After cutting one arm off close to the monster's body mass, he desisted for a time.

We were yelling, swearing, fighting frantically, and the heat was so great that the sweat blinded us. We were cutting the thing up piecemeal. It began to be a question if the monster would hold out or not. I was growing hopeful that we might cut him up so badly that he would desist. It was a long struggle.

It seemed like ages since Bill had gone under. I began to believe that he had been eaten. We had no hope that he would make the outside and get help. Then the memory of the big shark at the entrance——

"Keep to it, boys," I said. "We'll cut him up so that he won't have hands enough to eat with by the time we get to the end of the ledge."

We were having a breathing spell, following the last tussle. There was a few hundred feet to go yet, and we gave ground slowly. We were now stripped to trousers, and, when the monster came on again, he squirted that black fluid all over us until we resembled men of tar.

The stench of musk was intolerable. I wiped the sickening stuff from my eyes and noticed that were were now within a few fathoms of the lip of the cavern, and the noise sounded like our death knell. Panting, we gave slowly, hoping against hope.

Suddenly I heard a wild yell above us. I looked up at the edge of the wall and saw Slade gazing down at us. As he yelled, he threw a whale line which came snaking to our feet. It had a bowline already in it. Slade had seen, and was ready at once.

"Get in that bowline," I yelled to Samson. He slipped it under his arms and was whisked aloft in a jiffy. Down came another line. Nate grabbed it and was hauled out.

"Cowardly rat," snarled James.

"Shut up! You next," I yelled, and he took his turn.

As mate and commanding officer, I was to wait until the last, and, as if the thing below sensed our aid, he pressed me closely, and I had to stab and stab to keep clear. The last few minutes in that hole seemed an age to me. I thought they had forgotten me above.

No line came down. It seemed as if it never would come down, but I dared not look up. With eyes fixed upon the rapidly coming tentacles, I backed away and yelled for help.

It seemed to me I would be forced into the water of the lip when something struck me on the back. It was the line, and I dropped the spear and grasped it. I had just time to place the bowline under my arms when I saw an arm shoot up. The large loom of the shadow was directly beneath me and just below the surface. One arm, then another and another, came up. I had now no weapon.

Some one above started to pull with a will, and, as I went up, a tentacle seized my right ankle. I stopped. They yelled from above and pulled mightily, and I thought my leg would go with the strain. I looked up and saw Slade peering over the edge of the crater. I was stopped in mid-air. The rope held taut and almost pulled my ankle out of joint, hut that was all.

Suddenly a hatchet came dangling down at the end of a line. I grasped it and tried to reach the grip on my leg, but I was too much stretched out to make it. Then I felt the line shake, and I saw Bahama Bill coming, sliding down and taking the hatchet from my hand. He seized me, let himself down to reach the tentacle below, and gave three mighty strokes. I broke clear and was instantly whisked aloft with him. In a moment I stood surrounded by my men.

"Damn, what a close squeak," said Slade, wiping the sweat from his face. "One second more and you'd have been done. How in the name of blazes did you get in that place? Where's your boat?"

"Where's Bill?" I asked.

"Here, sare. I's here," and he stepped forward and grasped my hand.

Then I told of how we had got in and how Bill had swum the passage. The diver had only had a chance to tell that we were in dire peril, and, without a word, they sent out a boat at top speed. He had gained the outside of the entrance and made his way up the side of the rock, where, by yelling and waving, he soon attracted attention. They were so close they could hear his words and were, at the time, getting ready to tow the vessel off again, as the calm had allowed her to drift in too close for comfort.

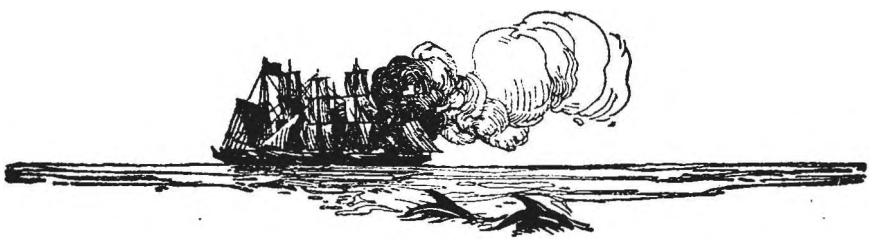
"You say there's a fortune down there?" asked Slade.

"There's a million and not less," I said.

"The sun gets them that way at times —better come aboard at once. I seen the devilfish from here, but not no gold. At the same time, if there was a million down there, it wouldn't be me after it, not until that fellow was gotten out first."

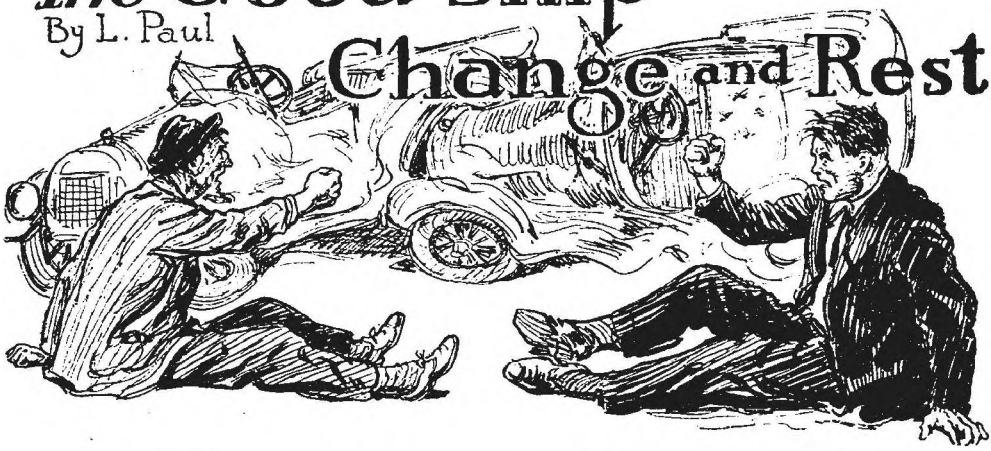
"Sunk," I said. "Sunk in the boat, a thousand fathoms down. Lost forever, with a devil to watch it."

"I'll try and believe you," said Slade, grinning.



The Good Ship Change and Rest

By L. Paul



Tim Brady had worked hard as a man could for three days running, and the doctor sent him off in a flivver for rest. But the flivver voyage did not last long, for he ran into Captain Trivett, in more ways than one, and made the acquaintance of his son, Bill. And they went to sea again, in dangerous frames of mind.

"BIG TIM" BRADY sat on the wheelhouse locker as the captain swung the tug *Dot* round Partridge Island and headed into St. John Harbor. Behind, at the end of a long steel hawser, a big spoon dredge still rolled in the short, steep Fundy seas.

It had been a tough job, bringing that dredge up from the States, a job such as Neil & Brady were always getting tangled with, for they were willing to tackle anything afloat in the towing or salvaging line. Neil it was who did the figuring, but upon Big Tim fell the burden of performance when papers were signed, sealed and delivered.

And this particular job had proved tougher than usual. For three days and as many nights, the stout little *Dot* had struggled with wind and wave out in the Bay of Fundy. For three days and nights, Big Tim had scarcely closed his eyes. Now that the *Dot* was heading for the dock, now that this little chore was done, his mind turned toward the comfortable bunk aft, with its soft pillows and easy spring. He could do with sleep in large quantities, could Tim Brady.

The little craft eased up off a long timber wharf. The towing machine aft began to wind in cable. Then the *Dot* swung in a circle, came alongside the big dredge and eased her into her berth. Big Tim rose, yawned and stretched.

"Ye can tell the owners she's here," he said to the captain of the tug. "And if they want me, ye can say that for the next twenty-four hours Tim Brady's his own man, an' not to be woke for anything short of a shipwreck."

Then he tumbled aft to the spare cabin.

He slipped off his boots and stretched out on the bunk. He sighed happily as he relaxed. He closed his eyes, but he did not sleep. For three days and nights, Big Tim had been gazing at running waves, white-crested seas. His closed eyes still saw them. Somehow, he could not banish the picture. Sleep—it had seemed so desirable a few minutes back. It proved impossible now that he had time for it.

Somewhere below, the pump sighed and shrieked, a slow, steady, torturing thing. The creaking fenders rubbed against the dock. The thousand and

one noises of a busy water front filtered into the cabin to rob him of repose. And those waves kept running and breaking before his eyes. Sleep—he tossed about, buried his face in the pillow. Somewhere ashore, a clock struck the hours—five, six, seven——

"Now this will never do." Tim Brady sat up. His head throbbed, his face burned. "If I don't get a wink of sleep soon, 'tis crazy I'll be. 'Tis a clear matter for a doctor."

He drew on his boots, reached for his hat and, a moment later, was swarming up a ladder to the dock.

He walked up town, eying the houses on either side of the street. At last, he found what he wanted—a brass plate that shone in the light of the street lamps.

Tim climbed the steps and rang the bell. A moment later, he stood in the doctor's office.

"Now what——" began the doctor, a youngish man with a kind voice.

"Ye can put me to sleep. 'Tis three days since I've closed an eye." Tim wasted no time on frills.

"Dear, dear. Now suppose you tell me all about it from the beginning." He reached for a stethoscope.

Tim told him. "And when I get time for a nap," he finished, " 'tis wide awake I am."

"Of course," the doctor assented. "What do you expect? You drive that big body overtime, you ask it to do three men's work, and then, 'I'll sleep,' says Mr. Brady. And, when he can't, it's the poor doctor has to fix him up. Now, tell me the truth—how long have you been overworking?"

" 'Tis a busy summer we've had," Tim replied.

"Doubtless, doubtless." The doctor reached for a pad and scribbled a prescription. "But it's over—for a couple of weeks, at any rate. You'll lay off."

"Now listen, doc——"

"Listen, is it? Hark to the lad. They're all the same. You can't afford it, and the work'll suffer. Is that it? Well, let me tell you, if you go on asking that big body of yours to do double time, you'll stop for good, one of these days. Now pay attention. Here's what you'll do. Cut out the work altogether. If you were a business man, I'd send you to a rest cure. But, seeing that you're a big seagoing lad, I'll just prescribe a change that will be a rest for you. Ever own a car?"

"I follow the sea," Tim replied scornfully.

"You did, and you will again, if you do what you're told. Buy a cheap flivver, secondhand. You come from Helmshaven, eh? Well, drive that flivver back by easy stages and take your time. Explore the country a bit. Forget all about your work, the sea, tugboats. It's green fields and an open road you need, my lad. And when you finally get home, drop me a line to tell me how you feel."

"Drive a car for change and rest, is it?" Tim protested. "I've no use for them roarin', joltin' things, save when making for the sea after a spell ashore."

"You'll have use for a nice, shiny one with a closed body, all black and private, for even Helmshaven'll have its motor hearse. Here's a prescription. It's dope, but it will give you one night's sleep. In the morning, buy, beg or steal a flivver. Ten dollars, please."

Big Tim Brady drew a roll of bills from his pocket. "If I could make money as easy as that, 'twould be an easy matter gettin' time off for sleep," he grumbled. "Nevertheless, I'll do it, though if it don't fix me up, ye'll hear from me again."

The doctor smiled. "It's a bargain. Put away that ten. I'll be a sport. When you get home to Helmshaven, send me whatever you think I've earned."

Tim Brady grinned. " 'Tis convinced

I am," he said. "But Doc, ye take chances o' never seein' that ten-spot again."

"I back my play," the doctor replied, "and I can pick a man when I see one."

The doctor's prescription did its work. Tim Brady, after getting it filled at the drug store, waited only to wire his partner, Neil. The telegram read, "Change and rest. Doctor's orders. Expect me when I get there. Tim Brady."

Next he phoned the dock, gave the captain of the *Dot* his orders and then booked a room at the hotel. Half an hour later, he was sound asleep.

When he woke up, it was well on toward noon. But the sleep had not done him much good. Dope, the doctor had said, and dope it was, that prescription. However he felt fit enough to carry on for the time being.

It proved an easy matter to buy a flivver. Its owner proved obliging, and the pair of them spent a pleasant afternoon with spanners and wrenches, fitting it for the road. By the time darkness came, Tim Brady was satisfied that it would travel as a flivver should.

Dawn found him on the road. He threaded his way a bit clumsily through the early city traffic, crossed the drawbridge and took the shore road south toward the border. But he felt ill at ease. 'Twas a year since he'd handled a car. During that time, he had been much in a tugboat wheelhouse where you pulled bells, leaving all matters mechanical to an engineer deep down below decks.

On this craft of tin, he was engineer and helmsman, too. And the channel looked a bit narrow. At first, he crept along slowly, turning out for the occasional early farmer's cart. However, ten minutes from the city limits, Tim Brady became a speed hound. He stepped on the gas, and the ancient car rattled along at thirty miles per hour.

"A tugboat man can navigate—anything—anywhere," he boasted, and then, as usual, pride had its fall.

The road led between scattered houses. On his left the waters of Fundy glittered in the early sun. In a tiny bay, a dirty tugboat lay at anchor. Two barges were being loaded at a wharf. For a moment, he took his eyes off the road to glance at them. And then, from a shed close by, another flivver backed out, full in his path.

Tim Brady saw it too late. He pulled levers, tugged at the wheel, tried instinctively to heave his own flivver aside by sheer strength. Then came a crash, the jingling of broken glass, the clatter of tin meeting tin. And he was sitting on the road, gazing dazedly at ruin.

Some ten feet distant, the driver of the other car lay prone, a small, hard-faced old man with straggling whiskers of a pinkish tinge.

The two cars, as if by magic, seemed to have broken into a hundred fragments. The little whiskered man sat up.

"Ye'll pay! Oh, blast ye, ye'll pay!" he cried.

"And for why?" Tim felt his anger rising. "For why, me little runt? Here ye throw off your lines and back out o' dock with never a toot o' your whistle. And me being in the fairway——"

"Ye damned sea lawyer. Ye blasted speed hound."

The little man rose to his feet and ruefully surveyed the ruins. From behind the shed, another man came running—a big man, younger than the driver of the ruined car.

"'Tis time ye came, Bill," the little man roared. "Look what the blasted fool's done to yer old man."

Tim rose. "Now as for that," he replied, "'tis clear the fault's not mine. Likewise, 'tis clear both cars is a total loss. But, bein' a sport, I'll call it quits."

"Quits, he says, Bill!" the little man screamed. "He drives mad an' busts

me up and says quits. What are ye waitin' for, Bill? Hammer the deadlights out o' him."

"I was waitin' till you done speechifyin', old man." Bill threw off his coat, rolled up his sleeves and came on toward Tim Brady.

"Will ye pay, or not?" he asked hopefully.

"Divil a cent." Tim's coat came off. "Sure," he thought, "if this is the sort of rest the doctor ordered, he'll get my business from now on."

"Lam him, Bill." The old man danced about them excitedly.

Bill answered never a word. But he rushed, his huge arms flailing.

"If one wreck ain't enough," Tim grinned, "if one don't suit, we'll make another." He ducked a wild blow and drove his right hard into Bill's stomach.

Bill stepped back, grunted and smiled. But there was no good humor in that grin. Rather was it the indication of pride in his capacity to assimilate punishment.

"So ye live on hard knocks," thought Tim Brady, and he became a bit more alert. This was evidently a tough customer.

Bill justified his opinion.

"Eat him up, Bill!" the old man cried, and Bill proceeded with the meal. He came on more warily and swung again. Tim blocked him, but, as the other's fist slid along his forearm, he felt the power of the blow.

He must not mix it too freely with this avenger. It would need all his science to handle such a customer. So he danced out of reach, led Bill on, blocked another swing, and then cracked a smart right to his square, jutting jaw.

Bill shook his head uncertainly. That last blow had stung. Then, cautiously, slowly, he came nearer, but now he had ceased to swing wildly. His big hands hung, half open, at his sides.

"'Tis a clinch he wants," Tim decided. "And if the big bear gets his paws on me, it's rest and to spare I'll have, in hospital."

He kept his distance. Bill followed.

"Eat him up, Bill!" the old man cried, and Bill rushed once more.

Tim dropped his guard. Bill, rushing, saw it, and changed his tactics. His right fist whistled through the air. Let him land once on this grinning jumping jack and——

But he was playing the wrong game. Tim Brady ducked. Bill's fist smashed him on the top of the head, a glancing blow that shook him, but left his wits clear. Then, stepping in, his own fists swung upward in a short arc—one, two—against Bill's jaw.

The big man stood there for an instant, arms loose, mouth wide. Then slowly, his knees bent, his big shoulders swayed, his eyes closed.

"Knocked out standing up," decided Tim, and held back the final blow.

"Ye dammed fool," the little man screamed. "He's beat ye."

At the words, Bill opened his eyes, tried to swing that flailing right once more. But the body wouldn't answer the mind.

And then, as Tim watched him, his broad face seemed to expand till it filled the entire world. It broke into a myriad of stars, and Tim Brady slid to earth, senseless.

The little man with the pinkish whiskers tossed a spanner to the road as Big Bill sank beside his prostrate foe.

When Tim Brady struggled back to consciousness, he was in the dark—a darkness, moreover, that held sounds strangely familiar. Yet, for the moment, he did not notice them, or, if he did, he put them down as part of the brain fog that afflicts a man who has been knocked out. That, he felt, must be the only explanation. The man, Bill, had put another blow across, had conquered in the end.

He tried to regain his feet, tried to rub sight back into his eyes. The re-

sult woke him completely. His head came against a heavy beam. The darkness persisted.

His head was clearer for the bump. The sounds about him began to make sense—the thrumming of a turning shaft, the vibration of a propeller, the rush of water against planking. Tim Brady was afloat again, against the doctor's orders, against all reason—afloat and a prisoner. He was in the chain locker of some craft, and at sea. He could feel the piled chain beneath his feet. That timber his head had struck supported the deck above.

But how had he come there? And why? There could be but the one answer. Bill had knocked him out. Bill and his old, pink-whiskered parent had shipped him aboard this craft, probably on that very tug he had seen at anchor.

He tenderly felt his aching head. That bump—if Bill's fist were responsible, he was some scrapper. And, having triumphed, why must the big man bring the vanquished Tim Brady aboard this craft?

He gave up that angle of the problem. Here he was, and here, probably, he must stay, at least till he got a clew to the why and wherefore.

There was one comfort. In all likelihood, Bill was aboard. And if so, sooner or later they might come together. And when they did—Tim flexed his arms and clenched his fists—he might find out just what Bill had done to him, perhaps hand that doughty battler a bit of his own medicine.

He felt about in the dark. From the size of the chain locker he judged the vessel was a small one. He could not stand upright in it. A small hatch, evidently opening on deck, was battened down securely. All his heaving would not budge it.

He sensed the short jerky lift of the craft as she struggled against the seas. It could mean but one thing.

"She's got a tow," he decided. "Probably them two barges I saw loadin'. Old 'Pink-whisker' is captain, belike, the old pirate."

Footsteps sounded above. Tim stretched himself on the chains again. Best to play dead for the moment. He might learn more that way.

"Ye'll go down, like I say." It was Pink-whisker's voice. It held a vague menace for whomever the little man talked to.

"I'll not—an' him croaked, most likely." The other voice was high pitched, held a tremble of fear.

"Ye dock rat. Question orders, will ye? Take that, then."

A scuffle, a blow—a man's sudden cry.

"'Tis plain they're a hard family," thought Tim and cocked his ear a bit more intently.

"If I had a spanner, ye'd get what he got, an' more." It was Pink-whisker again.

The other man mumbled vague protests. Then came the sound of a second blow. The bar securing the hatch clanked free, and daylight streamed into the chain locker. Eyes well-nigh closed, Tim Brady lay still.

He knew now what had struck him. It wasn't Bill, but his old man who had laid Tim Brady out. A spanner! That accounted for the lump on his head. And now the old pirate who had done it was leaning over the hatch grinning down at him. He longed to get up and hand back a bit of what he had received.

Caution held him back. At best, he might maul old Pink-whisker a bit. Then, overpowered, he would be dumped again into his dark prison. Whereas, if he waited, there might be a chance to even the score in a better way. There might be an opportunity to finish out the scrap with big Bill.

"Get down, get down." Old Pink-whisker shoved the second man toward the hatch. "Look him over. If he's a

stiff, we'll heave him overside. If he ain't, well we'll see. Get down, Harris, an' stand by him for a bit."

Reluctantly Harris obeyed, a rat of a man, whose upper lip was bruised and cut.

"Strike me pink," he whispered "he's stiff."

Tim Brady lay still.

"Tickle him a bit wi' yer knife," Pink-whisker urged. Harris drew out a clasp knife and crept nearer to the prone, motionless figure. He pressed the point against Tim's thigh. But Tim never moved a muscle.

"He's dead." Harris drew back from Tim.

"Dead, nothin'. Feel his pulse."

"I won't." Harris reached for the hatch coaming to draw himself up. "I didn't ship for to handle no stiffs. 'Tis bad luck, handlin' o' such. Cap Trivett, an'——"

"Bad luck, is it? I'll bad luck ye, my bucko." The captain's little eyes glared angrily. "So ye hate to handle him, do ye? Ye're feared to stand by a corpse, are ye? Bad luck, ye say!" He drew the hatch closed. "Bide there a bit and hearken to orders next time, ye dock rat."

The man, Harris, cowered against the ship's planking. Above, the captain laughed evilly as he secured the hatch. Then his footsteps died away as he went aft to the wheelhouse.

In the darkness, chains clanked. Harris opened his mouth to scream. But two big hands closed round his throat and silenced him.

"Now ye'll behave," Tim Brady cautioned him in a whisper. " 'Tis no stiff I am, Mr. Harris, but a livin', breathin' man, short o' temper when I'm crossed, so unless ye do what I say——"

He shook the unfortunate Harris a bit roughly and then relaxed his grip.

"Now tell me, what ship's this?"

Harris fought for breath, but could not yet reply.

"The *Maybelle*—an' tow," he managed at last.

"An' him that sent ye down here?"

"Cap'n Trivett."

"Father o' Bill, the big bucko?"

"Yes, blast him."

"Ye don't take to Cap'n Trivett, I see." Tim's voice grew a shade friendlier. "Which same is natural. Where's Bill?"

"On the second barge," Harris snarled. "Trust him to pick a soft job."

"So ye don't like son Bill, neither. Then perhaps ye'll tell me how I come here. But keep your voice low, for 'tis not a public meetin', but a confab between friends we're havin'. Speak up now. I was havin' an argyment with this same Bill back on the road. Somethin'—a spanner, the old cap said—struck me, an' I wake up aboard the *Maybelle*. If ye know the answer, spit it out."

"I can guess, knowin' the Trivetts." Harris resolved to speak out. Those two blows, he felt, rather snapped any thread of loyalty that bound him to the pink-whiskered Captain Trivett up in the wheelhouse.

"I can guess. Ye fought, an' wellnigh licked Bill. The old cap knocked ye cold. Then they dragged ye back into the shed and cleared up the mess ye'd made o' the two cars. 'Twas nigh sailin' time, an' there's them ashore ain't got too much use for Cap Trivett an' his business. So, bein' feared to leave ye, they brought ye along."

"Thinkin' I wasn't quite dead, an' apt to wake an' make trouble?"

"Thinkin' ye was dyin', an' corpses bein' awkward on the premises."

"And what," Tim asked, "what does the old pirate mean to do wi' me now?"

"If ye'd croaked, ye'd slip overboard to-night. If ye get better, he'll set ye ashore somewhere in the States. We're Boston bound, where ye ain't likely to have friends."

"So, that's it. Now ye talk sensible.

Ye don't like Trivett, nor yet his big son." Tim felt in his pockets. "Would ye like to get square with the both o' them? And make a bit on the side?"

"I ain't takin' any chances," Harris answered nervously. "Besides, ye ain't got the price to buy me. Knowin' Cap Trivett, I'm certain sure he rolled ye."

"That he did." Tim, finding his pockets empty, opened his shirt and reached inside. "But he missed this. Ye can't see, Harris, but hark to the music." In the darkness, he drew forth a slim wallet, opened it and drew out a packet of bills. They rustled as he peeled them off.

"Ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty," he counted, "an' all for doin' what ye'd like to do."

"Which is?"

"Gettin' square with the Trivett family, father an' son."

"I ain't aimin' to cross 'em," Harris protested nervously.

"Ye needn't. Hark now." Tim came closer. "Supposin' this old pink-whiskered pirate comes back in a minute. Ye'll tell him I'm breathin' light, but seem in bad shape. That'll give us time. Then, to-night, when it's dark, come forward an' loosen the hatch."

"An' then?"

"Why then," Tim laughed grimly, "Then I reckon the rest is up to me."

"But what'll ye do?"

"It happens to be my own business, Harris, but do your part, an' I'll tell ye this much. I aim to make considerable grief for old Cap Trivett. Just how, 'tis not clear as yet. But so long as I'm locked up below, it can't be done. Moreover, there's a bit of a fight that needs finishin' between me and son Bill. And I aim to clean that up too. Afterwards, well, 'tis clear we must leave it to the Brady luck. But hark! Some one's comin' forward." Tim slipped the packet into Harris' limp hand. "Play fair, and ye'll get more. Double cross me, an'——"

The footsteps above paused, dead overhead.

"An' Harris, if so be ye can lay hands on it"—Tim leaned closer and dropped his voice—"bring me a drop o' what ye have on your breath."

Then, as the hatch slid clear, Tim Brady sank again upon the piled-up chains.

"He's out of his head—not to say strong, but persistent," said Harris as old Captain Trivett peered down into the gloom of the chain locker.

"The hell he is," Captain Trivett growled. "Well, I s'pose he'd be a damned nuisance if he could. Now we'll have to slip him ashore somewhere. An' with this cargo, I don't like hangin' round too close to the United States o' America."

"He ain't conscious." Harris, playing his part sincerely, bent over the recumbent figure.

"Leave him be, leave him be. Do ye aim to loaf down there all afternoon?" Captain Trivett replied. And Harris, climbing up on deck, would have closed the hatch once more.

"I s'pose we got to pamper him now," Cap'n Trivett grumbled. "Go get a pail o' water an' some grub an' leave it handy. I can't keep a blinkin' nurse alongside o' him. We won't get near to the States till mornin'."

He shambled aft, followed by Harris. In a few moments, the latter was back with bread and a tin mug of water.

"Cap'n's in his cabin havin' a drink," he reported. "Nobody nearer than the wheelhouse."

Tim seized the mug of water, but Harris with a wink, stayed him.

"Ye asked for what I had on me breath," he said, and slid a hand to his hip pocket. He produced a slim flask. "Scotch." He passed it to Tim Brady. "There's none better in rum row."

Tim drew the cork, took a deep swallow, then washed it down with water.

The liquor, on an empty stomach, burned. But he felt a new man.

"Ye've played fair so far," he said. "Can I trust ye for the rest? Will I find yon hatch loose after dark tonight?"

"If it can be done."

"It's got to be done. Man, do ye want to see this Cap Trivett get his, him an' his son Bill? He's beat ye up, an' I guess ye owe Bill something too, from the pleasant smile ye give at his name. Besides, there's fifty o' my good dollars in your pocket this minute——"

"'Twill be loose," Harris agreed. "I'm through with the Trivett tribe after this trip."

"That's right. Now ye mustn't linger here. Old Cap Trivett'll be comin' to see what ye are doing."

"Never a fear. Once we're clear o' harbor, he sticks to his cabin daytime, drinkin'. Beastly, I calls it."

"Then ye can stay to tell me one or two things." Tim listened for a moment to make sure no one was moving overhead. "Who's about at night?"

"Cap himself takes the wheel till midnight. One deck hand up forward."

"And the barges? What about them?"

"One man aboard each, Bill bein' on the second barge, the *Imperator*."

"Ye are sure about Bill?"

"Certain sure."

"All right. Now, if ye play up right, ye'll find me gone before midnight, an' ye'll find another ten dollars down here. I'll put it in the mug."

"Right." Harris started toward the hatch. Then he turned. "If ye bust Cap'n Trivett, give him an extra one for me," he said. "As for Bill——"

"When I get through with William," Tim grinned back, "when I get through with Bill Trivett, I guess ye'll be willin' to kiss him an' make friends."

The afternoon wore on. Tim Brady, crouching in the chain locker, munched his bread, and waited.

The thin pencil of light that filtered through the barred hatch faded. It was getting dark. The tug was jumping a bit now, with a short chop striking her abeam.

Came cautious footsteps on the deck overhead. Then the rasp of iron on iron. The hatch cover moved, ever so little. Harris was on the job.

Tim waited till the footsteps died away again. Then slowly, cautiously, inch by inch, he raised the hatch, till it was balanced on his hands, slid it cautiously aside and lowered it again.

He waited a moment, lest some one had seen or heard, There was little danger of that, as he saw when his head thrust out into the cold night air. For it was a dirty, foggy night, and the lookout, crouched against the anchor winch forward, was evidently half asleep. And the roar of the waves, the whistling wind, drowned most noises.

Tim eased his big body up on deck, slid across to the shelter of the bulwarks and lay still.

Little could he see in the blackness. The dim running lights scarce showed through the fog. The wheelhouse he could make out merely because it loomed a shade blacker against the dark sky. In that wheelhouse, Cap Trivett probably nursed the wheel. And Tim's plan did not call for a meeting between himself and Cap Trivett—just yet, at any rate.

The lookout ahead stirred. Tim shrank closer against the dripping bulwarks. The man, however, merely sought a more comfortable attitude and then relaxed again, facing forward. Tim breathed again and crept slowly aft, till the black bulk of the wheelhouse loomed above him.

That was the danger point. Could he get by Captain Trivett? The little man at the wheel would probably be wide awake. The wheelhouse left but a narrow passage aft on either side. If the sliding doors were open, if big Tim's

foot should strike some bit of deck litter, the little captain was bound to hear him as he passed. And then, out would come the crew, and, after a struggle, Tim Brady would be dropped unceremoniously into that chain locker forward, unless, indeed, a worse fate befell him and he disappeared overside.

So, for a moment, he hesitated, lying there in the darkness. And in that moment, Captain Trivett, drawing out his pipe, fumbled for a match.

He struck it. Tim could see his face in the glare as he cupped his hands about the flame.

"Glory be," thought Tim as the match flickered out, "'tis my chance."

And, as the captain sucked contentedly at his pipe, while yet his eyes were blinded by the glare, Tim Brady sneaked softly aft, past fire-hold door and engine room, till he crouched at the stern of the *Maybelle*.

He could see nothing aft save the white-gray wake. The fog was growing thicker. He felt about and his hands closed on the towline where it went overboard—an old wire hawser, tight as a fiddlestring.

"Not yet," he breathed and, crawling forward, felt for the rudder chains where they left the quadrant. He found the port chain, followed it forward till it ended in an iron rod that ran on rollers toward the wheelhouse.

"Thought so—a shackle." He fingered the pin that secured it. "Now, Cap Trivett, in case ye grow restless about what's comin' off, we'll pile up a bit o' grief for ye."

He continued his explorations until he found what he sought—a length of heaving line. Then he crept back to the rudder chain and, with infinite caution, drew the cotter pin from the shackle, loosened the bolt and threaded rod to chain with the heaving line.

This done, he removed the shackle entirely. Now, the link between wheel and rudder was weakened. A fathom of worn heaving line had replaced the stout chain. It might hold for half an hour, perhaps longer. But, sooner or later, the heaving line, frayed and worn on the guides, would part. And then Captain Trivett would have something else to think of besides whatever hell might break loose on the barges aft.

Tim Brady went aft again. He felt the towline. The loose ends of rusty wire stood up like bristles on it. He drew off his belt, replacing it with another bit of heaving line. Then he looped the stout leather over the steel hawser, wrapped the ends around his wrists and slid overboard.

His feet barely touched the water, but the waves dragged at them and drew him slowly away from the tug, the leather belt sliding along the taut hawser. As the towline dipped nearer to the surface, the pull of the water became stronger and his speed greater. The waves rose to his waist—to his shoulders. Now he was sliding aft at a speed equal to that of the tug.

The towline dipped below the surface. Drawing a long breath, Tim Brady went with it. The water drummed in his ears. His lungs were at the bursting point. But he dare not let go. If he did, if the cross current caught him, he would miss the barges astern. And then what chance had he of coming out of this alive? So he clung till at last the line broke free of the seas again and began to climb toward the high bows of the first barge.

He drew himself up till the cable rubbed his breast. Then he brought his legs up, crossing his feet over the wire, and clung, the seas racing along his back—clung till his wind came back. Then he dropped again. But now, even the tug of the water could not drag him along the upward-sloping wire. The leather belt stuck. It began to slip through his chilled fingers.

"No help for it." He winced and dragged himself up again. "'Tis climb

ye must, Tim Brady, from this on." Hand over hand, he crept up the rising cable, palms cut and bleeding as the loose wires tore them. At last, the black bows of the first barge loomed above him. The wire hawser terminated in a bridle. He rested for a moment where manila and wire joined, and, as he rested, Tim Brady laughed.

"Change and rest, change and rest, and 'tis this the doctor ordered," he thought. Then he went hand over hand up the port bridle hawser to the bow of the first barge.

Cautiously he raised his head and peered aft. A single lantern dimmed by fog burned on the one mast. Nothing else could he see save the wet blackness of the deck and the darker shadows along the battered bulwarks.

He eased himself inboard and crept aft.

"'Tis a lazy man aboard, and the Brady luck holds," he muttered, and so came to the stern. "Honest rope, by the powers!" and he felt the thick, black hawser stretched tight from one barge to the other.

"Moreover, 'tis but a short stretch this time," he concluded, for the hawser was straight, dipping scarcely at all as it vanished into the fog. "It's tired I am of frogging it. But since Friend Bill is somewhere back there, it's frog it I must," and he slipped overside once more.

But, this time, it was plain sailing. The heavy rope was tight, almost level. He hunched along it, taking his time, well above the racing seas, until the second barge loomed up ahead.

She seemed bigger than the craft ahead. As he climbed her bows, he saw that she had once been something better than a barge. The remains of an ancient figurehead, splintered and torn, the shape of her, forward, told the story of a decent three-sticker fallen on evil days, a schooner with clipped wings in reduced circumstances.

His seaman's eye took this in instinctively, but he gave it no second thought. Somewhere back there was Bill. With Bill Trivett Tim Brady had an appointment of his own making. As he crept aft, he noticed that the decks were wide and clear of litter. Ample space here for the business on hand. But first he must find Bill, must disturb his stolen repose, for he had no doubt that the big fellow was holed up somewhere, out of the weather. Otherwise, he would have been heard of before this.

He crept round the corner of the cabin, well aft. From a companionway light shone. Tim Brady peered down.

At a table, his head pillowed on his arms, Bill Trivett lolled asleep. Before him stood a half-empty bottle. His glass, overturned, had spilled its contents on the floor.

Tim leaped down and shook the sleeper by the shoulder.

"Wake up, Bill Trivett," he cried. "I've been put to a pile o' trouble to make this social call, an' the sooner we get to business——"

Bill Trivett lurched in his seat. His eyes opened slowly, then closed again. Tim bent closer and shook his man again. There was no response.

"Drunk!" he cried, disgusted. "Here I come all this way to trim a man, and he's too drunk to stand up to me. However, 'tis a sickness time'll cure, Bill Trivett." He gave the man a final shake, in vain. Bill Trivett was dead to the world.

Tim Brady climbed on deck. As he faced forward, the tug's whistle roared.

"That'll be the steering gear," he concluded. "Cap's waking up his roughnecks."

He went forward. Already the towline had slacked.

"Now I wonder." Tim stood there looking overside. "'Twill be a matter o' hours before the big lad's fit to stick up his mitts. And 'tis certain old Pinkwhisker yonder'll begin to wonder how

his steerin' gear turned into heavin' line, once he gets her fixed and has time for it. But if——"

He went aft to the cabin, rummaged about for a moment, then came forward again with an ax.

"If I let the hawser slip," Tim Brady said, "old Cap Trivett may blame it on me or blame it on Providence. But when it goes overboard this way, 'twill be clear Providence had no hand in it. And I'd like old Cap Trivett to know what's bit him. I sure would."

And the ax came down on the hawser.

He watched the severed end slide overboard—a bit more grief for father. Now to straighten up Son Bill.

The cabin boasted a tiny oil stove. In a locker, he found coffee. He poured a cupful into a saucepan, added water and lighted the flame beneath it.

Then he went on deck, dropped a bucket overside, filled it and returned to the cabin.

"Ye'll not be the man ye were, Bill," he confided to the sleeping enemy, "but ye'll be sober come dawn." And he heaved the bucket of cold sea water over Bill Trivett.

The drunken man shivered and opened his eyes. Then he raised himself unsteadily and reached for the bottle. But Tim Brady was before him. His arms went round Bill Trivett, drew him up and away. He pushed him into a bunk and left him.

What with the cold water and a bit of sleep and the coffee, he figured Bill Trivett might be in shape to see the sunrise. After that, what Bill might or might not see would depend on his skill in the manly art of self-defense.

Tim went on deck. The fog blanket was thicker than ever. But the wind was dropping a little. He cupped a hand about his ear. Never a sound of the tug could he pick out of the night. Captain Trivett hadn't found out yet all that had happened. He had probably rung full speed ahead and gone off with the other barge.

"The Brady luck," Tim murmured. "Now let the fog hold till daylight and 'twill be the last favor I ask of it."

He divided the night between Bill Trivett and the barge. The big man snored on. Every hour Tim roused him, forcing bitter coffee down his throat. Bill was still too drunk to recognize him. But Tim Brady, who had handled drunken sailors before this, knew that with dawn Bill Trivett would be sober enough.

As to the barge, seeing that here he was afloat on her, 'twas but natural that he should give her the once over. So he took the lantern from its hook and went on deck.

She had been a pretty decent craft in her young days—a three-sticker, with fine lines. That was apparent. The stumps of the masts remained. Cargo booms projected from them over battened-down, tarpaulin-covered hatches. He loosed the tarpaulin on the after hatch, slid aside a panel of the cover, and peered down. There were potatoes, barrels of them, and nothing else.

He lowered himself till his feet touched the top of a barrel, then let go. The barge gave a lurch as a sea struck her. The barrel tipped as Tim's weight came on its edge and went over. About a bushel of potatoes rolled out on the planking.

Tim, tumbling to the planks, clung to the lantern. For a minute, he did not appreciate what had happened. He looked at the barrel where it lay on its side.

Then he saw. There was not another potato in it. But there was something else. He thrust his hand in and pulled out a layer of straw. Then came bottles.

"So that's it." He rose and canted another barrel. But this one was filled with honest potatoes. He examined a third—more bottles. There were thirty

barrels in the after hold. Ten of them held contraband liquor.

He climbed out on deck. Forward he went to the other holds. But he found nothing save such honest cargo as a coasting barge might reasonably carry.

"He don't crowd his luck, this Captain Trivett," Tim concluded. "Small lots and safe voyages is his motto. However, here's one cargo that won't reach port," and he swung aft toward the cabin.

Bill Trivett stirred uneasily at his coming.

"So ye're comin' to?" Tim grabbed him by the shoulder, dragged him from the bunk and shook him.

The man opened his eyes, stared stupidly for an instant at Tim, then paled and turned his head away. A shudder ran over him.

"Croaked him," whispered Bill Trivett. "We've croaked him, an' now——"

"So ye think I'm a ghost, eh? Well, me lad, ye can just change your mind."

He swung his hand up and slapped Bill Trivett across his ashen face. The blood surged back with the blow. Trivett tore free of his grip and backed against the wall.

Tim grinned cheerfully. "Will that persuade ye? 'Tis flesh and blood I am, an' how I come here is my business. But what I do'll concern ye, Bill Trivett."

Trivett clenched his fists. His head was not clear yet, but he had grasped one fact—this was no ghost grinning opposite him. His business was to smash the grin off the other's face. Being a man of one idea at a time, Bill Trivett was going to start in right away.

"Hold hard, hold hard. Ye are far from fit to scrap yet. Lord knows it's been trouble enough gettin' to ye, Bill Trivett. And I won't have ye spoilin' things by startin' it too soon."

"Hold yer gab an' put up your hands." Trivett steadied himself against the wall, ready to rush. But Tim saw that he was unsteady on his legs.

"No, no." Tim slid toward the companionway. "Ye'll bide quiet till dawn. Then we'll settle things on deck where there's room. An' if ye'll take my advice, there's coffee on the stove an' cold sea water in yon pail, an' by usin' the two o' them, ye can shake the jag."

But Bill Trivett evidently thought his foe was planning escape. He rushed. Tim dodged the wild blow, placed his hands against the big man's chest and pushed him back. Bill's legs brought up against the edge of the bunk and he toppled into it.

"Ye can see for yourself, me lad." Tim slipped out and closed the door. "Ye are in no condition to stand up to any one." He secured the door and looked about him.

The fog was still thick. But a gray light was in it. Dawn was near.

"Rest and change, rest and change. 'Tis change right enough, but I could do with the rest too." He yawned. His eyelids were heavy as he stood there, leaning against the housing. "But 'tis little rest I'll have this night."

He climbed up and peered down the cabin skylight. Big Bill Trivett, swaying unsteadily, was bathing his head in the bucket of water.

"'Twill be no shame to hammer ye, come mornin'," Tim concluded and sprang forward.

There was work to be done before dawn. The barge, drifting helplessly, would make toward shore on the rising tide. And if any curious authorities came peeking and prying, asking rude questions concerning the cargo for instance, it might go hard for those aboard her. Those ten barrels, so long as they remained aboard, were dangerous. For 'twould be a shame now, thought Tim Brady, to be lugged off to jail before he settled matters with the big lad in the cabin. And settle matters he must.

The liquor must go overboard. He

loosed the lashings that held the cargo booms fast, rove rope through the blocks, and dropped down into the after hold. 'Twas a simple matter for Tim Brady to slip a sling round each of the incriminating barrels. It took longer to hoist them on deck, but at last it was done, and they lay there, the whole ten. He pried a plank loose from the rude flooring of the hold, laid it against the bulwarks and edged the first barrel up it. A splash, and it was gone. Eight others followed it. At the last one he paused.

" 'Twould be but decent," he grinned. "Yon doctor with his change and rest, 'tis to him I owe a divertin' night."

He drew a dozen bottles from the barrel and concealed them in the hold, in the space between the planking and the hull. Then the last barrel went overside. He slid the plank back into the hold and eased it into place over the dozen bottles he had salvaged.

The job had taken the best part of two hours. The dawn was over now, and the fog had turned from black to gray, from gray to white. It was thinning fast. Already he could see to the westward the loom of land. As he watched, the banks of mist parted. "Grand Manan," he guessed, "in Canadian waters."

He went aft. The cabin companionway was still barred. He unfastened the door and called, "Bill, Bill Trivett."

"I'm comin'," the man below roared and came bounding up.

Tim backed clear. "Are ye for it?" he asked.

Big Bill Trivett stood staring about him. "Ye've cut her loose," he roared. "Where's the tug, where's the *Maybelle?*"

"Forty or fifty mile down the coast," Tim grinned provokingly. "And now, if ye have no objection, and with your kind permission, we'll finish the little argument we started back ashore."

"Objection, ye damned meddler." Big Bill clenched his fists. "Objection, ye hijacker."

Tim came toward him. "Look out," he warned, and tapped Bill Trivett on the jaw.

The big man needed no further urging. Those great arms flailing, he rushed across the deck, driving Tim Brady before him by the sheer weight of his great body.

Tim side-stepped, hooked a right to his stomach and, sliding out of reach, waited for Bill Trivett to attack again. There was no use risking a clinch and defeat.

But Bill Trivett, bringing up against the bulwarks, did not turn. Instead, he stood rooted there, his eyes turned seaward where a small steamer was coming into view, a steamer with white foam at her bow and smoke belching from her stack.

"Damn the luck, 'tis them." Big Bill turned and ran aft. "Ye can claim ye licked me," he explained as he swung the dinghy that hung at the after davits overboard. "Not that ye could do that same, but them folks aims to board us, an' if they find what's in the after hold, it's little fightin' either o' us'll get for a stretch o' months."

"So ye are yellow, after all," Tim taunted him. "Ye can't stand up to me unless the old man's waitin' to bean me with a spanner, Bill Trivett."

"Yellow nothin'. Yon's a revenue craft, and these here is Canadian waters. If ye've got any sense at all, help me over with this craft. Mebbe we can get clear before they spot us."

"You can go to the devil." Tim Brady slumped disgustedly against the bulwarks.

"I'd ruther go there than face them folks, with my record." Big Bill Trivett was lowering away. Now he sprang into the dinghy. "Are ye comin' or do ye stick?"

Receiving no answer, he shoved off and began to row toward the land.

"The Brady luck." Tim watched him go. "Here I spend a whole night gettin' that lad ready to fight. He comes up like a bantam rooster, we mix it, an' then, because a measly revenue craft starts our way, he's off. 'Tis plain that crime don't pay. Now me," he congratulated himself, "bein' pure at heart, I ain't worryin'."

The cutter foamed up five minutes later. By now, Bill and his dinghy had vanished in a bank of fog along the shore of Grand Manan.

"What craft's that?" an officer on her bridge bawled through a megaphone.

"The good ship *Change and Rest*, out o' St. John for Helmshaven," Tim called back.

"What are you doing adrift? Where's your tug, mister?"

"Broke loose last night."

"I'm sending a boat aboard you." The officer barked an order. Tim watched as sailors lowered a boat, manned it and rowed across.

A gold-braided officer climbed over the bulwarks. "What's your cargo?"

"Help yerself." Tim waved grandly toward the open hatch.

The officer, followed by two of his men, climbed down. They searched the barge from stem to stern. Then the officer came up to Tim Brady where he stood grinning by the bulwarks.

"It's queer," the officer said, scratching his head. "I took ye for a Trivett."

"Is it insultin' me ye are?" Tim forced a frown.

"Never a bit." The officer threw a leg over the rail. "But this looks like one o' his barges and we'd a tip the old cap was running a cargo south."

"So it was." Tim's face brightened as inspiration struck him. "So it was—his barge."

"Then how the devil do you come by it?"

"Ye might call it for services rendered," Tim smiled happily. "And if so be ye come across the old cap, ye might tell him ye saw me, an' that I'm well pleased with the bargain."

"Anything we can do? You don't propose to float around here with wind due, do you?" The officer dropped into his boat. The sailors grasped the oars.

"If ye've a wireless, ye might send word for a tug." Tim leaned over the rail. "If ye pass the word to Neil & Brady at Helmshaven, they'll look after it."

"I'll do that." The oars hit the water and the boat darted away.

Tim Brady turned happily toward Grand Manan. The dinghy, a black dot, lay on the beach. A tiny figure, like a fly, was climbing up the cliffs. Bill Trivett was taking no chances.

"Change and rest, change and rest," Tim yawned sleepily. "Well, so far as change goes, 'tis plain I'm one up. I lose a damned flivver that I don't want, and I get a barge that Neil & Brady can make some honest use of. For there's never a chance that old Cap Trivett'll ask questions. And as for Bill——"

He turned toward the island again. No trace of the climbing Bill Trivett could he see.

"But when it comes to rest"—Tim Brady stumbled toward the cabin—"when it comes to rest, I reckon I got a bit comin' to me."

The Cape Horn Snorters

The "Snorters" had as their object in life the taming of hellship skippers and their mates, and a queer, lovable quartet they were; cockney Zac Higgins, Sam Borden, Jock Ferguson, and Patrick O'Neill. They found the *Grampian* sailing under two of the seven seas' most brutal officers, Captain Angus MacGregor and Judson Phips as mate, so they shipped on her at once, adding to their number young Nat Soule, whose rival in love with Mary Douglas was this same Judson Phips. At Hongkong, a mysterious fourth mate was taken on. George Flint, who knew Sam Borden, and Zac snagged an important letter from the Old Man's mail which Jock was translating from the Gaelic.

A SERIAL—PART 2

CHAPTER XV.

JOCK FERGUSON, being one of the canniest and most farsighted of his race, loved to dwell on dramatic situations. He had "a michty gude yin the noo"—the glittering eyes and tense expressions of his watchmates told him that.

"Aye," he continued, well pleased with the attentive faces about him, "Ah see several names that are mair or less familiar tae us—Andra Douglas an' his dochter, Mary, Angus MacGregor, Meester Phips, an' last, but no least, conseederable reference tae a 'vera lang, lean, insolent young upstart.'

"It appears that the 'lean' yin saved the lassie's life by rescuin' her frae footpads. A leetle time later, he presented himsel' afore the feyther an' demanded his 'consent an' blessin'.' The auld mon chased him oot because he had decided that the lass should marry Phips—a mon o' education, social poseetion an' ancient lineage. It waur then arranged that the mon Phips should sail as mate wi' Captain MacGregor, who is the lassie's godfeyther. It has been presumed that the skipper will turn in a waun'erfu' report o' the feyther's choice.

"No, syne the disappearance o' yon 'insolent' body, the lass ha'e been a veritable thorn i' her feyther's flesh. As she appears tae be in a state o' conteenual mutiny, her sire ha'e written tae Captain MacGregor for his report tae be sent hame frae here, so that a' preparations for the marriage can be made before han'. The ceremony will then take place immediately after tha *Grampian's* arrival hame. Noo," Jock

concluded, beaming benignantly at his attentive listeners, "this letter is merely a ca' on Captain MacGregor for his report o' his mate."

"The father seems to feel quite certain that Phips is all he should be." Sam quietly remarked. "I'd like to write that report."

"Wot's the matter wiv Jock writin' a truthful one in Gaelic? That is," Zac hastened to add after getting beyond Jock's reach, "if yer kin write the truth in that lingo."

"That would only be a waste of time," Sam replied, "because, as we sail in a couple of days, the chances are that we'd carry the report ourselves. It's altogether likely the Old Man will see it that way and postpone his report till he gets home. If he does——"

"Aye," growled Jock, "an' only the gude Lord kens what micht happen atween this an' Boston."

"Now," said Sam, addressing Nat, "as you have been forewarned, you should forearm yourself by watchin' that mate like a hawk. It's altogether likely he knows that he's the father's choice for the girl. If he didn't know before that you are the girl's choice, he certainly does now, providing he has that picture. If he has the picture, we'll mighty soon know it by the way he'll use you in the near future."

"B'dad! an' Oi don't know about that 'near-future' business, at all, at all, Sam," Pat growled. "This Misther Phips is as cute as a fox. He moight wait for some dark, dirthy night. Thin, his first move'll be to sind the lad to Fiddler's Green, thin with an 'accident' written in the official log, the murtherin' scut'll go home without a rival. We'll all have to watch him, Sammie, an' may the curse ave Cromwell rist on him."

"Not goin' after the blighter nah, are yer, Nat?" asked Zac, as Nat pulled open the fo'c's'le door.

"Hardly," Nat replied. "I'm goin' out for a breath of fresh air."

"Right ho, ole bean! 'Op to it."

"Where did he go, Zac?" Sam asked, when the little cockney had closed the door after Nat.

"Up on the fo'c's'le 'ead."

"Now then, Jock," Sam resumed, turning to the grim Scot, "if I know you at all, there's something in that letter you haven't let out. What is it?"

"That lad," Jock commenced, after carefully laying aside his pipe, "is amply qualified—wi' a leetle mair experience in clippers—tae tak' command o' ony ship afloat."

"Certainly. Go on."

"Weel, listen while Ah translate a bit frae the letter. In speakin' o' his dochter, Meester Douglas says, 'This day she has promised tae impleecitly obey mah commands an' marry the mate o' the *Grampian* as soon as the ship arrives in Boston. As Ah ken what yere report will be, please send it immediately.'

"Therein, as the Psalmist says, 'lies the conclusion o' the whole matter.'" Jock concluded as he folded the letter.

"I'm afraid you'll have to make it a little plainer, Jock," said Sam, "I don't quite get your drift."

"Do ye no? Weel, weel!" purred Jock, actually indulging in a dry chuckle.

"G'arn," prompted Zac, "yer even got me."

"Weel," Jock resumed with painful deliberation, "do ye no ken, ye muckle loons, that hellships like the *Grampian* hae a daft notion that a' their officers maun be braw fechtin' men—the higher the billet, the better the fechter?"

The three listeners nodded in unison.

"Noo, as ye ken, yon Nat's a husky lad, as quick's a cat, a born leader o' men an' yin that'll no become a hellish autocrat when he gets in command. Do ye no think that he micht be able——"

Like a parson, he broke off and quoted his text. "'She has this day promised tae impleecitly obey my commands and marry the mate o' the *Grampian*.'"

Zac rolled back into his bunk with a howl of delight, while Pat bellowed, with a keen appreciation of possible coming events, "The Hat me Feyther Wore," till Sam poked him viciously in the ribs.

"Your suggestion, my Caledonian friend," said Sam, addressing Jock in his best style, "is indeed worthy of the rugged country that bred you. It contains the germ of almost unlimited possibilities, but, I fear me, our young acolyte will have to work out his own salvation. A hint or two may be given him, as time rolls on, that his natural Yankee shrewdness will embrace. In fact, methinks, that the new fourth mate, Mr. Flint, given fair play, will set the course for him. Then, perchance, Nat will show that he is no mean citizen, and——"

He broke off with a snap as the door slid open. When he saw it was Nat, he looked at Jock, then glanced at the letter that the Scot still held.

"Still discussin' Zaccie's 'sniggin's'?" Nat grinned, also glancing at Jock, who was once more opening the letter.

"Yes," replied Sam. "Jock has been translating it to us, and I guess by the look of things, Nat, that your chances of winning the young lady are mighty slender."

"Is that so?" Nat belligerently demanded.

"It is. Just read him that last bit you doped out, Jock. Perchance he won't feel so cocky then."

Jock peered thoughtfully at the letter, then noisily cleared his throat.

"'She has this day promised to impleecitly obey my commands and marry the mate o' the *Grampian*, as soon as the ship arrives in Boston.'"

As Sam had covertly passed the signal, Jock ceased reading and carefully refolded the letter.

Nat thoughtfully stroked his chin for a minute, then abruptly asked for the loan of Sam's fiddle.

"We'll give hint No. 1 a chance to germinate," Sam whispered to Jock. Then, turning to Zac, he said, "You take that letter, young fellow, and see that it is accidentally found in the boat and returned to the skipper."

"Right ho, Sammie." Zac cheerfully yapped as he grabbed the letter. "Nah yer wants ter pipe dahn, so we can listen ter a drop o' good music, as plyed by er real musical Soule."

CHAPTER XVI.

The men who came aboard to refill the *Grampian's* complement were a bunch of hard-bitten tykes. To a man, they were Anglo-Saxon, and, as they were all out of a wrecked opium clipper and had been fighting Chinese pirates for years, they were a reckless gang who cared for neither the quick nor the dead. Three of them had been with Captain Watkins in the *Antelope* the time that he smashed the pirates off the Ladrones and sailed into Macau with a Chinaman hanging from every yardarm. This was Watkins' method of warning the pirates to leave his ship alone in the future.

A couple of hours after these worthies came aboard, the *Grampian* snored past Green Island on her way down the China Sea before the fresh monsoon. The new men were all excellent sailors, but, as they had not been in a large ship for years, and never in a tea clipper, they found things rather strange.

Mr. Phips, knowing what the new men were, handled them very gingerly all day. Just before dark, he ordered all hands aft to the waist where he and Mr. Ganter picked watches. There was not much choice about it because the newcomers, to a man, were passed over to the second mate. Mr. Ganter looked sidewise at the mate for this move, but, apparently, he was too closely under his senior's thumb to remonstrate.

The mate had more on his mind than

the bare getting rid of possibly dangerous men, and he betrayed the fact to the Snorters, when he made Nat the first choice of his new watch.

Mr. Ganter, determined to have as many of his old watch as possible, made Sam his first choice. When the mate saw that, his second was—little Zac. He thereby blocked the second mate from getting much of his beloved fancy work around the poop done on the passage home, because Zac was, without doubt, the most cunning of the Snorters in all kinds of fancy sailorizing.

The second came back at him by choosing Pat O'Neill. This was a clever bit of diplomacy on Mr. Ganter's part, because Pat was, admittedly, the finest helmsman in the ship. With the big Irishman at the wheel, Mr. Ganter could devote his whole time to his man driving, thereby getting the best out of the men, while Pat, who, when at the wheel, seemed to become part and parcel of the mighty fabric he was directing, could be trusted to get every inch out of the ship.

Ferguson, having enormous strength in his mighty arms and hands, and therefore the best man of the lot when it came to heavy rigging work, was the mate's next choice. From that on, the choosing business was simply an exchange of watches—the mate being determined to have the best of the two.

The *Grampian* had an excellent start on her long passage home, and, for two days, she drove ahead at a steady, fifteen-knot clip. She was still droning along with every stitch set, ringtail, royal studdingsails on fore and main, and that prince of kites, the "Jamie Green," pulling like a Trojan under her long, tapering jib boom, when suddenly the boatswain raised the cry of "Murder!" and rushed out from under the forecastle head dragging the insensible form of Bill Garboard behind him.

"That man's not dead, you black fool," roared Captain MacGregor, the first man to reach the boatswain. "He's only stunned."

"Ah—Ah knows he ain't daid, cap'n, sah," whimpered the negro, "'cause Ah done knock him out when Ah seed him murder li'le Tim Donovan under the fo'c's'le haid jus' now, sah. No, no, dis man ain't daid!"

"But this one is," barked Mr. Flint, who just then emerged from under the forecastle head and laid the body of Donovan on deck beside the boatswain's victim. "His skull's been bashed in."

"You're right, Mr. Flint," said the Old Man after a brief examination. "He's been struck with a heavy, blunt instrument. Go under there again and see if you can find it. Bos'n, carry the body aft to the sail locker and tell Sails to have it ready for burial at sunrise."

"Heah yo', Ferg'son, yo' caht dis yere daid pusson 'long to de sailmakah. Be real shahp about it now," the boatswain immediately ordered.

"I told you to do that, bos'n," snapped the skipper. "Obey orders."

"Ah cain't do that job nohow, cap'n, sah," moaned the boatswain, shrinking away from the body as Jock picked it up. "'caise Ah's allus bin mortal 'feard ob all kin's ob daid bodies an' corpuses. Hones' t' Bob, cap'n, dat am de truf."

Captain MacGregor turned away with a snort of disgust.

"What did you find, Mr. Flint?" he asked the fourth, who had just returned from his search.

"Nothing, sir. There's nothing adrift under there heavy enough to kill a rat with."

"How do you account for that, sir?" demanded the skipper. "The bos'n says he caught Garboard in the act."

"If he caught him in the act, sir, he ought to be able to tell us what sort of an instrument he used and what became of it."

"Do you hear that, bos'n?" barked the Old Man. "What was Donovan struck with?"

"A long, iron bolt, sah," instantly replied the boatswain. "It done look lak one ob dem long breasthook fastenin's, sah."

"What became of it? It's not to be found now."

"Well, sah, when Ah yelled an' jumped foh Gahboa'd, he frowed dat bolt for'ahd an' it done went out de hawse pipe. I shuah heard iron rattle on iron, sah."

"Don't you keep your hawse pipes plugged at sea, Mr. Phips," Captain MacGregor demanded of the mate.

"Yes, sir, as a rule, but, as I was having the heel of the bowsprit scraped, I told the bos'n to knock the plugs out, as it would give a little more light under there."

"Quite so, Mr. Phips. Was Donovan doing the scraping?"

"Yes, sir."

"But he is one of the starboard watch. Why was he working forward?"

"You had Higgins aft, sir, on a special fancy-work job, so I was compelled to take one of the star-bowlines to make up my complement."

"Were you?" snapped the skipper as he turned to look at Garboard, who was just coming to.

"What did you kill Donovan for?" he demanded a moment later.

"S-s-sir?" dazedly replied Garboard, blinking owlishly up at the captain.

"Why did you kill Donovan?"

"Is—is ole Tim dead?"

"Yes. Why did you kill him?"

"Wot! Me kill ole Tim?" whispered Garboard, sitting up and staring at the skipper, apparently unable to grasp the accusation.

"Yes, you killed him. The bos'n saw you. Why did you do it?"

"The nigger lies, sir! He never saw me do anything o' the sort. Ole Timmie an' me's fit pigtail an' Malay pirates t'gether fer more'n thirty years. I'd kill meself a dozen times, sir, afore I'd hurt a hair on Tim's head. He hadn't many left, Lord knows, but I wouldn't hurt a one o' 'em, sir, 'cause no man never had a better messmate than ole Timmie."

"That will do, Garboard. No more of that maudlin gibberish. Are you going to tell me why you killed Donovan, or are you not? We know that you struck him on the head with an iron bolt and that you threw it out the hawse pipe when the bos'n yelled at you. Now own up."

"Is—is ole Timmie really gone ter F-Fiddler's Green, sir?"

"He has. The sailmaker is busy sewing him up. Why did you kill him?"

"Can—can I see him, cap'n? Jus' once more afore he goes ter Davy's locker?" Garboard pleaded, huge tears coursing unheeded down his time-scarred, weather-beaten face.

"Take him along and let him see his victim, Mr. Flint," growled the skipper. "Then put him in irons. We'll land him at Anger. I should run him up to the lee yardarm. A man who would kill a shipmate he's sailed with for thirty years is not fit to live."

The heartbroken old sailor was led aft to the sail locker, where his victim was straightened out, ready for his winding sheet.

Garboard stood and stared at his old mate for a minute. Then, with a soul-racking sob, he dropped beside him, took his face between his hands and reverently kissed him. After that, he devoutly implored his Creator to permit them to be shipmates again in the great Hereafter.

Mr. Flint then jerked him to his feet and started to drag him away, but, with almost superhuman strength for one of his years, Garboard broke away, pointed to the awful wound in Donovan's head and triumphantly barked:

"There y'are, sir. There y'are! There's sure proof that I didn't hurt ole Timmie!"

"What do you mean, Garboard?" asked the fourth.

"Look there! Look at his head, sir! It ain't bleedin'! If I'd killed Timmie, his head 'd be bleedin' now! A murdered man's wounds allus bleeds whenever the swine as killed him comes near!"

"Come on, old man," urged Mr. Flint, his voice strangely softening. "That idea's got whiskers on it, it's so old. It's gone West long ago, the same as werewolves and witches."

"No it ain't, sir! I've seen hundreds o' killed men in my time—so's Timmie—an' they allus bled whenever the murderer come around."

"Well," snapped Captain MacGregor, who had arrived in time to hear the last remark, "Donovan is not bleeding, and you killed him."

"No, no, cap'n! I—I couldn't even hurt ole Timmie, sir," sobbed the old-timer. "What 'd I want ter kill him fer?"

"For revenge, I suppose," replied the skipper, turning his withering stare on Garboard. "You and Donovan had a fight in the fo'c's'le last night, didn't you?"

"Yes, sir."

"And you got the worst of it?"

"Yes, sir."

"That's why you killed him then. You wanted to get even for the hiding you got last night."

"Good Lord, cap'n, yer away off yer course! Yer see, sir, me an' Timmie was allus havin' little fights like that. They was like typhoons—they allus cleared the air an' we liked one another better'n ever arterwards. I guess yer never had a real, all-oak and copper-fastened shipmate, cap'n, or yer'd know that a little scrap once in a while has ter be had—same's brothers."

"Clap the bracelets on him, Mr. Flint," growled the captain, "and put him in the lazaret.

"Here, Higgins," he ordered a moment later, "get Garboard's blanket and take it along to him."

"Aye, aye, sir," answered Zac, who instantly scurried away on his thoughtful errand.

"What have you there?" demanded Mr. Flint, who was just coming out of the lazaret when Zac arrived.

"Ole Bill's blanket, sir, wot the captain tole me ter get fer 'im."

"All right, my lad," said the fourth, stepping aside. "Take it down to him, and, Higgins," he concluded lowering his voice, "spread it out and make him as comfortable as possible. I reckon his days now are short. There's an old tarpaulin over on the port side. Get it, straighten it out and spread the blanket on it."

"Aye, aye, sir," Zac replied, dropping below.

It was pitch dark in the lazaret, but the little Cockney had no trouble whatever in locating Garboard, because the old chap was continually moaning: "Everybody thinks I killed poor 'ole Timmie, but I didn't. I couldn't."

"Cheer up, old bean," Zac whispered, when he reached old Bill's side. "'Ere's one as don't believe yer slugged yer myte." Then, without another word, he pulled up the tarpaulin, which he straightened out and spread the blanket over.

"Come over 'ere, myte," he called out when all was ready. "I've got yer bed hall myde up ready fer yer.

"Nah," he continued when Garboard was comfortably settled, "stop yer moanin' an' go ter sleep. Yer got hall night in ter-night, an'. Bill," he continued, clapping a comforting hand on the heartbroken old chap's shoulder, "jus' remember as 'ow Zaccheus 'Iggins, hesquire, don't believe yer guilty."

"Thank the Lord fer that!" whispered Bill. "I believes yer, 'Zaccie, 'cos yer just about Timmie's size an' yer looks like he did when he was a young feller like you."

"That's orl right, ole-timer, but I gotter go nah, 'cos the fourth is wytin' ter lock yer in. Yer cawn't smoke dahn 'ere, Bill," Zac concluded, sticking his plug in a pocket that Bill could reach, "so 'ere's er bit o' chawin' fer yer ter exercise yer jaws on. I'm off. Cheery ho, ole spraht."

Directly after Zac had departed on his errand of mercy, the sailmaker, having measured and cut his canvas, left the sail locker in search of the necessary weights to sink the body.

The instant he went out, Captain MacGregor, who had remained behind, seized the solitary light, dropped beside the dead man and closely examined the terrible wound that ran across the top of the nearly bald head. The wound was about six inches long and nearly an inch and a half deep.

"Were any square bolts used in the building of this ship, sir," a voice asked from the other side of the body.

Captain MacGregor started violently, then elevated the light and looked fixedly into the cool gray eyes of the speaker. Whether it was some dominating force in those eyes or whether it was the effect of the recent tragedy that kept him from peremptorily ordering Nat on deck, we know not, but we do know that he lowered the light and again looked at the battered head.

"Why did you ask that question, Soule?" he demanded a little later.

"Because, sir," Nat replied, pointing at the wound, "that is not the track of a round instrument."

"Why isn't it?"

"Because that wound is too deep to have been done by a round weapon, sir. It was done by either a square or a triangular instrument."

Captain MacGregor slowly nodded.

"Shipbuilders occasionally use square bolts in construction work," he thoughtfully remarked after a time, "but there were none used in this ship that I am aware of.

"What's that?" he asked, a moment later, as Nat picked something nearly two inches long out of the wound.

"A sliver, sir—oak," Nat replied when he had wiped it off.

"An oaken sliver," said the Old Man as though speaking to himself.

"Yes, sir, oak. That man was struck by a square-cornered billet of oak, and this piece was broken off."

"H'm! The bos'n lied. He said he heard 'iron rattle on iron.' Wood on iron don't rattle."

"Perhaps, sir, he was so excited that he don't really know what he heard or saw," said Nat, as he slipped the sliver into one of the sailmaker's empty needle papers.

"What are you going to do with that?" asked the skipper, appraisingly running his eyes up and down Nat's supple form as though that was the first time he had seen him.

"Just goin' to keep it for future reference, sir," Nat grimly replied. "Might find where it came from some day."

"Here, hang this light up," snapped the Old Man. "I reckon that Mr. Phips will keep you too busy to find anything for some time to come."

After hanging the light up, Nat stood for a minute, lost in deep thought. Then, as the skipper had gone and he heard the footsteps of the returning sailmaker, he gave a resigned toss of his head and went on deck.

"Here, you skulking witch toaster," roared the mate, as Nat started forward, "get a bucket of water and a swab. Then chase your long carcass under the fo'c's'le head and clean up that mess of filth Donovan left behind."

Nat hastened to obey orders. It was his watch below, and he had not yet had his supper, but that didn't bother him in the least. He was glad of a chance to do a little investigating on his own.

Some twenty minutes later, he emerged from under the forecastle head,

threw the water overboard to leeward, washed out the bucket and swab and put each of them in their respective places.

"Did you clean that mess up properly?" the mate demanded as Nat started for the forecastle.

"I don't know, sir. It's pitch dark under there."

"Take your fo'c's'le lamp and make a good job of it. Jump now."

Nat entered the forecastle, but immediately returned to the mate.

"They won't let me take the lamp, sir," he quietly reported.

"They won't, eh? I'll mighty soon get it for you," roared Mr. Phips as he sprang for the door.

"Give me that light," he bellowed as he bounced into the forecastle.

But, even as he bellowed, the light went out, and Mr. Phips followed suit almost immediately. His exit was forcible—so forcible, in fact, that he shot aft on his back full three fathoms before he stopped.

When he came to a stop, a deluge of water, swept over him, and a voice from forward barked, "The next time you want to come in, knock like a little gentleman."

Roaring like a sea lion, Mr. Phips came to his feet, and, seeing a long shadow standing by the after corner of the forward house and hearing it chuckle, he grabbed a belaying pin and jumped for it. The murderously descending pin struck nothing, till, at the bottom of its arc, it cracked his own shin. As he doubled up with a howl of pain, a puissant fist came in contact with his jaw and knocked him another two fathoms aft.

With a gush of obscenity which, for pure filth, would have disgraced a Whitechapel sewer, Mr. Phips again came to his feet. This time, considering discretion the better part of valor, he slunk aft to get into some dry clothes. The shadow, after thoughtfully rubbing his fist, repaired to the forecastle and his long delayed supper.

CHAPTER XVII.

Captain MacGregor, who, like most skippers, had a keen eye for his slop-chest sales, always allowed a spitbox to be kept beside the wheel—the more tobacco a man chewed while there, the greater the income from the slop chest. A man couldn't spit on deck. Neither could he leave his work to spit over the side, as too much valuable time would be lost. So, he was always mighty glad when his trick at the wheel came, because he could then have a good comfortable chew.

Now, it was customary for the man who left the wheel at four bells—six a. m. and p. m.—to empty the spitbox, wash it out and partially fill it with clean salt water. But, since leaving Hongkong, Mr. Phips had decreed that Nat, and Nat alone, should do all these necessary emptyings. This was a pure work-up job and tended to gall the heart of any A. B. and cause him to commit—well, "indiscretions," Mr. Phips called 'em.

This was undoubtedly the mate's reason for giving Nat every dirty job he could think of. He was trying to make the "Witch Burner," as he called Nat, commit some goodly "indiscretion"—say, that of publicly striking an officer first. If he so far forgot himself as to do that, he'd probably lose the number of his mess and lose it so quickly that he'd never know exactly how it happened.

"Did you finish that job under the fo'c's'le head last night, Witch Burner?" Mr. Phips demanded next day, when Nat had finished his morning jobs.

"No, sir."

"Why in Hades didn't you, you lazy swine?"

"Because you failed to get me a light, sir," Nat coolly replied.

"Get along there and do it now," bellowed the mate. "And as that muck has probably soaked into the deck by this time, get to work on it with a holystone. Shake yourself now.

"Here you, Higgins," he continued, "you finished that after-bell lanyard yesterday, didn't you?"

"Yes, sir—orl but seizin' it ter the clapper," Zac replied.

"Any farmer can do that! You get your undersized carcass under the fo'c's'le head and carry on that scraping job Donovan laid down on."

"Aye, aye, sir," Zac answered, turning away with a grimace. There was considerable difference between sitting in the shade of the cross jack doing fancy work and scraping the heel of a varnished hard-pine bowsprit in the sweltering heat under the forecastle head.

When the sun danced up out of the east as though in a hurry to pour his blistering rays over long-suffering humanity, his early beams shot under the forecastle head and made things under there plainly visible.

"Here, 'Cock,'" suddenly ordered Mr. Taylor, who had arrived to hurry up Nat and Zac a bit, "while it's good and light here, you get busy and scrape the for'ard side o' the pawl post."

With an inward groan, Zac tackled his new job, which, being seasoned oak, was considerably harder scraping than the bowsprit.

"'Lor' bless the Dook o' Argyle,'" he suddenly quoted, suspending his work and staring at the port forward corner of the pawl post that a wandering sunbeam was then playing over.

"You should always scratch your back against something when you say that, Zaccie," Nat grinned, as he glanced up from his work.

"No, I don't, Nattie, but I was jus' thinkin' that some bloke er other must 'a' when 'e was scratchin' 'is nob on the corner 'ere."

"What the dickens are you yappin' about, Zac?" Nat demanded as he came painfully to his feet.

"There y'are. See fer yerself," Zac growled, pointing to six or eight fairly long, gray hairs that were sticking to the corner of the pawl post. "The blighter felt so bloomin' good while 'e was abaht it that 'e even got rough an' busted orf a bit o' ther solid hoak," he concluded, lifting his knife to resume his scraping.

"Don't touch it, Zac, for the love of mike!" Nat gasped, grabbing the little cockney by the wrist with a grip of steel.

"Wot's the matter wi' you, long un," Zac snapped. "Gorn balmy?"

Nat excitedly pointed to the spot Zac had indicated and shook his head. A moment later, he fished a piece of paper out of his pocket and took therefrom a sliver of wood. After a couple of trials, the sliver fitted exactly into the corner of the pawl post. Then, with a sigh of intense relief, he stood back and beamed triumphantly at his little shipmate.

"Where'd yer find that bit o' wood, Nattie?" Zac asked, after coolly surveying the pleased face before him for a minute.

"I picked it out of that awful gash in poor old Tim's head," Nat whispered, after looking cautiously around.

Zac whistled softly between his teeth, then pursed his thin lips.

"Then those hairs are Tim's," he said, waxing serious, "and he wasn't struck by anything, because no hundred men alive could pull up that pawl post and hit him with it. Could it have been suicide?"

To think was to act with Zac. He stepped away a few paces, turned and made as though to dive, headfirst, into the corner of that two-foot-square pawl post.

"That'll do, Zac," Nat barked. "That's not the lay. If it had been done

that way, Tim would have been killed by a fore and aft blow, whereas he was killed by a thwartship one."

Being utterly stumped, the two men thoughtfully resumed their respective tasks.

"Say, Zac," Nat suddenly whispered, "you were talkin' to old Bill last night. Did he tell you anything about this?"

"All he knows, poor devil, and that's mighty little. He says that the bos'n rushed along the deck and ordered him to get under the fo'c's'le head and get busy on the heel of the bowsprit. He went, and, when he got pretty well forward, he fell over a man. Goin' in out of the light, he couldn't see anything for a bit, but, as soon as his eyes got used to the gloom, he saw that it was old Tim.

"He tried to pick him up, but, just as he stooped, the bos'n yelled 'Murder' and biffed him on the jaw. He knew no more till he heard the Old Man askin' him why he had killed Donovan. He swears that's all he knows about it, Nat, but what strikes me as funny, is, if Bill couldn't see anything when he first went under, how could the nigger? They say niggers can see in the dark, like a cat, but I doubt it."

"As far as I can see, Zac," said Nat, drawling worse than ever, "there are only two ways about it."

"And they are?"

"The bos'n either come in directly behind Bill, or he knew what had happened, beforehand. To give him the benefit of the doubt—that is, persumin' Bill did do it, which you and I don't believe—we'll say that he followed Bill in, saw him fall down, but, owing to the gloom, didn't know what really happened till his eyes became adjusted. Then, seeing Bill trying to pick Tim up, he became panic-stricken, yelled 'Murder' and landed on Bill's jaw.

"Still," Nat resumed, after a moment's thought, "on the other hand, he might have killed the little chap himself, ran aft on the starboard side, then come for'ard on the port and ordered Bill under to give Tim a hand. When Bill came under, he followed and accused him of murder. Knowing that the two old chaps had had a fight the night before, he could bring that up when questioned, and Bill's 'revenge' would be the logical cause of the killing."

"Blime, ole son!" Zac praised, dropping back into the dialect, "but yer oughter 'ave been er twistin' law sharp. But s'y, 'ow does yer figger aht that Tim really was killed. Yer've been figgerin' aht who done it so far?"

"Lie down on deck here. Maybe I can show you."

When Zac lay down, Nat rolled him over on his right side. Then, after gripping him by the collar with his right hand and seizing him by the thigh with his left, he raised him bodily and swung him, headfirst, toward the pawl post.

"There you are, my little man," Nat proudly remarked as he stood Zac on his feet. "That would do the trick all right, wouldn't it—if you were driven hard enough into that corner?"

"Sure it would," growled Zac, shaking himself, "an' the idea would be fine if th bos'n was the only bloke in the ship powerful ernough ter 'andle a man that way. As it 'appens though, there's hat least five more besides you an' the bos'n that could do it, ter s'y nuffink o' three er four maybes. There's the skipper, the myte, the second myte, the fourth myte, maybe the bos'n's myte, maybe Sam Borden, maybe Jock Ferguson, Pat O'Neill an' Zaccheus 'Iggins —I don't fink."

"You're right, Zac. Most any of those men could have done the trick, but, let's see. Sam was snake-stitchin' the spanker all the afternoon. Jock was workin' in the foretop. Pat was at the wheel. I was putting a new footrope on the fore royal, and"—he suddenly dropped back to his work and hissed—

"what were you doin' Zaccheus Higgins?"

"Go ter 'ell, yer long, overgrowed Yankee sod!" Zac yapped in a voice loud enough to be heard by whoever was coming. Then, a moment later, in a sibilant whisper, he made known the fact that the visitor was "Yaller" Phips.

"Didn't I tell you to scrape that bowsprit, you Whitechapel stiff?" snarled the mate, making a vicious poke at Zac as soon as he arrived.

"Yes, sir," said Zac, keeping well out of reach, "but Mr. Taylor told me to scrape the for'ard side o' the pawl post while the mornin' light was shinin' in, so——"

"Shut up and get to work," roared Mr. Phips, "before I jump over there and kick you into the middle of next month."

"Aye, aye, sir," Zac answered, so cheerfully that the mate sprang for him again.

Failing to reach the nimble little cockney, Mr. Phips contented himself by abusing Nat for his apparent laziness. In fact, the both of them were accused of this, the deadliest of sins at sea. In this instance, he had just cause for complaint, because neither man had done ten minutes' work during the past hour.

Under ordinary conditions, he would have chased them out on deck and set them to work where he could constantly keep his eye on them, but, had he not heard them bickering when he came forward? He had, and, knowing that cohesion rarely exists between bickerers, Mr. Phips departed, bearing an inward grin.

"All hands on deck to shorten down," rolled along the decks very shortly after the mate had resumed his tour of inspection.

Two minutes later, the studdingsails, Jamie Green, skysails, royal staysails and crossjack were coming home by the run, and, fifteen minutes later, the *Grampian* was laying to, with her main yards aback. Then all hands were ordered to assemble in the waist about the ensign-covered remains of their late shipmate, Timothy Donovan.

There, uncovered in the presence of their dead, they stood, utterly lost to the surrounding beauties of their little world, the radius of which was but eight short miles. The morning sun, shooting across the modest seas created by the ten knot monsoon, changed the oriental sea into one vast field of flashing, scintillating gems. Overhead, white and tinted masses of tropical clouds drifted lazily athwart the deep blue sky. None, except perchance that semi-dreamer, Sam Borden, beheld those matchless beauties that the benignant Creator has bestowed upon His thoughtless, thankless creatures.

Nowhere is the stupendous solemnity of the presence of the grim hand of disillusionment more keenly felt than at sea. Those "that go down to the sea in ships" and continually pit their puny strength against the implacable elements, are, in their souls, a kindly race, with hearts of lions and the sympathetic simplicity of children.

The carpenter and sailmaker stood at the head of the bier, ready, at the given signal, to raise the inboard end and cause the body thereon to slip into the sea to find a tarrying place at the bottom of the fathomless deep, until the dead are given up.

All eyes were turned toward that massive, almost squatty figure on the poop, with the wind tossing his bronze-colored hair and beard. With the Book lying open on one of his huge palms, he stood, without the least semblance of emotion, and let his eyes rove over the living about him, till the last shuffle and sniffle had died away. Then, in a voice as deeply sonorous as the booming of distant surf, he began to read that strangely oppressive burial service of the sea.

" 'For when Thou art angry, all our

days are gone; we bring our years to an end, as it were a tale that is told.'" As those sublime but thunderous words of the Patriarch rolled away, Captain MacGregor inclined his head toward his two petty officers.

A minute later came the words. "'We therefore commit his body to the deep,'" in accents so gentle that many gasping sobs were heard. With the first word, his right hand slowly began to rise. With the last one, the weighted body struck the water with scarcely a splash and rapidly sank from view.

"'Until,'" the *Grampian's* master resumed, closing the Book and quoting from memory, "'until the sea shall give up its dead and time shall be no more.'"

A few seconds' pause—then he slipped the Book into his pocket and snapped at the mate, "Get her on her course again, sir."

"Hard up that wheel," bayed Mr. Phips. "Lee main braces. Jump now, you scum, your holiday's been too damned long altogether."

The men went to their work with a rush, not so much on account of the mate's orders as the desire to get away from their gloomy thoughts.

"Get back to your jobs," ordered Mr. Phips, half an hour later, when every stitch was again set and the *Grampian* was once more heading to the southward with a goodly bone in her teeth.

Nat and Zac, who happened to be close together when the order was given, instantly started forward. Nat, in turning, jostled the little cockney who immediately kicked him on the shin. The kick was answered by an apparently vicious backhander that knocked Zac halfway across the deck.

"Keep those two fellows together all you possibly can, Mr. Taylor," said the mate in an undertone. "They're like the Kilkenny cats, and, if they're kept together enough, maybe they'll end the same way."

That was all Mr. Phips said on the matter, but he had great hopes. Who knows, perchance that fiery cockney runt might wax vindictive enough to slip a few inches of steel into the other fellow. The bare thought of that possibility caused the thinker to caress his hands.

As soon as Zac and Nat reached their rendezvous, they looked owlishly at each other for the space of three breaths. Then they solemnly shook hands.

"I opine, Zaccheus," Nat drawled, "that we are on the highway to fame, if not to fortune. Methinks that Mr. Phips hath fallen into the gins of the wicked."

"Betcher ruddy life 'e 'as, ole bean," Zac agreed. "Why the yaller sod'll be expectin' us ter scoff each other alive in er minute."

"That's exactly what we want him to expect, sweet coz, and the more he expects it, the more he'll leave us alone under here. But first off, old hoss, how doth deadly enemies work when on similar jobs?"

"They work like 'ell—one tryin' ter do more'n the other."

"Exactly. Now let's make the dust fly. The more work we do, the more time we'll have to think and plot and plan—later. Here we go!"

Suiting actions to his words, Nat wet the deck over the bloody spot. Then, instead of sprinkling it with sand and grinding the deck down with a holystone, he seized one of Zac's scrapers and went to work the riskier but quicker way.

"Keep your eye skinned, Zac," he said a little later as he got up to throw his telltale scrapings out the lee hawse pipe. "The fat'll be in the fire if I'm caught scrapin' this deck. I'll have her ready for the stone in another ten minutes—if I'm not caught. How're you doin' with your little job?"

"Comin' like a 'ouse erfire," Zac replied without raising his eyes from his work. "I gave the ruddy thing er coat

o' slush afore I went on deck. She scrapes like a 'unk o' chees nah."

"Good! When we get together on the bowsprit we'll think thinks, dream dreams and plan plans."

"Wot 'o, she bumps!" piped Zac, as his scraper struck a spot that the slush had made particularly soft. "I'm dyin' ter think thunks, blime, if I hain't! I'm allus tickled stiff when plannin' plans, I am. S-s-st!"

Quick as a flash, Nat discarded the scraper and, by the time Mr. Taylor peered over the bowsprit at him, he had the deck wet and sanded and was very busy with the holystone.

"Don't you stick your ugly cockney dial over here, you blasted runt," Nat growled, "or I'll pull your block off and use it for a spit kid."

"Who the devil are you talkin' to?" demanded the third.

"Sufferin' Lazarus! Is that you, Mr. Taylor?" Nat gasped. "I thought it was that cussed lime-juicer stickin' his empty skull over here."

"All right, Soule, but don't make a mistake like that again. It might not be healthy."

"I'll try not to, sir," gulped Nat, bearing down on his stone.

"I s'y, Mr. T'yler," yapped Zac as the third was leaving, "cawn't yer gim-me er job somewhere else, 'cos I'm scairt stiff o' that 'ere ruddy, long-legged 'M'yflower' cah's son."

"You'll stay right where you are, you cockney bum, an' consider yourself lucky if I don't kick a hole through you for tellin' me what to do." Mr. Taylor roared.

"I wasn't a-tellin' o' yer, sir," sniffled Zac. "I was honly a-wishin', sir."

"Shut up, you scum," admonished the third as he took his departure.

"Zaccie," Nat solemnly whispered when they were alone, "you'll be the death of me yet. If I could act like you, I'd leave the sea and go——"

"Nah, wot's the matter wi' yer?"

"Nothing, Zac, only that actin' of yours hath caused me to conceive an idear. Shut up, and perchance it will grow."

Zac obeyed orders, and, for two solid hours, the two worthies worked so industriously, that, by the end of that time, they had accomplished almost a full day's work.

"I suppose thou knowest, O Zaccheus," Nat drawled, as he stopped to rub his aching wrists, "that thou art about the same size as the late Timothy Donovan, esquire?"

"Wot are yer bellyachin' abaht nah, yer long, overgrowed cah's son?"

"I was simply oratin', O Zaccheus, that thou and the late Timothy Donovan, were, in many ways, very similar. In other words, you resemble him greatly."

"Yus, honly I'm er bit livelier'n poor ole Tim."

"Maybe, Zaccheus, maybe," Nat softly replied, "but in this case, there's really not as much difference as one would expect between the quick and the dead.

"Now, to pursue my remarks," Nat quietly continued, after returning to Zac his hastily shied slush swab and wiping the grease out of his ear, "you and Tim Donovan looked a whole lot alike."

"Well, wot of it?" Zac snapped.

"Hu-s-s-sh! Thy Uncle Nathaniel is about to unfold a tale."

Zac thereupon inclined his ear and attentively listened to the unfolding of the tale.

"Is that the idea as was born er while back?" he reverently asked, when the tale had been told.

"Yes. What about it?" Nat asked.

"Nuffink, honly seein' as 'ow that cheild's a hinfant prodigy, it's abaht time yer sent it ter the barber."

"Why, Zac?"

"'Cos ther blinkin' thing's growed too fast. It needs trimmin' hup er bit."

"Who's the barber?"

"Me—Zaccheus Higgins, hesquire."

"All right. A hair cut and a shave for the infant, Zac, only don't talk the kid to death."

"No bloomin' fear," Zac replied, settling down to his work.

"Great medicine!" Nat yelped, when Zac, with his assistance, handed the infant prodigy its hat and stick.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"Phat's me little mon doin'—havin' a daydream?" asked Pat O'Neill, as he and Sam stepped into the port forecastle during the second dogwatch that evening.

Zac was sitting in a corner apparently lost in deep and somber thought.

"Wot yer bellyachin' abaht, yer big, flat-footed, bog trotter?" he growled, without looking up. "'Ow the 'ell can er bloke 'ave daydreams in the night?"

The whole watch collapsed, but Zaccheus Higgins, A. B., pondered on. Being a born actor, he was "thinking thunks" and mentally adding little frills of his own to the wondrous plan he and Nat had concocted.

At eight bells, the port watch took the deck, and, directly after the wheel and lookout had been relieved, the boatswain started roaming the decks in search of little work-up jobs.

"Lay alof' on dat lee main yahdahm," he suddenly ordered, addressing Gil Brooks, a sporty member of the watch. "Ah seed er Irish pennant up dere jus' afore dahk."

"I bet yer a plug o' the best that you daresn't awsk the bos'n where it is when yer gets erloft," Zac whispered, as Gill started for the rigging.

"Git yer plug ready, son," growled Gil. "I'll need her when I come down."

"Say, bos'n," Gill yelled from the main yardarm a couple of minutes later, "I can't find no pennant. Where is it?"

"Stop right where yo' is at, yo' son o' a sculpin," bellowed the boatswain as he sprang on the sheer pole, "'cos Ah's goin' ter show yo' dat 'ere pennant wif mah li'le dogs foh talkin' ter me dat way. Dere ain't no white trash allowed ter talk back to dis chile nohow."

By the time his threat was finished, he was in the maintop. Then, after slipping around to leeward, he dropped onto the footrope and started out toward Gil.

"Easy with the boots, darky," came the voice of Tim Donovan from the extreme end of the yard, just as the boatswain's right leg swung back for the first kick.

The night being fine and clear and everything on the yard plainly visible, the boatswain shot one glance along it, saw nothing, and, with an awful scream, he shot through space, grabbed a backstay and slid on deck with a swishing rush.

"Why didn't you teach that cheeky swine a lesson?" snarled the mate, when the boatswain shakily crawled up on the poop a few minutes later. "You're getting some timid, to fly away from a man half your size, you are."

"Me, sah? Ah done fly away from no man," replied the boatswain with chattering teeth.

"No?" sarcastically snarled the mate, who had seen what had happened, but had heard nothing. "What did you fly away from then?"

"A—a ha'nt, Misto Phips. A ha'nt."

"A ha'nt, my eye! You're getting cold feet! Get around to windward and get that slob when he reaches the deck. He's coming down now."

Determined to retrieve himself, the boatswain sprang off the poop and reached the weather side, just as Gil dropped on deck.

"Now, I'se gwine ter learn yo' de proper way ter 'dress a off'cer, yo' low-down houn' dawg," he roared, grabbing Gil by the neck.

Like the mate, it was impossible for the boatswain to fight square. Even with Brooks, a man but little more than half his size, he had to use his massive knuckle-dusters, but, just as he drew back his huge, brass-mounted fist, a sepulchral voice floated out of the belly of the mainsail.

"Why don't yer take him for'ard ter the pawl post, black man?" it inquired very quietly and suggestively.

The boatswain dropped his man and tore aft to the sacred precincts of the poop, where the toe of the mate's boot caught him under the chin as he tried to mount thereon.

"Get back and settle that cur, you lily-livered ox," roared Mr. Phips, "or I'll come down there and kick that hunk of putrefaction you call your head completely off your shoulders."

"It's not de man, Misto Phips. It's de ha'nt ag'in," the negro whimpered. "He done talk outer de belly ob de mains'l, sah."

"I don't give one hurrah in perdition if there are fifty ha'nts, you Senegalese swine," snarled the mate as he dropped on the main deck beside the boatswain. "You're going to obey orders in this packet. Go and get that man."

"Stay where you are, darky," again floated out of the belly of the mainsail.

"Dere yo' is, sah!" moaned the boatswain. "Yo' done heard it dat time."

Mr. Phips stepped forward and critically examined the huge sail, but, as he could see nothing, he returned to the quaking negro.

"Get for'ard and get that man," he roared, "or I'll perforate that empty skull of yours. There's nothing in that sail that can harm any man."

"On yer life, black man, don't yer pass the main riggin'," warned the "ha'nt."

"Mah Jupiter, Misto Phips," the boatswain groaned, dropping on his knees, "done sen' me for'ard, sah. Dat's his voice, sah, his voice."

"Who's voice, you blithering idiot. Who's voice?"

"Tim Donovan's, sah—de daid man."

"I don't care a tinker's curse," snarled the mate, dragging out his heavy bulldog. "You're going for'ard after that man, and going now. Jump!"

The boatswain slowly came to his feet and glared around. He was between the devil and the deep sea—the "ha'nt" and the mate's gun. He stood irresolute. He couldn't decide which master to obey, but, when the slowly rising gun reached the level of his breast, he moaned dismally and staggered forward, the mate close behind him. In the wake of the main rigging, they both stopped, as though they had suddenly crashed into some mighty, invisible barrier.

"Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha-ah!" came in terrible, unearthly shrieks out of the mainsail, each "Ha" closer and infinitely more hellish. But, before the last one had spent itself, the negro was a senseless heap on the deck, and Mr. Phips was well on his way aft.

CHAPTER XIX.

"Bos'n, get for'ard and see what all that row is about on the fo'c's'le head," Mr. Phips ordered, shortly after eight bells the following night. "Boot every one off out of it except the lookout man. Lively now."

The boatswain slowly left the poop, but, when abreast of the main rigging, he suddenly got up speed, passed under the mainsail like a fleeting shadow and did not ease down till a flying leap landed him on the forecastle head. He glanced apprehensively about him, but saw nothing disturbing. Then he inhaled mightily and grinned—the "ha'nt" was not working to-night.

"Get up on yo' feet an' keep on' em, yo' lazy houn' dawg," he bellowed when he noticed the lookout man comfortably seated on the capstan.

As the man let the order pass unheeded, the boatswain, with a roar of rage, sprang forward and made a vicious swing at his head. He only succeeded in knocking the fellow's hat off, however. Then, after regaining his balance, which the empty blow had caused him to lose, he wheeled to renew the attack, but that was all. His jaw dropped, his eyes started from their sockets, and, with his fist still drawn, he stood like one suddenly petrified. Tim Donovan, with pale, luminous, wavering fires playing about that awful gash in his head as well as about his eyes, nostrils and mouth, stood before him.

"Murderer," slowly commenced that fearful shape, as it raised a hand and deliberately pointed a long, flaming forefinger at the transfixed boatswain. "Murderer, your days are numbered."

The pointing of that fearsome finger broke the tension, and the negro, with a scream of deadly terror, turned and literally flew aft. His speed being too swift for accuracy, he tripped, went headlong off the forecastle head and landed on deck. He came slowly to his feet and again resumed his journey, but, before he reached the after corner of the forward house, that hellish apparition once more confronted him.

"Don't be frightened," it quietly resumed. "You murdered me, so why be frightened o' me ghost? Listen, darky, you're a double murderer. You not only killed me, but you deliberately stand by an' say nothing while an innocent man—my old pal—is hung in your place. What have yer got ter say fer yerself? Speak! You killed me. Own up like er man."

"Y-yes, Misto Ghos', Ah done do what yo' said, all right. B-but, lissen yere, Misto Ghos', lissen yere. Ah was jus' waitin' fer daylight ter come so's Ah could tell Cap'n MahGregor all erbout hit. Hones' ter Jupiter, Ah was, Misto Ghos'!"

"Liar! You never thought about Bill Garboard except ter plan out how you could get him hung instead o' yerself. Now listen"—here the voice became more sepulchral than ever—"as yer not quite ready ter come with me, I'll give yer forty-eight hours ter go ter Capt'in MacGregor an' tell him, afore two witnesses, exactly how an' why you killed me. If you've not done so by that time, I'll make yer confess, an' then, yer rotten, black soul goes ter hell."

The last was a weird, unholy, blood-curdling shriek that echoed and re-echoed about the decks, long after the ghastly visitant had vanished into space.

"All hands on deck to shorten sail and stand by for squalls," rolled along from aft, almost simultaneously with the shade's departure.

Knowing that no man can tell the nature of the squalls of that locality—they may mean nothing more than a torrential downpour of rain, or they may mean wind of hurricane force—the kites were in and furled in record time.

The squall was a vicious one, followed by a miniature cloud-burst, which, in turn, was followed by thirty-six hours of light, baffling airs. This was a period of ceaseless sail drill that was simply heartbreaking in that heavy, damp, equatorial heat—a period that soon got on everybody's nerves and turned them into a snapping, snarling horde of bickering malcontents.

At noon on the second day of this spell of hellishness, all hands trooped aft to the break of the poop with the grub kids and, in no uncertain tones, demanded better food and more of it.

"Lay for'ard, you mutinous curs," Captain MacGgregor roared. "You're getting all the grub you're going to get. As for the quality, it's better grub than you are men. You're nothing but a gang of——"

A huge shank bone, slung by one of the star-bowlines, cracked him between

the eyes and interrupted his flow of eloquence by knocking him down. With incredible swiftness for one of his build, he came to his feet, jerked out an old-fashioned derringer and winged the slinger of the bone.

Seeing the man go down, the rest of the men, with deep, ominous growls, surged toward the poop. But, before they could attempt to mount it, the whole eleven of the afterguard stood before them, all armed to the teeth, and the mate opened fire.

His first shot missed—a strange thing when shooting into a closely packed body of men, thirty feet away—but the second one told why, because Nat, the tallest man of the lot, went to the deck with a crash. When Mr. Phips fired again, the skipper, who was as shrewd a judge of men as he was of weather, knocked up his hand and told him that the trouble was over.

"First blood fer Mr. Yaller Phips," Zac growled, as Jock Ferguson picked Nat up and started forward with him.

"An eighth of an inch farther south and his goose would have been cooked," Pat, the surgeon of the Snorters, told the rest of his cult, after he had critically examined Nat's wound. "The bullet went through his port ear and plowed a furrow for three inches along the side of his head. Misther Phips'll have to try again, so he will."

"Speak o' the de'il an' he's sure tae appear," Jock suddenly whispered. "Here he is the noo."

The mate, having learned a lesson the night he was thrown out of the forecastle, just then knocked at the door.

"Come in," growled Jock, who was then the recognized head of the port watch.

"Is he badly hurt?" Mr. Phips asked Pat, who was washing Nat's wound.

"Only stunned, sor," Pat replied without looking up. "He'll be around in a few minyutes, Oi'm afther thinkin'."

"That's good," said the mate with apparent satisfaction. "The captain sent me along to see how he was and to give you this stuff to bathe the wound with—if he wasn't too far gone. He says it is a wonderful antiseptic and that you can use it full strength the first time. After that it should be diluted."

So saying, Mr. Phips handed Pat a small bottle of colorless liquid and departed, well pleased with things in general and himself in particular.

The mate's back was barely turned before Pat pulled the cork out of the bottle, sniffed at the contents. Then he instantly jammed the cork home again, poked the bottle in his pocket and went on with his work. He had barely finished his bandaging when Captain MacGregor arrived and demanded to know how Nat was. He had just finished with the man he had winged.

He listened attentively to Pat's description of the wound. Then, after asking a few questions, he turned toward the door.

"Just a second, sor," Pat said, hastily stepping after him. "Will you let me have a good antiseptic to bathe the wound with?"

"Yes," the Old Man snapped, "I'll send the steward along with enough for both men. And, O'Neill, as you appear to know something about dressings, you will look after both men till they are able to look after themselves."

"Oi, oi, sor," Pat replied, throwing a peculiar look at the rest of the Snorters.

Captain MacGregor barely reached the poop before that awful pursuit of vagrant airs again began. Every one that was captured sent the *Grampian* closer in under the shore of western Borneo—a thing Captain MacGregor worked for every evening, in order to catch the little breeze that usually came off the land about dark.

"By the deep, six," sang the leadsman about three bells in the first dogwatch that night.

The Old Man heard, but that was all —he knew where he was going.

"By the mark, five."

Still no orders. That personification of aggression merely sniffed landward and held on.

"A quarter less five."

Those cold gray eyes turned in their sockets and rested expressionlessly on the leadsman.

"And a half four."

With a roar of rage, Captain MacGregor rushed forward, grabbed the leadsman by the neck and yanked him out of the chains.

"Take that lead, Mr. Flint," he purred, "and tell me the truth."

"And a half five," the fourth sang as the lead took bottom.

The skipper, who still held the deposed leadsman, slowly swung his man face to.

"Liar!" he hissed, driving his fist home between the fellow's eyes.

"Remain in the chains, Mr. Flint," he calmly ordered, when the "liar" had toppled headfirst off the poop. "That fellow seems to be somewhat afraid of the pirates who infest these waters. He must be when he'd lie that way."

Captain MacGregor then returned to his former position by the lee taffrail, abreast of the wheel.

"And a quarter five," came from the chains as four bells went.

As the line again swished down through the smooth water on the next sound, the Old Man's head shot forward turtlewise and remained that way for a few seconds. Then he wheeled, grabbed his glass and trained it shoreward.

"By the mark, five."

"Square the after yards, Mr. Ganter," the skipper suddenly ordered, closing his glass with a crash. "Leave your foreyards as they are, to throw her off when the breeze strikes, Mr. Phips."

"Weather main braces," roared both officers in unison. The ship was then on the starboard tack and the wind expected from the lee beam.

"And a quarter less five."

Slowly the dark line of wind-ruffled water approached from the east and, slowly but surely, gained strength. So much so, that, by seven bells, the *Grampian* was snoring away across the Java Sea for Sunda Straits and the Indian Ocean.

CHAPTER XX.

After supper, Pat went into the forecastle, ostensibly to see how Nat was making out, but, from the peculiar, set expression on his face, the other Snorters knew that there was something heavy on his mind. None of them questioned him because they knew from experience that it would be useless. He would tell them when he thought fit and not before.

"Oi want ye all, Nat included, to listen to me for a few minutes," he thoughtfully said, after seeing that Nat was as comfortable as possible under the circumstances.

"Do any ave ye recognize that schmell?" he asked, after he had carefully drawn the cork from the bottle the mate had given him some hours before and waved it back and forth.

"Bitter almonds," Nat almost instantly answered. "The old cook of the *Salem* used to use it for flavorin'."

"Roight," Pat grimly replied as he pulled a small book out of his pocket that bore on its cover the title, "Poisons and their Antedotes."

"Now listen to this," he continued, after opening the book at an especially marked place: "'Prussic or hydrocyanic acid, an organic acid first prepared in 1782-83 by C. Schule. The free acid is a colorless liquid with a smell resembling bitter almonds. It burns with a blue flame and is readily soluble in water.' This stuff does both," he said, looking fixedly at the Snorters and holding up the bottle.

" 'Prussic acid,' " he continued reading after turning over a couple of pages, " 'is a protoplasmic poison, directly lethal to all living tissues, whether plant or animal. It is by no means the most powerful poison known, but it is by far the most rapid. A single inhalation of the pure acid will produce absolutely instantaneous death. The acid is capable of passing through the unbroken skin, whereupon it instantly paralyzes the sensory nerves. It is very rapidly absorbed from raw surfaces, thereby causing fatal consequences. It is, naturally, an antiseptic.' "

"Blime! an' wot's the use o' that last sentence," Zac demanded, "if a single whiff o' the stuff'll wipe er bloke aht?"

"Probably they were thinkin' ave a very weak solution ave the sthuff when they wrote that, Zac. Ye see, it says here that, 'the pharmacopœial preparations of this acid are a two per cent solution, less than a teaspoonful of which will cause death.'

"Now," Pat continued, holding up the bottle, "Oi don't know how sthrong this is, but Oi can safely say thot we know why it was left here. We also know that Captain MacGregor did not send it for'ard. If he'd sent it, he'd have said so when Oi asked him for an antiseptic. Yes, me sons, this little bottle tells us in no uncertain words the sort ave a swine we have to contend with."

"I have to contend with, you mean," barked Nat, sitting up in his bunk with an oath.

"You compose yerself in thot pew, me son," Pat snapped, as he pushed Nat back on his clothes-bag pillow. "Yere wars are our wars till ye're able to look out for yerself."

"But, Sufferin' Lazarus, Pat," Nat protested, "I'm all right—quite able to get up, an' I sure want to to-night."

"Why to-noight?"

"This is the night Tim Donovan's ghost walks, isn't it?" Nat innocently asked. "An' as I've allus been real partial to spooks, Pat, I'm afraid I'll have to turn out an' look over to-night's sample."

"All roight, Nattie, but ye must keep sthill an' get some more shleep in the meantoime."

"Can do, but be sure and call me when the spook arrives," Nat replied.

Nat got a good four hours' sleep, but, soon after the watch went on deck at eight bells, he cautiously raised his head and looked toward a distant corner of the forecastle.

"How worketh the oracle, Zaccheus?" he whispered.

"Experdoodleous, me son! 'Ow's the ole bean?"

"I shall inform thee anon, old hoss," Nat replied, as he sat up and threw his legs out of the bunk.

"She seems ter work orl right," Zac observed, after Nat had taken a few turns about the forecastle.

"Methinks she'll do for the nonce, Zaccheus, but now, 'to smoke and perchance to spit,' as the immortal bard hath it," Nat replied, fishing out his pipe and tobacco.

"What of the night, Zaccheus?" he asked when the pipe was going in good shape.

"Black's the earl o' 'ell's ridin' hoots."

"Good—providin' it don't rain."

The two then smoked quietly on till they heard a peculiar noise outside. They then hastened on deck and, almost immediately after, a wild, weird, unearthly shriek floated through space from somewhere ahead. Every man on deck froze in his tracks and remained breathless while that ghastly sound tore aft through the rigging directly overhead. Then, with a wild rush, most of them disappeared.

The second shriek wailed along about two fathoms above the deck and caused practically every post of duty to be deserted.

Suddenly, there appeared on the main

deck a dull, lambent glow that gradually assumed an awful, but human, shape. A glowing, glimmering, pale-blue flame seemed to fill and hover about the mouth, nostrils, ears and eyes, while across the top of the head, in what appeared to be a terrible gash, played with increased vividness the same bluish light. The hands were long, hellish talons of the same living flame that played over the whole form of that awful apparition.

Slowly, with its head a good ten feet above the deck, that flaming nocturnal visitant floated aft and onto the poop, where it suddenly assumed the dimensions of a small man. As it alighted on the poop, Mr. Phips and the third mate suddenly observed that the man at the wheel was not steering a proper course and gravitated aft to the wheelhouse. Mr. Ganter, having come on deck to see what was going on, followed them. Captain MacGregor and Mr. Flint alone remained on the forward part of the poop, and, for a master and fourth mate, they stood remarkably close together.

"Captain MacGregor," began the specter, in the voice of the late Timothy Donovan, "I've come fer my murderer."

"He's in irons in the lazaret," grimly replied the skipper.

"No, he's not, sir. Bill Garboard didn't do it."

"Who did then?"

"That 'ere big black bos'n of yours, sir. I told him two nights ago ter tell you all about it or I'd take him ternight—after he's tol' yer the truth. Where is he, sir?"

"I don't know. He disappeared with that first infernal squawk of yours."

The unearthly one's awful hands made a couple of peculiar passes, and, with startling abruptness, the bos'n slid along the poop on his back and stopped between the flaming visitant and the captain. He attempted to arise, but those fiery hands spread over him, and that terrible voice ordered him to remain where he was and tell Captain MacGregor and Mr. Flint exactly how and why he had killed Timothy Donovan.

"Did you kill Donovan, bos'n?" asked the skipper, nudging the recumbent one with the toe of his boot.

"N-no, sah."

Instantly one of those long, gleaming, sulphurous fingers seemed to leap at the liar like a tongue of living flame.

"The truth, darky, an' nothin' else," ordered that awful voice.

"Did you kill Donovan?" asked the captain again.

"Y-yes, sah."

"Speak louder next time," snapped the Old Man. "Why did you kill him?"

"'Cos he bit mah ahm, sah."

"Why did he bite your arm?"

"It's dis way, sah," whined the bos'n. "Yo' see—"

"Black man," suddenly interrupted the ghost, "if yer don't stop yer long yarns an' tell the truth, I'll cut yer orf afore yer breathes ergain."

"Ah—Ah went under de f'c's'le haid ter see how dat man was gettin' erlong wif his work an' foun' der lofah smokin' his pipe. Ah done grabbed him by the shouldahs ter give him a li'le shakin' up, when he turned his haid an' druv his teef inter mah ahm. Dat done make me so mad, cap'n, sah, dat Ah jus' nachurally picked dat man up an' druv him haid fust inter de conah of de pawl pos. Den Ah drop him an' when Ah done saw what er mess his haid was in, Ah jus' run out from under the fo'c's'le haid an' aft ter de break of de poop. Ah stops dere an', after a bit, Ah thinks erbout der fight dat man an' Bill Ga'bo'd done hab de night afore. Jus' when Ah think dat Ah sees Ga'bo'd comin' down de fore riggin', so Ah run fo'wa'd an' chased him under de fo'c's'le haid ter help Donovan scrape de heel ob de bowsprit. When he went dar, Ah

done foller him, an' when Ah seed him fall ober Donovan. Ah cracked him one on der jaw an' yelled 'Murder.' Arter dat, Ah done drag Ga'bo'd outer dat place by de neck an' tell you-all all erbout hit. Yo' all beliebed de story an' when yo' put Ga'bo'd in irons, Ah was de happies' chile erlive till dis yere ha'nt done come."

"Bos'n," gritted Captain MacGregor, "I can understand a man killing another in a fit of anger, but I can't understand a man being low enough, or cowardly enough, to let another man hang for it."

"Are you quite satisfied that the nigger is tellin' the truth, Captain MacGregor?" the ghost then asked.

"Yes."

Silence then reigned for the space of a full minute, wherein not a man moved or even breathed, but every eye was fixed on that ghastly visitant, whose flaming orbs seemed to play over the recumbent boatswain with malevolent hatred.

"Negro," it finally said, in a voice that shook with chills of abject terror all who heard it—a voice, slow and perfect in its pronunciation and accent, but terrible in the sublime intensity of its tone—"negro, this night thy soul is required of thee."

As the last word died away, one of those awful hands floated out, hovered over the boatswain for a few moments, and then slowly fluttered down and implacably closed over his right wrist.

With the first encircling touch of that fiery hand, the boatswain emitted one long-drawn howl of terror. Then he dropped back on deck with a crash.

Slowly, the other lambent hand went forward and clasped the boatswain's hand. The first hand then relaxed its grip, but rested for a full minute on the wrist before the hand and arm was permitted to drop.

When the boatswain's lifeless arm struck the deck, the apparition began to float slowly forward. At the break of the poop, it paused for a second, then continued on its way, as it had come—some six feet above the main deck. After passing under the mainsail, it floated up and hung for a moment over the weather rail before it dissolved into space.

The silence of the ship was suddenly shattered by Captain MacGregor's bellow of incredulity, as the grisly visitant began to fade away. While the bellow was still in the air, he started forward like a typhoon, but the ghost had utterly vanished before he had covered half the distance. Not satisfied with the evidence of his eyes, he thoroughly searched the forward part of the ship, acting like a man who suspects that he has been cleverly hoaxed.

"Mr. Flint," he growled when he returned to the poop a half an hour later, "clap that murdering cur in irons as soon as he comes to. Release the other man first.

"Now what's the matter?" he snapped a few minutes later, on hearing the irons the fourth had taken off Garboard clatter on deck beside the boatswain. "Snap the irons on that swine and get him into the lazaret."

"I think, sir, under the circumstances, that the sail locker is the place for him," Mr. Flint replied.

"You think!" snapped the Old Man. "You have no business to think when I give orders. Don't dare question my orders again, sir. Get that man into the lazaret."

"Very well, sir," replied the fourth, picking up the irons and slipping them into his pocket. "I'll get a couple of men along and drop him into the lazaret."

"Why don't you put him in irons, Mr. Flint?" demanded the skipper, advancing threateningly toward the fourth.

"Didn't that flamin' spook say something about the nigger's soul bein' this night required o' him, sir?" Mr. Flint asked, without budging an inch.

"Yes, but what the little pink Hades has that to do with you clapping on those irons?" Captain MacGregor almost purred.

"Because, sir, that spook was wise. It said that that big stiff's soul was required of him, and—well, it's gone. His guilty conscience has killed him."

"Guilty conscience!" the Old Man snorted, after briefly investigating the late boatswain. "Guilty conscience, be damned! A thing that will shoulder its murder onto an innocent man has no conscience—guilty or otherwise. Superstition killed that carrion and nothing else. Dump him into the sail locker, Mr. Flint, and tell Sails to have him ready for burial at sunrise.

"Clever lad, that spook," he mumbled a short time later, as he turned away from thoughtfully considering the *Grampian's* phosphorescent wake. "I'd give considerable to know which one of them it was."

CHAPTER XXI.

Directly after the body of the late boatswain had been consigned to the deep, the yellow boatswain's mate was promoted to fill the vacancy, and Jock Ferguson was offered the vacant berth, but he refused the honor, as did Sam, Pat and Zac.

Captain MacGregor was sort of struck aback by these refusals, but, before he could compel either of them to take the job, Tom Adams, a husky, ambitious youngster of nineteen, bound to get ahead, volunteered to tackle it. As Tom was an excellent seaman for his years, the Old Man, recognizing good second-mate material, gave him the berth and a couple of dollars more a month.

The breeze the *Grampian* had picked up the night before held good for twelve hours, then fell away to a dead calm. The calm lasted another twelve hours, then the southeast trades floated lazily along and, thirty hours later, she passed Java Head and was once more in the Indian Ocean and out of dangerous navigation.

Almost the moment Java Head had passed the beam, Mr. Phips again became the remorseless slave driver of the outward passage. The crew was put on watch and watch, with the exception that there was no afternoon watch below. This was kept up till the tarring down and all the painting above decks was finished. Then it was "holystone and shine" once more. As the mate was a past master in the art of unnecessarily ordering men about, there was never a moment's respite day or night.

From the day Nat had been shot, the men had continued their growlings about the grub, especially the everlasting burgoo. For breakfast it was burgoo and molasses, the usual hard-tack and bootleg coffee. For dinner it was would-be soup, salt beef or pork, an occasional spud, and—that's all, unless they wanted to gnaw at a piece of hard-tack.

For supper, they had hash—the remains of the breakfast burgoo, a few cracker crumbs, a little meat, and, perchance, a spud or two. Thus, the chief ingredients of two meals a day consisted of burgoo—oatmeal porridge, a wholesome and heating food in all weathers. In fact, it is so heating that it should never be given men in the tropics.

The men growled at this diet, and every day the growl waxed louder. They were sorely tempted to go aft about it again, but, as yet, they remembered their previous reception too well. After a time, one brainy individual opined that the sudden and abrupt conclusion of their last howl was due mainly to the state of weather existing at the time, and the tactless way they had opened negotiations.

A few days after passing Java Head, they put their heads together and de-

cided that a really strenuous howl about the grub should be lifted up on the morrow, but withal, a diplomatic one. The star-bowlines were the prime movers in the affair, but, as they had already come to eat out of Sam's hand, they would have words with him on the matter and get him to be their spokesman.

"All right," Sam agreed, after due consideration, "I'll do the talkin'—when the time comes."

"That'll be to-morra, Sam," they yapped in unison.

"No, it won't," Sam positively told them.

"Why not?"

"Because it'll be suicide. Don't you fellows think for one minute that the Old Man's in any frame of mind to listen to a kick about the grub. The trades are too light."

"What's the trades gotter do with it?"

"All, my sons. They are, an' have been, so light that, in no one hour since we passed Anger, have we done more than six knots, wherein we should have been snorin' along doin' at least twelve. No. We gotta wait till the trades freshen up an' the old girl pulls off a couple of good days' runs before we tackle him. He may listen to us then. He'll eat the lot of us if we tackle him now."

Seeing the soundness of Sam's logic, both watches held themselves in and mentally prayed for more wind. At last it came, studdingsails began to split, booms began to crack and Mr. Phips began to look for excuses to shorten down.

The morning after a three-hundred-and-ninety-three-knot day's work, the star-bowlines, headed by Sam, emerged from the forecastle and marched aft. As soon as they appeared on deck, the larbowlines downed tools and joined them in the waist, where they all silently waited for Captain MacGregor.

"Well?" snarled the skipper, after he had stood on the forward end of the poop and glared ferociously at them for a minute or two.

"Good morning, sir," Sam began.

"I said, 'well,'" the Old Man growled, stepping toward the weather poop steps.

"We are here, sir," Sam resumed in his best style, "to complain once more about the grub."

"What's the matter with it?"

"The food, sir, such as it is, is not too bad, but it is utterly ruined by the way it is cooked. Possibly we can stand it, if you will be good enough to stop that everlastin', half-cooked, lumpy burgoo, while we are in the tropics. As oatmeal is not a warm-weather food and should never be eaten in these latitudes, will you please give us some substitute until we get into the North Atlantic, at least?"

"No," roared the Old Man. "Not by a damned sight! Not if it shrivels the soul case of every blasted one of you! Oatmeal is the best all-round grub ever made, and it has built the finest race of men in the world, bar none. Scotland has always eaten oats and always will, as long as the world wags."

"Pardon me, Captain MacGregor," said Nat, whom Jock and Zac had appointed spokesman for the port watch, "but I fear that your last remark is a little out. Scotland is even now goin' back on the hardy oat."

The Old Man went purple with rage. He was utterly and completely struck aback by the awful heresy of that sacrilegious assertion.

"Here you are, sir," Nat continued, gravely holding out a small newspaper clipping. "Here's the proof. I cut it out of a Hongkong paper."

Captain MacGregor came to himself with a start that forced forth a mighty roar followed by a flying leap that landed him on the main deck within reach of the speaker.

In spite of Sam's hissed warning, Nat

made no attempt to avoid the Old Man's mighty arms. He simply crouched and waited for those huge limbs to close around him. As they began to encircle him, he went into action as though on springs. So quick was he that when the circle closed, it closed around him just below the shoulders, his left arm flexed, thus giving two parts of it to resist the expected awful compression. He was then standing with his knees almost on deck, while his right arm was above his head and all clear for any use he could put it to.

The skipper chuckled, then slowly and irresistibly his implacable constriction commenced. As it did, Nat's right arm dropped, and the heel of his palm slipped under the chuckler's chin, and the tip of a long finger hovered menacingly before each eye.

"Captain," said Nat when he was all set, "I fear I have you at a disadvantage. Bein' crouched, I can lift you off your feet. Then, as your own grip will give me an excellent fulcrum, sir, I can break your neck in about half a second, to say nothing of putting your eyes out at the same time."

At the first sound of those cruel, drawling, nonchalant words, Captain MacGregor unconsciously eased his mighty grip.

"As it is, sir," Nat continued, "I'm not pinin' to do either, if you'll let me go and read what the scribe hath said about Scotland and the festive oat."

While speaking, Nat had been slowly trying to work the crumpled clipping out of his partially paralyzed left hand and get it into position for the Old Man to read.

"Now, my ranting billie," purred the skipper, when Nat had the paper where he wanted it. "I'll read your silly ravings. Then you'll go to hell with the marrow squeezed out of every bone in your long-legged carcass."

Captain MacGregor then squinted his eyes and read: "As Scots are rapidly giving up their porridge in favor of wheaten bread, large stocks of oat meal are accumulating in all parts of Scotland."

"That's a blithering lie!" he roared when he had read, and viciously spat at the paper.

"Look out for yourself," he continued. "I'm going to give you what I'd love to give the lying, cackling loon that wrote that rotten heresy."

With the last word, the mighty muscles of his massive arms and shoulders began to contract. The contraction, however, barely started before Nat began to straighten up. When his legs were straight, Captain MacGregor's feet were clear of the deck. Then, as he still retained his grip, Nat's right hand began an upward, backward thrust that could only end in a broken neck for the skipper if persisted in.

Nat, having no intention of breaking necks, stopped his thrust when the Old Man's head reached a dangerous angle, but, at the same time, he slowly sunk his two forefingers into those cold gray eyes above him.

Captain MacGregor was now suffering terrible pain, but, having been reared in an even harder country than that of his ancestors, he was a man and bore it without a whimper. After a little, Nat gave his victim's chin a slight push sidewise. This caused the most excruciating kind of agony and forced out a most stubbornly resisted moan of pure anguish.

Mr. Phips, on hearing the moan, looked at Mr. Taylor and nodded. With almost incredible swiftness, the third jerked a long, heavy-bladed knife out of his boot and prepared to sling it. He naturally thought that no one was watching his movements, but, even as his arm went back, a deftly jerked belaying pin hurtled through the air, struck him behind the ear and put him to sleep.

The mate, seeing him go down,

ground out an oath and slyly pulled his gun. This was too good a chance for him to miss. One good shot would do the trick—two tricks. It would rid the world of Nat, save the Old Man's life and, thereby, make sure of the necessary good report.

With a grin of unholy joy on his comely face, he raised the heavy Colt. There was no chance to miss, because the fighters were standing as motionless as though turned to stone. He took careful aim and was just about to pull the trigger when a heavy paunch mat rushed down from the mizzen-topmast cap, like some huge, unwieldy bird and dropped with sufficient force over his head and shoulders to knock him flat on deck.

Thirty seconds later, he was on his feet again with murder blazing in his big, watery-blue eyes. He looked for his gun, but, as it had utterly vanished, he wheeled with a withering curse and tore down to his room for another.

In a brace of shakes, Mr. Phips was back on the poop with another gun. Without even wasting a glance aloft to see who had dropped the mat, he slid along to the break of the poop where he stopped and raised his second weapon. He was in a hurry to finish Nat off. This was too good a chance to miss.

As his eye ran along the sights, he noticed that Nat had swung Captain MacGregor around so that he was now between him and the poop. With another gush of putrid profanity, Mr. Phips dropped his arm and began jockeying for a position that would give him a clear shot at his proposed victim, but it made no difference where he went—he was too yellow to chance leaving the poop—Nat, coached by Sam, continually kept the Old Man in the wake of that gun.

"What do you say, sir?" Nat asked the skipper after some minutes of this maneuvering. "Have you had enough?"

The indomitable old warrior merely growled and tried to tighten his grip.

"Better give in, sir," Nat continued, "because the mate is tryin' his best to shoot me, but, as I am keepin' you in the direct line of fire, he can't get the chance. He may wax desperate soon and get you instead of me."

"To hell with him," the Old Man growled, contracting his arms with a suddenness that caused Nat to gasp. He had eased his pressure a little on the skipper's chin.

This bit of tenderness on Nat's part was almost his last careless act in this world, because, with the sudden unexpected constriction and his effort to force the captain's head back again, he failed to hear Sam's next order.

Mr. Phips, seeing his opportunity, instantly sprang into position and blazed away. Being in too much of a hurry, his first shot only knocked Nat's cap off. His second was a clean miss, because, just as he pressed the trigger, an invisible voice began to sing in the maintop.

"Hoh! 'E is one blinkin' ole scut,
'E 'as yaller Jud Phips fer 'is myte.
'E barks an' 'e 'owls like er mut—
The long-tongued, bad-tempered ole skyte!"

Before the first half dozen words had died away, the steely clasp that encircled Nat began to ease up.

"Watch his tricks, Nat," Sam hissed. "He has more of 'em than a fox."

Nat grimly nodded and did not ease his thrust a particle. As Captain MacGregor's arms were steadily relaxing, he turned and pushed his back against the bulwarks. Being then in a position instantly to resume the thrust if necessary, he eased it enough to allow the Old Man to speak.

"Who is that screeching coof?" he slowly demanded.

"I don't know, sir. There's not a soul in the maintop where the singin's comin' from."

"Let me go, young man," the skipper

then ordered, dropping his arms to his sides, "and I'll mighty soon find out."

Nat dropped his right arm, stepped quickly back out of reach and began to rub his numbed left. Captain MacGregor's head snapped back into position, his eyes opened, but instantly closed again—he could see nothing but thousands of red, dancing molecules. He started aft, but entirely missed the poop steps and crashed into the poop.

"I'll lead you aft, sir," said Nat, taking him by the arm and turning him around.

"You'll do nothing of the sort," the Old Man snapped. "You'll guide me to the poop steps and nothing more, you attenuated loon."

Captain MacGregor mounted the poop and started aft, vowing vengeance on the singer of the insulting song.

"Mr. Ganter," he suddenly barked, stopping with a jerk, "what men have you working on the main?"

"None, sir," the second replied. "I reckon that 'ere singin's bein' done by the spook o' the bos'n's."

"Spook, be damned!" roared the skipper, rubbing his aching eyes. "There's a ventriloquist aboard here. That's all the spook there is. Who have you got aloft on the mizzen?"

"No one, except that little cockney, sir, an' I reckon he ain't got a voice a quarter the size o' that gent that's howlin' in the maintop. Want him down here, sir?"

"No," snorted the Old Man. "Leave the runt where he is. He could not throw his voice the length of a kilt."

With that he again started aft, but, before he reached the mizzen rigging, he was brought up with a round turn by:

"Hoh! 'E is one 'airy old Celt.
'E's a mug fer a second called Ganter.
'E weeps fer a syler man's pelt—
The slave-drivin', dod-blasted ole ranter!"

He uttered a suppressed moan, a moan caused more by fury than by the agony of his sightless, streaming eyes. Then he turned and resumed his way aft, thinking deeply despite his pain and anger.

CHAPTER XXII.

It was three days before the pain had entirely left Captain MacGregor's eyes and he again resumed his ceaseless prowl about the decks, but, during those days, he had pondered over many things and realized much.

As the *Grampian* had reeled off over a thousand knots since his grapple with Nat and was now past Mauritius and doing a steady fourteen knots, the skipper was feeling well, very well—for him.

Just after six bells, in the second dog-watch that night, a low, plaintive wail of the pipes was borne aft to his keen ears. He stopped his restless pacing of the poop and listened expectantly to the rhythmical march of Jock Ferguson on the fore deck. A moment later, when Jock got his stride, "Scots Wha Ha'e" tore a hole in the night with a droning wail that sent the blood wildly coursing through his veins.

When the music of Bruce's immortal address died away, Captain MacGregor stood still and pondered deeply on the days of chivalry. He was one of those hardy fellows who should have ridden with Richard, Cœur de Lion, or, perchance, harried the haughty don with Francis Drake.

Even as he pondered, that mighty voice, which had been heard so often of late aboard the *Grampian*, rolled over the ship from the weather main yard-arm with a sonorous beauty that was at once startling, impressive and spellbinding. It was a chant full of tears and fury, the heartbroken appeal of a patriot to his oppressed countrymen.

"Scots, what ha's wi' Wallace bled,
Scots, what ha'e on parritch fed,
D' ye ken wha's bein' said?
Na, ye canna be!

"A chiel amang us, takin' notes,
Says auld Scotia's gi'in' off her oats,
Frae Gretna Green tae John o' Groats.
Mak him scoff the lee!"

The voice paused for the space of ten seconds. Then it demanded in tones of distant thunder, which ended with a species of sarcasm that would have made a knight of the "Round Table" out of a weevil,

"Wha wad mak auld Scotia eat,
The Suthron's sleazy stuff ca'd wheat?
Wha wad tak awa' her aiten meat?
Mak' him turn an' flee!

"What wad show a traitor's guile?
Wha wad kill young Scotia's smile
By makin' a' his swirlies bile?
Heave him i' the sea!

"Wha wad be a scur-rvy soul?
Wha wad ring auld Scotia's toll
By breakin' up his parritch bowl?
Hoots mon! Awa' wi' ye!"

Captain MacGregor stood stock still with the young tropical moon shining square into his hard, rugged face and gazed unseeingly at the weather end of the main yard, his thoughts ranging back to the days when mighty thews and a sure eye were the principal things that kept a man long in the land of his fathers.

Anon, when a light, fleecy cloud drifted across the moon, he slowly came out of his reverie, walked to the poop steps, descended and strode purposefully forward to the main hatch, where four men stood around Sam Borden, who was seated and had his fiddle tucked under his chin.

"Who was that disembodied songster?" the Old Man quietly demanded of the party before him, his voice partially devoid of aggressiveness.

Instead of an answer, Sam made a preparatory gesture with his bow. Then, with its first sweep, the four who were standing began to sing, in wonderfully modulated voices, "Scots Wha Ha'e," in the original.

It was excellent singing, far better than that of many so-called opera singers. In fact, little Zac and Jock had been trained to that end in their early days, but the sea had called louder than the footlights. The others had had no training in their youth, but, as they were naturally good singers, they had been apt pupils of the other two.

Captain MacGregor stood and listened, apparently utterly oblivious of the fact that he was the master of the *Grampian* and the men before him were his A. B.s.

At the finish of the song, he nodded a couple of times, then glanced aloft and to windward.

"Sing it again," he suddenly ordered, "the way it came from aloft."

The Snorters obeyed orders, and, when the song was finished, Captain MacGregor made a noise that sounded suspiciously like a chuckle. Then he turned and slowly made his way aft. He had barely started before Jock filled the pipes that were still under his arm, and struck up "The Cock o' the North."

The Old Man unconsciously quickened his pace, but, when he reached the poop, he stopped and listened. At the final wail, he abruptly turned and went below, but returned to the deck almost immediately and started forward again. At the head of the poop steps, he stopped with a jerk as the quartette began to sing that deathless Irish masterpiece, "Believe me if all those endearing young charms."

His stop was very brief. A moment later he was again beside the hatch.

"Don't murder that by singing it, you feckless loons!" he barked. "Stand aside," he continued, making a vicious sweep of his arm at the singers when they stopped. "Now, Borden," he growled when they had stepped behind Sam, "play that piece—if you can do it justice."

"Aye, aye, sir," Sam replied, and forthwith played that beautiful old song

as it has seldom been played on land or sea.

Captain MacGregor listened rapturously—like one listening to the favorite of some loved one who has gone on before. When Sam finished, the skipper slowly laid a rather bulky parcel on the hatch. Then he turned and went aft with his head bowed and his hands behind him.

"Not this time, Jock," Sam suddenly snapped as Jock again began making ready to pipe the Old Man aft.

"Why not?" Jock demanded.

"Because it'll be suicide if you do. That beauty of Tommy Moore's has struck some ancient chord, some hidden sorrow maybe, that'd make him kill you if you stopped its tender vibrations.

"Come on," Sam continued, stepping off the hatch and picking up the parcel Captain MacGregor had left behind. "let us have a look at the Old Man's largess."

Led by Sam, the Snorters repaired to the port forecastle and stood expectantly around while he carefully removed the wrapper of the "largess."

"Gin!" Nat, Jock, Pat and Zac disgustedly snorted, when their eyes fell on the large, square, black bottle in Sam's hands.

Sam shot them a quick look, then deftly removed the cork and sniffed the contents of the bottle.

"Rum," he quietly remarked.

"Ah-h!" quoth the others, bunching a bit closer.

"Yes, rum," Sam continued as he reached for a pannikin. "I didn't think the Old Man 'd insult us with gin."

"B'dad! An' it's meself that was thinkin' thot he'd niver be afther insultin' us at all, at all, so it was," Pat breathed through a most expansive grin.

Sam pityingly regarded the big Irishman for a moment, then carefully recorked the bottle and started for the door.

"Dinna min' yon muckle loon, Sam," Jock growled, after laying a detaining hand on Sam's arm. "Ah ken what the puir chiel meant. He thoucht a MacGregor 'd gie us naught but abuse."

"Nah yer shahtin', Jock! An' bleedin' little o' that we'd get if it cost the ole cock anyfink," yapped Zac who was skipping around on his toes, like a hen on a blistering deck.

"Here's the pannikin, Sam," Jock continued, utterly ignoring the little cockney. "Gie us a bit dram."

Sam uncorked the bottle once more and cautiously started to pour the fiery liquid into the proffered tin.

"Say when," he soon snapped at Jock, but the canny Scot's eyes were not even looking at the gurgling liquid. "When" in that particular respect, at that particular moment, was not in his vocabulary. He was going to have his "bit dram"—if he could be fortunate enough to get it.

When the gurgling ceased, he looked reproachfully at Sam, at the bottle and, finally, at the pannikin. Then, with painful deliberation, he caused the manly lotion to trickle down his hairy throat.

"Ye will soon ken, Sam," he said, purposely disregarding the impatient fidgets of Pat and Zac, "that yon's a maist potent brew. D'ye mind, when we were i' the *Squantum*, hoo we——"

He broke off and peered with fatherly tolerance from under his beetling brows at Zac, who had snatched the pannikin out of his hand.

"When!" yelped Zac, after Sam had stopped pouring into his outstretched tin. "I don't want no bloomin' bawf ternight. Zaccheus 'Iggins hain't no blinkin' 'og!

" 'Ere's t' yer, yer big, overgrowed Orangeman," he concluded, raising the tin to Pat. He then tossed off his portion of the "potent brew" as though it was so much new milk and passed over the tin.

"Wiit have a little of this 'curse of the ages,' Patrick?" Sam casually asked the drooling Irishman.

"Just a cow's mouthful, Samuel," Pat replied, gently nudging the bottle with his pannikin.

With extreme carefulness, Sam then poured Pat's portion into the waiting tin. When his whack was out, Pat cocked his eye accusingly at the pannikin, then held it aloft.

"Here's to the gintle Captain Angus MacGregor," he said with intense earnestness. "May his shadow niver grow less an' the skin ave a gooseberry kiver all his inimies."

Then, after his joyful blue eyes had wandered benignantly over the others, he slowly and with vast appreciation drank his drink.

"Ye don't know," he resumed, tilting the cup and peering therein, "ye niver can know, how Oi hate the dom sthuff, but," he mournfully continued, "Oi'm compelled to drink it, so Oi am."

"Compelled, Patrick? What meanest thou?" asked the unsuspicious Nat.

"Shure the dom sthuff killed me feyther, Nattie. Therefore Oi'm compelled to drink it in order to have me r-r-revenge."

"Methinks I grasp the idea, Patrick," Nat solemnly replied, reaching for the pannikin. "Your idea is worthy of you, sir, and revenge is indeed sweet."

"Wouldst quaff a frindly beaker of this goodly lotion, Nathaniel?" Sam asked, glancing aloft into Nat's twinkling gray eyes.

"Samuel," Nat replied, "an it please thee, I shall quaff a goodly beaker of thy friendly lotion."

"Yea, gents," he continued, caressing his belly with a circular motion of his left hand, "a charming spirit that. The veritable nectar of the gods. Try a little, Samuel. It will warm the cockles of thy gizzard."

"I shall, Nathaniel," Sam replied, taking the proffered tin, "but, let it be known, not on they recommendation, but because St. Paul has told us to take a little brew for our 'stomach's sake.'"

"Quite so, Samuel, quite so," said Nat as he stepped behind Jock. "I have often heard say that it is excellent stuff for our stomach's ache."

"Patrick O'Neill," Sam barked, suspending his pouring operations, "as would-be jesters are a blot on the face of the earth, slay me forthwith yon witch-hunting attenuation."

"B'dad, an' Oi'll do thot same!" Pat choked. "The prime vertical's afther needin' it, so he is."

"Zaccheus Higgins," Sam hissed at the little cockney, who was squaring up to Nat and threatening him with sudden and awful death for daring "ter hinsult the ruddy kink o' the hillustrious an' far-famed Cype 'Orn Snorters." "Zaccheus Higgins, as there remaineth not quarter enough of this princely nectar for all the boys, take thou the vial and stow it away in some sequestered nook for our future reference. Some day, perchance, when storms stormeth and blizzards blizzeth, we may need somewhat to warm the chilled marrow of our comely bones, and need it badly."

"Aye, aye, sir," Zac yapped, grabbing the half empty bottle, which, after an affectionate pat, he stowed away in the bottom of Jock's big sea chest.

Eight bells having been struck while Zac was carefully closing the top of Jock's chest, they all hastened aft to muster.

"Relieve the wheel and lookout," ordered Mr. Phips, when both watches had mustered at the break of the poop on their respective sides and reported themselves.

This order was followed by Mr. Phips' usual, but mostly unnecessary, fifteen-minute "sweating-up"—a little work-up touch of the mate's that gained him no thanks from any one.

Directly the port watch was ordered

below, a low peculiar whistle was heard. The whistle was almost instantly answered by three others of a similar nature, and, a few minutes later, the Cape Horn Snorters were crouched together on top of the forward house under the bow of the weather boat.

"Now, my sons," Sam began, "we have this night learned for sure that Captain MacGregor, way down deep, is a white man, who, like many other shipmasters, has been given the name of a hellion by hoodlums and stiffs who really got what they deserved while in his ship. Personally, I think his heart is in the right place. How say you? Guilty or not guilty?"

"Not guilty," came three husky voices.

"Good! There's no need to ask for your opinion of Mr. Phips, Ganter or Taylor. The last two are rotten to the core, but the mate is putrid. Nature made him a moral leper. He went to college and emerged an educated moral leper and, therefore, a greater menace to humanity than ever.

"For refined cruelty and barbarous brutality, commend me to the educated autocrat every time. The Spanish Inquisition will teach any one that. We must deal with him to the limit. As Ganter is by far the better of the three, a good drubbing will probably do him. Taylor we've got to watch, because he is a killer and glories in it."

Sam then got down to business and, for half an hour, talked like a father to a sick dog, thoroughly setting forth his plans, and thoughtfully going into the finest details.

"Now you've got it, my sons," he concluded, after answering many questions and adopting several suggestions. "If our men run true to form, our work is easy. If they don't, we'll have to adopt the quickest and most efficient methods we can think of at the time."

"Do ye think the long yin'll ken hoo tae work oot his ain salvation?" asked Jock. "Ah dinna want tae see him lose yon bonny lass, Sam."

"Of course you don't, Jock," said Sam, laying a hand on one of Jock's massive shoulders, "you sentimental old cuss—none of us do. If he hasn't savvy enough to work out his own salvation, we'll give him a few broad Irishman's hints, as Pat says."

"Yer needn't worry abaht Nat er blinkin' bit," Zac suddenly chipped in, "'cos 'is bloomin' bean's sure screwed on the right w'y."

"I hope you're right, Zac," said Sam.

"Blime," Zac returned, "I'll bet each one o' you bloomin' stiffs a yaller quidler that yer won't hafter give that 'ere long-legged, long-'eaded bloke er bloomin' one o' the bog-trotter's broad 'ints."

"Now, then," Sam continued, "from now on, we avoid no trouble with the mates, or any one else. We carry the palm of peace no longer. We start nothing, mind, but, if trouble comes our way, we don't move one inch out of its course. Come on, Pat. It's our watch below."

Sam and Pat then went below and turned in, while Zac and Jock stretched out where they were and quarreled till Nat came from the wheel at four bells and joined them. Then, as it was a fine, warm, dark night and nothing doing, the three of them thoughtfully went to sleep and tore it off till one bell.

CHAPTER XXIII.

The night flew on. So did the *Grampian*, with every stitch set and drawing with animated rivalry. At five o'clock next morning, as soon as the port watch had had their bootleg, the work of the day commenced. The first job was to rig the "gallows" and scrub the decks down fore and aft. When it was light enough to see, the watch was ordered to get out the gear preparatory to resuming the jobs last night's darkness had interrupted.

"Come on, yo' damn cockney stiff,"

yelped the boatswain at Zac, who was patiently waiting to get a "serving board" and a ball of marline from the locker. "What the debbil is yo' loafin' foh?"

For answer, Zac casually ran his sharp little gray-blue eyes up the boatswain's form. Then he calmly turned to pick up his gear.

That ignoring look was more than the conceited boatswain could stand.

"Ah'm talkin' to yo', yo' blasted li'le runt," he bellowed, grabbing Zac by the left arm and jerking him around.

Zac said nothing, but his eyes contracted and gleamed like points of frosty steel in the sunlight. Then, with an air of utter boredom, and a look of almost frightened disgust, he brushed his left sleeve with the ball of marline, as though he feared he had been contaminated by a creature with some loathsome disease.

"Done yo' heah me," croaked the boatswain, almost choked with wrath. "Ah's talkin' ter yo', yo' li'le, low-down bum."

"Are yer speakin' ter me, bos'n," Zac asked, as though noticing the negro for the first time.

"Ah shuah is, runt, an done yo' fergit it."

"Well, don't do it any more, bos'n, 'cos I don't allow scum ter talk ter me like that," Zac replied, as he turned to go about his work.

That last shot was too much for the boatswain's bully nature, and, as the little man's back was toward him, he sprang and caught him a terrific right-hand swing behind the ear, knocking him under a spare topmast and splitting his head open.

Zac slowly and painfully crawled out from under the spar, and, with the blood oozing down the side of his neck, he turned and faced the grinning boatswain.

"Did yer 'it me, darky?" he quietly asked.

"Ah shuah did, runt. Ah shuah did!"

"Yer 'it me from be'ind, eh?" Zac again asked, all the time retreating before the slowly advancing boatswain.

"Ah shuah did. Dat's de onliest way ter treat low-down scum like you."

"You putrid, yellow swine?" suddenly sounded a strange voice directly behind the boatswain, who instantly wheeled to see who the new enemy was.

As soon as the negro turned, Zac slipped to the locker and grabbed a two-foot length of hemp rope that the former boatswain had kept for hazing purposes. While the treacherous one's slowly moving mind was still trying to dope out where that mysterious voice had come from, he received a terrific downward, slashing stroke across the back with Zac's soggy weapon, making him howl with surprise and pain.

Then commenced one of the most weird and one-sided battles in the annals of maritime warfare. For ten minutes, the boatswain tried his utmost to do up this diminutive thing that hopped before him, continually dealing out blows that stung like adders when they landed on certain parts, and raised welts an inch in diameter when they landed on others. It was no use, he might as well have tried to hit or capture a healthy midge dancing in a moonbeam.

Finally, he gave it up and seized one of the huge main-brace belaying pins and tried to get in a blow with it, but, as before, it was no use. Seeing the futility of this, he hurled the pin with all his force at Zac. It missed him by inches.

Seeing that the pin had missed and the blows still fell, the boatswain's insides turned to water, and he started for the poop on the jump. Fast as he traveled, his nimble Nemesis was faster, and, before he reached the poop steps, Zac landed astride his neck from behind, hooked his toes under the negro's arms and his left forearm under his chin. Zac then turned his steed around and made him gallop forward. When

forward he turned him and galloped him aft with the rope's end falling on his after parts once every two seconds.

Mr. Phips, on hearing the awful howls of Zac's charger, tore out of the wheelhouse, where he had been working up an early-morning star sight, and started forward on the run. As he reached the forward end of the poop, he was stopped by Captain MacGregor, who was standing out of sight in the forward companionway.

"What's the longitude, Mr. Phips?" he asked.

"I've not quite finished, sir," replied the mate glowering forward.

"Go and finish, Mr. Phips. Never mind that racket on the main deck. We need a new and more efficient bos'n, sir, in the worst way. It's a pity some one hasn't hammered the liver out of that useless darky long ago.

"Who are you looking for?" he suddenly asked, on noticing that the mate's eyes were roving about the deck in every direction.

"Mr. Taylor, sir."

"Huh!" snorted the Old Man; "he's doing the only wise thing I've known him to do since he came aboard—keeping out of sight."

Mr. Phips took the hint and hurried aft to the chartroom and his navigation.

Two or three times during his wild ride, Zac had to come up hard on the boatswain's chin to keep from being tossed over his head.

"Black man," he snapped, after one of these times, "if yer tries that again, I'll just lift yer bally chin up 'igh, twist yer yaller dome rahnd an' crack yer bleedin' neck across me bloomin' laig. Nah, be er real nice fella an' get up er little more speed."

The boatswain tried to obey orders, but, as his strength was rapidly failing, he could only manage two more turns about the deck before he collapsed in a heap.

When his steed went down, Zac dropped lightly to his feet, turned, placed one foot on the fallen one, made a few elaborate flourishes with his rope's end and, with due decorum, made three sweping bows to his wildly cheering shipmates.

Almost before the cheers had died away, Mr. Taylor suddenly appeared and ordered a few buckets of water thrown over the boatswain to bring him to.

The third stood and blinked. He was struck aback. Never before had an order of his been carried out with such cheerful haste. Finally, seeing that it was love's labor lost, he stopped the almost continuous cataract of water that poured over the boatswain.

"Cut it out afore you drown the yaller swine," he barked. "Pick him up and heave him into his pew. Then get on with your jobs."

The negro had barely been disposed of when the skipper and mate strolled along to the forward end of the poop, apparently discussing something of considerable importance.

Zac had just resumed his delayed job when the mate came forward and told him to lay aft to the chart room and give Captain MacGregor an account of himself.

"Shut the door," growled the Old Man as Zac, cap in hand, slipped into the chart room from the wheelhouse.

"Now, young man," he continued, looking fixedly at Zac when the door had been closed, "give me a full account of your recent adventures with my late bos'n."

"Late bos'n!" Zac gasped, returning the skipper's gaze, wherein he detected a faint twinkle. "'As the bloomin' sod kicked the bucket, sir?"

"Yes—as far as being bos'n of this ship is concerned. Go on with your tale, Higgins."

Looking the skipper square in the eye, Zac spun his yarn from beginning to end in faultless English. Several times

during the narrative, a faint smile crossed Captain MacGregor's rugged face at Zac's dry, subtle humor.

"A good job well done, Higgins," the Old Man judiciously remarked when Zac had finished. "But I don't approve of men beating up my officers. I ought to put you in irons for a mutinous assault."

"As the officer struck the first blow, sir, you cannot do that, sir—not conscientiously."

"You seem to be able to speak an excellent quality of English, Higgins—for a cockney," the skipper irrelevantly remarked.

"I'm not a cockney, sir. Not a cockney at all."

"You were born in London, weren't you?"

"Yes, sir, but not within the sound of Bow Bells."

"So a man's not a genuine cockney unless he was born within the sound of Bow Bells, eh?"

"That's what they say, sir."

Being of Scotch descent, Captain MacGregor was naturally somewhat curious.

"I'm surprised at your lack of ambition, Higgins," he naïvely remarked. "One would think, from your apparent education, that you would study navigation so that you could one day become a shipmaster."

"I have studied the art, sir," Zac replied with a touch of pride, "and was considered a rather apt pupil."

The Old Man quickly turned his head away, ostensibly to cough, but in reality to hide a satisfied grin.

"Now, Higgins," he said, after a few seconds spent with corrugated brows, "as your recent offense is a very bad thing for the discipline of the ship, I must render you some form of drastic punishment."

"How, sir?" Zac asked with evident alarm.

"By making you bos'n in the negro's stead," the skipper snapped, looking savagely at Zac.

It was now Zac's turn to cough and hide a grin.

"Have you ever been bos'n before?"

"Yes, sir, in an East Indiaman, at seventeen. My father was master of her."

He omitted to tell Captain MacGregor that he had been mate of the same ship at twenty.

"All right, Higgins," ordered the skipper, as they stepped out on deck. "Lay forward now, heave that fellow's gear out on deck, scrub the place out, then shift your own gear in.

"Here, Mr. Phips," he called, on seeing the mate on the lee side of the poop. "I've made Higgins bos'n, Mr. Phips," he continued, when the mate stopped before him, "instead of that darky he has just been jockeying around the decks."

The mate snorted and abruptly started forward, while Captain MacGregor grinned. He knew the mate had no use for Zac, but he somehow felt confident that the new boatswain was capable of both filling the bill and taking care of himself.

Zac hastened forward to the boatswain's room and looked casually inside. The late boatswain had come to his senses, but was writhing about in his bunk and moaning dismally.

"'Ere, darky," Zac barked, "get outer that bug walk, pack up yer dunnage an' cart it inter the port forecastle—if they'll 'ave the likes o' yer in there. Then git back 'ere an' scrub that pew till it shines like a 'ound's tooth. Lively now. I'm ther new bos'n."

"Ah kain't move nohow, Misto Bos'n," groaned the sufferer, making no effort to get out of the bunk.

For answer, Zac grabbed his discarded rope's end that still lay on the main hatch and bounced into the room.

"Darky," he purred, swishing his weapon about, "wot yer got afore was

honly er happitizer ter wot yer'll git nah if yer don't 'op, an' 'op most ruddy lively."

With a mighty groan, the beaten one came out of the pew and began filling his bag with more haste than speed. When the bag was packed, he carried it into the port forecastle where he expected to occupy the bunk that Zac would vacate.

Under Zac's efficient directions, the changes were completely made by eight bells, when the deposed boatswain's troubles were renewed. The port watch, coming below and finding him in possession of Zac's bunk, immediately held a consultation of war, the upshot of which was that they would not have the newcomer in the forecastle.

As the colored gent refused to vacate the premises when requested, he was picked up by Nat and Jock and thrown bodily out, his gear after him.

CHAPTER XXIV.

"Why the great silence, Nattie, darlint?" Pat asked in the second dogwatch that evening, shortly after he had joined Nat and Jock in the Snorter's usual rendezvous, under the bow of the weather boat on top of the forward house. "Are ye homesick or just tryin' to think?"

"Neither, Pat, I was wonderin'."

"Was ye now! An' may Oi become bould enough to ask ye what about?"

"You may."

"Would Nattie be afther tellin' his Uncle Pathrick what he was wonderin' about?" Pat asked after regarding his long shipmate for a bit out of the tail of his eye.

"Uncle Patrick," Nat commenced in his usual form, "I was wonderin' why it was that one Zaccheus Higgins should be made bos'n of the noble *Grampian* when the vacancy occurred, instead of the bos'n's mate, who was, methinks, entitled to the job."

"He got the berth, Nattie, because he gave the late bos'n the wallopin' ave his loife, thereby demonstratin' thot he's the better mon."

"But why? Why, Uncle Patrick?"

"Oi dunno, Nattie, darlint, except thot there is a sort ave unwritten law in all hard-case ships thot when a sailor mon—a good, all-round sailor mon—defates in lawful combat an officer, thot officer is chased for'ard, an' the sailor mon is chased aft. It's wan way ave inter-rpretatin' the law ave the survival ave the fittest—the best mon haulds down the job.

"It wor-rks foine in some cases, an' in some cases it wor-rks rotten. In either case, it gives the ship husky, two-fisted officers thot are usually fir-rst-class sailor men."

"Ye're pairfectly recht, Pat," Jock growled in his usually canny manner.

"Suppose it had been the second or third mate that Zac had shown the error of his ways, what then?" Nat asked after a moment's silence.

"The same thing, laddie," Jock answered.

Nothing more was said and, at the end of five minutes, Nat got up and started away without a word.

"The laddie is afther thinkin' things," Pat remarked when Nat got out of hearing.

"The seed, wee as at it waur, dinna fa' on barren soil," Jock replied sagely.

"Whaur's Sam?" he asked a little later.

"He's under the fo'c's'le head, havin' a private confab with our late frind, Zaccheus Higgins."

"Aye," Jock soberly replied, "ye mauna be o'er friendly wi' a bos'n. It's accordin' tae scripture, but"—he stopped, and peered cautiously around—"Ah tak it Zac has some news or ither?"

"Ps-s-s-t! Hauld yere whist a minyute, Jock, till Oi see who it is thot's comin'. All right," he whispered a moment later, "it's himself—Sam."

"Where's Nat?" Sam asked as soon as he had seated himself.

"B'dad! an' he left us a bit ago to drame drames ave glory, so he did."

"Aye," said Jock.

Sam whistled softly.

"The bug's got him mighty quick."

"Ha'e ye seen oor new bos'n the nicht, Sam?" Jock asked in a sort of a prompting manner.

"Yes, I've just left him. He passed along a bit of information that we've been wantin' for some time. We knew all along that Flint came aboard here to square up with somebody. We thought it was Taylor, but we were away off."

"Who the divvle is ut?"

"Aye, mon?"

"It's Phips. You see, the fourth is the only one in the afterguard who knows who we are. So far, he's been layin' on his oars, waitin' to see what we were up to and how we were goin' to do it. When Zac trimmed the coon's sails and took his berth, Mr. Flint tumbled to our game—or thought he did. He went to Zac and told him to tell me that the mate was his meat and for us to leave him alone."

"Do ye think that Meester Flint will no get cauld feet, Sam?"

"Jock, as the fourth has thrown up the command of a brand new clipper for the express purpose of comin' here, I hardly think there will be any question of cold feet."

"What is our nixt move, Sammie?" Pat asked, after duly considering Sam's news.

"We'll lie doggo for a bit and let Mr. Flint make the next move—if he's not too long about it."

"Eight bells! Struck by the hand of a Royal Marine," yelped some would-be humorist as the bell was loudly struck aft.

As eight bells meant that all hands had to muster, this ended the Snorters' conference for the time being.

CHAPTER XXV.

"Way 'ay 'ay 'ay-y-y you sleepers. All 'ands on deck ter shorten dahn. It's blowin' big guns, but no rain. Come runnin', nah!"

So bellowed Zaccheus Higgins, boatswain of the full-rigged clipper, *Grampian,* at daylight, two mornings after his promotion.

"Clew up the fore-topgallant sail," he roared as soon as the port watch struck the deck.

"Star-bowlines, man the main-topgallant gear," ordered Mr. Flint at the same time.

"Stand by to run up the lee side first," he barked, as he motioned Sam to ease away the halyards a few feet.

"What the blazes sort of a bush-preacher stunt is that, you blasted lead-heeled hay shoveler?" howled the mate. "Are you trying to lose that sail, you infernal farmer."

"Up with a rush now," yelled Mr. Flint, throwing the turns off the pin and letting the lee sheet go by the run, at the same time motioning Sam to do likewise with the halyards. "Show those larbowlines how a sail should be taken in."

Before the yard was down to the cap, the lee side of the sail was snug up, the slack of the weather brace having been taken in as the yard came down. The weather side of the sail was all in the wind by the time its gear was manned. Two minutes after Mr. Flint had cast off the sheet, the huge topgallant sail was close up under the yard.

"Eight of you aloft and furl it," ordered the fourth. "Here, O'Neill, you've got the longest arms in the watch, lay aloft and furl that mizzen-topmast staysail. The rest of you lay aft and tuck a reef in the spanker."

The mate ground his teeth with rage when he saw the efficiency of Mr. Flint's maneuver.

When the immediate work was fin-

ished, a half hour later, the mate, still foaming with anger at the way his watch had been beaten, left the fore deck and started aft. When in the wake of the main rigging, he suddenly stopped and glared at the sturdy Mr. Flint, who was barring his way.

"You made a few pleasant remarks to me a while ago, Mr. Phips," coolly asserted the fourth. "Did you not?"

"I did. What of it?"

"This, Phips. I want an apology, and I want it in the presence of my watch."

"Your watch," sneered the mate.

"Yes, my watch. Mr. Ganter being laid up, it is therefore my watch, and I demand an apology in its presence."

"I'll see you damned first."

Mr. Flint then leaned slightly toward the mate and snapped a few words that made him start back as though he had been suddenly confronted by a hissing cobra.

For a minute, he stood with his hands fumbling in his coat pockets, as though undecided what to do or where to go.

Mr. Flint stood with a face as expressionless as a granite breakwater. He was not being fooled at all. He knew that the mate's fumbling hands were simply working themselves into their customary brass protections.

Thinking his man somewhat off his guard, the mate suddenly jerked his hands out of his pockets and let fly a vicious right at the fourth's jaw. The blow struck nothing harder than air, but it struck that so hard that he simultaneously lost his balance, his science and his temper. In the ordinary course of events, he had considerable science, but, in cases of this kind, it was seldom any good to him, because he was too yellow to keep his temper and remain cool and self-possessed.

Mr. Flint, on the other hand, possessed but a modicum of science, but, by remaining as cool, calm and unruffled as a pickled shad, he was able to work what little he did have to the limit.

Despite the mate's brass-bound fists, Mr. Flint soon began to demonstrate the fact that he was the better man, even if he was twenty years older. At the end of ten minutes, he had the mate groggy and was knocking him around just about as he chose.

Suddenly, the fourth seemed to go berserk. With an inarticulate roar of long suppressed fury, he sprang and seized the mate by the throat, and the two crashed to the deck—Mr. Flint on top, with madness blazing from his coal-black eyes.

Mr. Taylor, who had been busy under the forecastle head, hearing the fourth's roar, came rushing out to learn the cause thereof. When nearing the fighters, he stopped and pulled his gun. Then he crept along, watching for a good chance to use it. He had not long to wait because, as soon as the ship made her next weather roll, he saw it and let out with all his strength for Mr. Flint's head. Unluckily for him, his aim was bad, and the descending butt barely grazed the fourth's head

Without an instant's hesitation, Mr. Flint sprang to his feet and made for his new enemy. The third pointed his gun and pulled the trigger. As a dull click was all the response he got, he dropped the heavy bulldog and swiftly jerked a knife out of the leg of one of his red-topped sea boots.

Guns and knives did not seem to phase the fourth in the least. He went for Mr. Taylor in the same cold, implacable way that he had gone for the mate. With catlike agility, he dodged two of the third's murderous slashes. Then, seeing an opening, he sprang in and drove home a terrific downward left to the point. With a howl of agony, Mr. Taylor crashed headfirst into the lee scuppers with a dislocated jaw.

The mate was not nearly as far gone as he had pretended, because, the instant Mr. Flint sprang for the third, he raised on an elbow and looked cau-

tiously around. A grin of unholy joy spread over his face when his eyes rested on the discarded gun. He carefully drew it to him with his foot, picked it up, examined it and nodded. Then he climbed to his feet in time to see the third piled up in the scuppers.

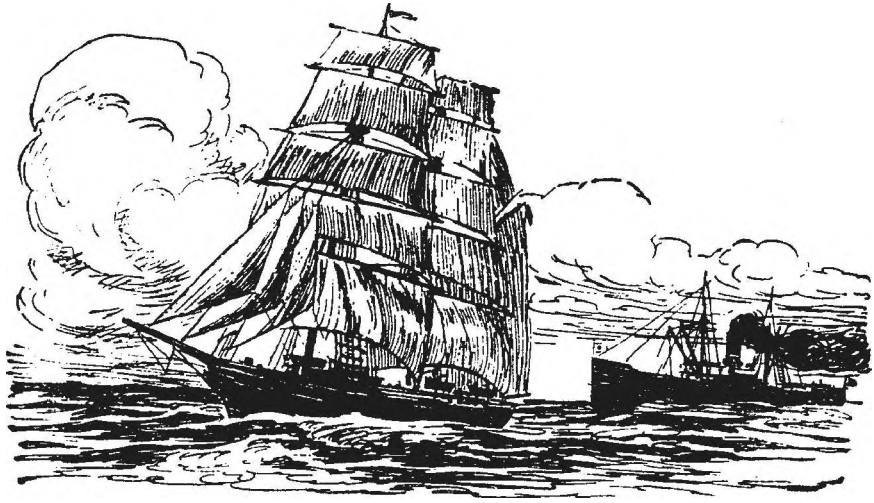
Mr. Phips cast a quick look about the decks and grinned—hideously. There was no one looking. He did not see the black head that was just showing above the recently furled mizzen-topmast staysail, nor did he see those gleaming, all-observing blue eyes that shone out of that same black head. On again looking to leeward, he saw that Mr. Flint was standing back to him, gazing down at the fallen third as though he could not quite make out what had happened.

With a sharklike grin, the mate quickly slipped around the main fife rail. He raised the gun, pointed it at the center of Mr. Flint's broad back and fired point blank.

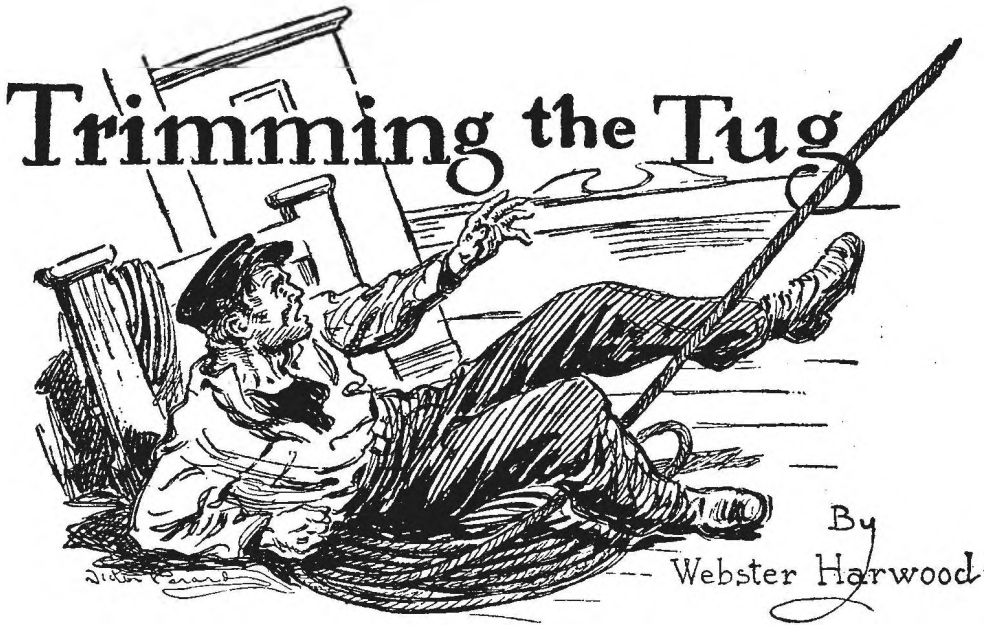
The fourth stood perfectly still for a moment. Then he pitched headlong into the scuppers beside the moaning third.

Mr. Flint had barely struck the deck before the mate went into action in his usual treacherous manner. He scurried across the deck and stuck the butt of the gun into the third's half-open right hand. Mr. Taylor, being half unconscious from pain, slowly closed his hand over the insinuated butt and clung to it like a frightened child to its mother.

TO BE CONTINUED.



Trimming the Tug



The tug, *Sea Monarch*, went out towing the barkentine, *Jeanne d'Arc*. But that isn't the whole business. Aboard the barkentine was the former crew of the tug, and aboard the tug was the former crew of a rival tug, and before the blow let up, things had got hind side foremost in one large evening.

"WAS you thinking about jobs, boys?" inquired Jean Casserly of his six friends, who, until very recently, had comprised the crew of the tug *Sea Monarch*.

They were good customers, and would be in the future, generally speaking, but just now—well, not so good, with all the tugboat hands out on strike. He was thinking about the long tabs under the names of the sextet, and there is a limit to the cheerful extension of credit by the most accommodating of reformed bartenders.

Casserly was reformed to the extent that he now doled food over the mahogany planking, maintaining a restaurant instead of a saloon. At heart, he remained an unabated mixer, fixer, and jokester.

"I was thinking Cap Jackson might be able to sign you for a short voyage," he continued.

"What's he got?"

"French barkentine wants a crew. Jackson'll be back here in a minute with the skipper. He's port captain for the agent."

"What good's a windjammer to us! A square-rigger at that, and deep water. Bound round th' Horn, I'll bet. We're steamboat men, and I, for one, ain't much good aloft. Yes, I like to keep my feet on deck." These and sundry other doubt-expressing remarks were directed across the bar.

"What's got into ye, Jean. Out of your head?" ventured "Happy" Patrick Hanrahan, acknowledged leader of the bunch on ship or ashore, by reason of two mighty fists and all that went with them. But he was known as "square" along the water front. "D'you want to send us to sea to get rid of us?"

"If you want a ship, talk to Cap Jackson."

"Supposin' we all was windjammer sailors, we couldn't sign. The union

wouldn't let us," persisted Hanrahan, puzzled at what Casserly had up his sleeve, if anything.

"Never mind the union. This is a French ship and the union's got nothing to do with your shipping foreign," stated Casserly with some emphasis. "This ship is going to tow up to Puget Sound, and all they want is a short crew to stand sea watches. You won't have to go aloft——"

"Tow!" came from six throats in various degrees of doubt. There was no towing being done that they knew anything about.

"Yep."

"What's going to tow her?"

"Tug *Sea Monarch*—ever heard of her?"

Dumb amazement filled six faces. A wink or two and several kicks were exchanged. Casserly had thought he would interest his friends and had taken his own way of doing it. He was enjoying himself thoroughly.

The old crew of the tug *Sea Monarch* were not ill-treated malcontents who would have wished to see her harmed in any manner. They had been aboard of her too long and had considered themselves an essential part of her and her well being. Ashore, they sang her praises. Her stanchness and power was glory to them, and never did they cease to boast of her.

Did another tugboat man tell of a tow accomplished in seventy hours, immediately a *Sea Monarch* hand would remember a packet with a dirty bottom that she had towed the same distance in sixty-five hours. Then the argument, verbal or otherwise, started.

Such an intense loyalty had become more or less of a joke along the San Francisco water front. It was a joke when the *Sea Monarch* men were not present, and a nuisance when they were. At times the *Sea Monarch* men were hit in a weak spot as the result.

They never forgave the crew of the *Urchin* for greasing a deck upon which they slipped. Happy Hanrahan and Fred Deeber, the chief engineer, had walked into Casserly's and encountered there the skipper and four of the crew from the *Urchin*.

"Have you been reading the papers to-day, Happy?" began the *Urchin* skipper after salutations.

"No, what's doing?"

"The army engineers has recommended that Alcatraz Island be took out of the channel. It's up to Congress to put up the money for the job."

This gossip was sweet music to the ears of towboat men. It meant plenty of work.

"Great lot of towing. A year's job blasting that rock," speculated Hanrahan.

"Blasting! Hell, no! They calculate to hook the *Sea Monarch* onto it, take it to sea and sink it," spouted the *Urchin* skipper.

That story had been related for months after and had caused many a fight. Had Barney Pepper, or some of the other brawl-loving members of the crew been present, the *Urchin* skipper would have been towed out at the time on a stretcher, but Hanrahan and Deeber, outnumbered two to one, joined in the laugh.

When the strike had been declared, the *Sea Monarch* crew, after talking the matter over with their captain, admitted they had no real grievance. They accepted as a necessity the wage cut.

The shipping market had hit snags, rates had fallen all along the line and a reduction of wages followed as a matter of course. But the men belonged to the union, and, as the union had voted to strike, out on the beach they must go as a matter of principle. Captain Darrow agreed that his men had little choice in the matter other than to strike.

"Yep. This froggie, *Jeanne d'Arc*, is going to tow up to Puget Sound," further elucidated the bartender.

"There is a bunch of frog sailors going to join her there, and you get transportation back here. No reason I know for you to turn it down." Saying which, Casserly walked to the other end of the bar to battle with some imaginary dust. He had already asked Captain Jackson to give the *Sea Monarch* men the job.

"Boys, here's the way I figgers it," began Hanrahan. "When Jackson comes, we'll know more about it, but this is how it hits me. Theer's going to be objections to our working a boat that's being towed by a bunch of strike breakers. But the union's about on the rocks this trip, and, if necessary, I resign to get this chance at that bunch, whoever they are, that's got our jobs—at Vancouver, on foreign soil maybe."

There was a mingled muttering of assent and objection. Casserly readily interpreted it as the cue for further baiting.

"After Cap Darrow asked you to come back yesterday and you refused, I forgot to mention that he took the crew of the *Urchin*——"

Wham! The calloused, open palm of Hanrahan came down on the mahogany. "I ship on the *Jeanne d'Arc*. Are ye with me, *Sea Monarch* men?" he bellowed.

"We are that!" they roared. And around the room they danced, each man holding an imaginary capstan bar in his hands and singing the chorus of the chantey. "And we won't be pestered about!"

"Save that! You'll be stepping around a rusty capstan when the ebb tide begins to make to-morrow," yelled Casserly to quiet them.

"Here's your crew," he announced a moment later when Captain Jackson entered, accompanied by an undersized, but thoroughly seagoing, French shipmaster. At the latter, the men took one look, made up their minds he was not sufficiently big to be bucko and immediately lost any considerable interest. Their attention went to the port captain, who lost no time in getting down to business.

"You've got a mate's ticket, Hanrahan?"

"To be sure I have."

"We'll sign you as mate. The rest of you go as A. B.s. I pay you off here when you get back. What do you say?"

"We says yes!"

If Captain Jackson suspected their eagerness, he gave no sign.

Away the six of them went, in the wake of Captain Jackson and the French captain, to the office of the consulate to sign articles. A half hour later they were tumbling into a launch and dancing out over the waters of the bay to the *Jeanne d'Arc*. A lone watchman, alone except for a small, black dog, greeted them as they climbed up the side ladder.

A sailing ship was no strange sight to the new crew of the *Jeanne d'Arc*. It was the circumstance that was unusual, for, dumped on the deck near the poop, they gazed about with much of the awkwardness of landlubbers. The dog could not make them out as sailors. They had not the smell of windjammer sailors, and they were foreigners to him. He sniffed at the heels of each of them and then barked his uncertainty, retreating to the cabin when Hanrahan spoke with authority.

"Go for'ard, men. Stow your duds and turn out for work."

"Very well, Pat. Almost forgot you was mate on this packet," said Pepper.

"Don't forget it any more. And don't forget the 'sir.' Get along with you now." Hanrahan had read sea stories in the magazines and knew what discipline of a deep-water ship should be.

Aboard the *Sea Monarch*, they had all used the same forecastle, but they recognized the necessity for a new order of things. Within a few minutes they had changed clothes and were out on deck.

Deeber was told to overhaul the capstan for weighing anchor. Pepper, with two others, was given the task of unshackling the port anchor and making ready to use the chain to make fast the cable from the tug. Another was sent aft to take a look at the steering gear. Mate Hanrahan soon had them all busy. The staccato whistle of a launch brought Hanrahan to the rail. In the launch was the captain of the barkentine, Captain Jackson, boxes of provisions, and —his heart gave a glad bound—good old Tow Chow, the ancient but dependable cook, of the *Sea Monarch.* He forgot his dignity as a member of the after guard.

"All hands lay aft to welcome the cook!" he sung out. They came.

Captain Grenier got scant attention as he came over the rail, and so, for that matter, did Captain Jackson. But Tow Chow—that was different. They all but kissed the Chinaman, who had long been working with them as a cook on tugboats of the bay—how long he could not remember.

"Tug at five. Everything all right?" inquired Captain Jackson. His job was done, and he was anxious to get away.

"Fine, only understand, I'm aboard here to see that this towing job is done right and don't expect me to pass time with this frog skipper. If there is any conversation, he has to learn my language," Hanrahan informed him doubtfully. He was not assured by Captain Jackson's chuckle and information that the international code was a shrug of the shoulders, a nod or a shake of the head.

Deeber came to Hanrahan with a bit of information. "This packet's got a steam donkey engine and a winch forward, geared to the capstan."

"Fine. Then the *Sea Monarch* men will not have to play merry-go-round on the forecastle head while them *Urchin* skates looks on and laughs. It's been worryin' the boys some."

The new crew of the barkentine worked until dark, and later—until Tow Chow called them to supper. After supper, Pepper did an unheard-of thing. He helped the cook wash dishes.

At four a. m., there was a stir aboard the *Jeanne d'Arc* as men began to move about the deck and congregated at the donkey house where Deeber stirred his fires. It was a crowd that was very much changed in appearance as near as could be judged by the fading light of the stars. French sailors, in leaving the ship, had left their woolen caps, topped by red knots, and these now jauntily adorned their successors.

The ship's dog had to smell them over again before he could decide that they were the same crowd he had accosted the preceding day. He liked them all, with the exception of the new chef in the galley. He was altogether a different kind, the first his dogship had ever met of the sort, and, after he had been chased out of the galley once, he made up his mind that he would eat aft and spend no time scraping an acquaintance with such a cook.

"She's coming, boys. Stand by, for-'ard," yelled Hanrahan.

"We, we, monshure," was chorused at him, followed by a mutinous shout of laughter. The dog barked happily for this sounded something like the *"Oui, oui, monsieur,"* he had been accustomed to hear. But Hanrahan did not like the rendition of "Aye, aye, sir."

"Where do you get this 'we, we, monsewer' stuff?" he growled with assumed malignancy. His crew beat a mock-discreet retreat forward, on the opposite side of the deck. "Getting real Frenchy, huh?" he shot after them.

The tug *Sea Monarch* swept up. Bells clanged in the engine room as she laid off.

"Take my line," called Captain Darrow from the tug.

"We," was the answer. A heaving line shot over the rail and couldn't pos-

sibly have been missed. But when it splashed back into the bay, the deck hand who had thrown it thought he had miscalculated in the dark. French-capped heads hanging over the rail bobbed with glee.

"Aw, get a ladder and carry it up if you can't throw it," snarled Darrow. He signaled for reverse engines to bring the tug closer.

"Take that, you poor bunch of frogs," yelled the deck hand on the tug, flinging the sandbag at the end of the heaving line in an angry swirl straight at the row of heads. The French sailor caps ducked, and thirty feet of the heaving line whizzed on deck.

This time it was not thrown overboard, but two buckets of dirty, cold, soapy dishwater were. They landed fairly on the after deck of the tug where three former *Urchin* men were located.

"What in hell's going on up there, you blasted frog murderers!" came sputtering from below.

"We, we!" was the response.

There was a note in the voices on the barkentine familiar to Darrow. He saw the shape of a head that was covered by no cap and saw it quickly withdrawn as some Celestial expletives, very unheavenly ones, were directed at a scurrying canine, whose curiosity had impelled him to further overtures.

"Where's the captain?" he called. The captain was aft. He had been told at the consulate that this new crew of his knew how to do a towing job, and he was not worrying. "We, we," was the only response. Captain Darrow began to smile broadly.

The man who had thrown the heaving line dropped the coils remaining in his hand when deluged and, wiping the stuff out of his eyes and ears, stood shaking his fists and swearing. He had taken a step forward and stood on the coils.

The slack of the line had been running light in the hands of Mate Hanrahan's men. Soon it tautened. It was given a mighty jerk, and a former *Urchin* man sat down very suddenly and very hard on an iron deck. There was a fresh volume of oaths from the tug, and some laughter from the barkentine that Darrow had heard often before.

"Let's get busy, men," he urged across from his pilot house to them. "Make fast to my cable and let's get out of here." He was shaking with mirth.

"We, we," answered him.

The anchor was fished and a few fathoms of the port chain on the towline run out. The tug moved off, slackening her cable on the towing machine as she went. Soon, with two short toots of the whistle, she took up the strain, and the barkentine got under way.

That night, there were storm warnings which portended a gale. It was then Captain Jackson told Jean Casserly that he wished the crew of the *Jeanne d'Arc* were on the tug *Sea Monarch*. The tug owners began worrying about the ability of the new crew to carry on through the storm. Marine-insurance agents began to speculate on the risk. A sixty-mile gale was sweeping down the coast.

Early next morning, Deeber and Hanrahan clawed their way forward through the wind to the break of the forecastle and there watched the lights of the tug far ahead when they were visible over the crests of the waves. That ocean and that wind was too much for any tug to face with a tow. Pepper, aft at the wheel, knew it. So did Captain Grenier and his faithful old sailmaker, who had remained on the ship as watchman. Both of them were on deck, waiting, ready for anything that might happen.

The odds were very much in favor of the wind. The barkentine was high and light and offered more resistance

than the steadily pulling tug could overcome. In the long run, the tug would have the best of it, if the line did not part, for the stiffest winds, fortunately, blow themselves out. But now it was very evident the tug was scarcely holding her own.

"Smoke isn't helping them any, the poor fish," shouted Deeber when he made out a black cloud of smoke, clean swept from the red stack of the tug, coming down the wind. Oil fuel burns at its best when it does not show a heavy smoke.

Hanrahan was thinking about the black smoke also, but not with the economical mind of an engineer. He was glad of that smoke, for it told him that, after a sight of her on the crest of a wave, the *Sea Monarch* was still afloat. Any one who has seen the stack and masts of a small vessel disappear as she sinks between great hills of water knows the feeling. Mate Hanrahan was worried—a worry he would not have felt in the slightest had he and the rest of the old crew been up ahead there with Captain Darrow. He drew Deeber into the companionway.

"Have you plenty of steam for the donkey?" he asked.

"Lots of it. I didn't know but what we might need it to haul in on our chain lead."

"Right ye are, me boy."

The fact was that Deeber, being a steamboat man, had kept his fire going as a matter of second nature. He felt more at home aboard the windjammer with steam around somewhere.

An excited yell from the rest of the crew brought them to the rail. The head of the barkentine had fallen off on the wind to starboard, which meant either that she was not being steered properly or that she had no headway to make steering possible. The tug was not to be seen over the port bow straight to windward.

Up the companionway to the forecastle head jumped Hanrahan, the wind forcing him to pause and hold on as his head and shoulders took it. Off on the starboard bow he heard short warning blasts of the *Sea Monarch's* whistle. Deeber was close beside him. For an instant, neither man realized what had happened.

"Engine's busted!" screamed Deeber in Hanrahan's ear. Hanrahan did not hesitate. He told Deeber to start the winch and haul in the twenty-fathom lead of anchor chain. Deeber moaned his wish to be aboard the tug as he hurried to the winch.

There were several things that might be done. When a windjammer loses her tow at sea in a gale she can ride on a sea anchor, or she can run for it under light canvas, provided she has sea room. A well-manned ship could have heaved to. To ride out the storm on a sea anchor seemed to be the thing to do here, but an idea stole into the brain of Hanrahan.

Those whistles of Captain Darrow's meant that the barkentine was to cut loose from the tug and drift until the tug could repair damages and again pick up the barkentine, and Hanrahan knew that. Ordinarily, that is what he would have done, but an idea with Hanrahan was an obsession.

Captain Grenier was at his elbow, waving assent to the winding in of the anchor chain and, with another series of descriptive motions, indicating that the shackle would be cast off and the tug left to pick up her cable. But Hanrahan made some talk of his own in pantomime to the French skipper, and some speech to the effect that the skipper had better get out of the way, and stay out, for the skipper did not understand.

The tug was drifting down on the wind, faster than the barkentine and dangerously in the direction of the bow of the larger vessel. The head of the barkentine had swung until she was in the trough of the sea, heeling far over

as she mounted the waves with her broad, high sides. Some headsail would bring her around, and some of Hanrahan's sign language was successfully interpreted by the skipper to this effect.

Ah! Then his mate advised running for it. That was probably best. They could scud back to San Francisco in this wind. The little skipper and his sailmaker got the covers off the jib. But what was his mate doing, the skipper questioned to himself?

The answer had been made clear only to the *Sea Monarch* men. They had screeched for joy. Now they were running the long sheet of the main boom forward. The anchor chain came in short to the shackle, and, with waves engulfing them, they brought the end of the sheet around the heavy towing cable and came back with it, outside the rigging to the winch.

Avalanches of chill water poured down over the sloping deck from windward, but always, as the barkentine settled back on the port side against the cable, they gained some slack. It was a heavy task to overhaul the slack of that cable, but the tugboat men knew how to handle it. The bight of the sheet drew back slowly on the bight of the cable, slipping inch by inch, so tight that it hummed in the wind.

Soon the two bights reached aft of the forecastle and over the rail. By sheer strength, Hanrahan forced the cable under a belaying pin inside the rail. After that, it was easier. In five minutes more, they worked the bight of the cable aft to where it could be lashed to the quarter bits.

The skipper had been shouting until he choked, in an endeavor to make himself understood. He frantically pointed toward the tug. There was reason for his clamor.

The *Sea Monarch* had drifted until she was but a ship's length to windward, and she appeared as a dark, faintly illumined blotch on the top of a huge wave that threatened to carry her along into collision with the ship. What Hanrahan needed now was evident to the skipper—headsails that would swing the bow of the barkentine away from the tug.

He rushed forward to the jib halyards, the men after him, slipping, falling, picking themselves up from the torrent of water on deck. They hauled up the jib with immediate effect on the ship, for she began to swing.

"Get sails on her, sails!" boomed Hanrahan. He knew nothing about the ropes of a sailing ship. Pepper did, a little, and he yelled into the ear of the French skipper and pointed aloft to the furled sails.

The French skipper yelled to the sailmaker, and, while he and Pepper ran for the shrouds and clambered aloft, the sailmaker cast off halyards from the pin rails and led them amidships to the donkey engine. Aloft on the footropes, Pepper and the doughty skipper, who was quite at home now, were casting off gaskets.

The tug was just off the stern of the *Jeanne d'Arc*. Hanrahan made his way aft. Captain Darrow was closer than he had intended to let the *Sea Monarch* come to the barkentine that voyage. White-faced men clung to the rail as seas dumped aboard. Darrow was endeavoring to hold the tug's head to the wind, but this was next to impossible.

"We'll pick you up later!" he thundered down the wind, thinking that the barkentine had cast off, and was going to run for it. Gray dawn was breaking and he could see the sails.

Hanrahan went into a fury.

"Cast off hell—we're going to tow you!" he roared, but his voice did not rise to more than a plaintive whimper above that wind. "Get that cable around for'ard!" he screamed, beside himself with rage, for he knew he was not able to make himself understood.

"Damn you, I'll tow you anyhow—

all the way back to Frisco, sternways, if you don't make fast for'ard!" Not a sound carried into the teeth of that wind. But the *Sea Monarch* men at the foremast of the *Jeanne d'Arc* heard him, and they cheered.

The elements were pitted against the *Sea Monarch*. Lower and upper topsails of the barkentine were pulling hard and were slowly putting sea room between the two vessels. Then came a giant wave, and up and up on its crest the tug was lifted. Down it she came on her beam, almost beneath the towering stern of the barkentine. The sight of that black mass of stern, threatening to pound down on top of them, was too much for the men huddled on the main deck in the lee of the house.

Darrow saw the danger. There was nothing he could do. As if by common impulse, his crew broke forward and aft to escape the spot where that steel rudder, post, and stern would grind into the tug.

The barkentine was gathering headway slowly, yet faster than the drift of the tug. When the stern of the barkentine pitched downward, it was close to the side of the tug, just close enough to miss it. But it was too close not to offer restraint to the men on the tug. As she lifted, they rushed again, this time to the midship section of the tug and, with one leap, like a pack of hounds over a fence, were on the poop deck of the barkentine.

Many things happened instantly. Six, or rather five, former *Sea Monarch* men were making mincemeat out of six former *Sea Monarch* men of more recent date. Deeber could not get hold of one because he had hesitated, and Happy Hanrahan had two of them by the throat and was knocking their heads together. Deeber's heart was on the tug.

Her house was still close off the stern and, with one flying leap, he went over the rail. Pepper, his man knocked cold, jumped after him. Hanrahan, tossing his two victims on the deck with maledictions, would have followed but the distance was now too great.

The rest of the combatants rolled over and over on the deck, rising to swing and falling with the man they hit. Even the ship's dog got in a few sharp nips at the newcomers who did not appear to be welcome. Altogether, it was a rapid clean-up of the more recent *Sea Monarch* crew, who, after the fight was taken out of them, were dragged to the ladder and kicked off the poop.

Pepper knew the ropes and every foothold on the deck of the *Sea Monarch*. He appeared with a coil of rope. Throwing a couple of half hitches over the niggerhead forward, he fought aft over the heaving deck, waist-deep in water, with the coil to the towing cable. He passed the coil around it and went forward again where he led the running part around the niggerhead and back to the steam capstan. It was a duplication of the job on the barkentine.

Darrow had glimpsed the bridle rigged aft on the barkentine, in that moment under her stern, and caught the idea. It was the first time he had heard of a tug being towed by a sailing ship, but there was nothing else for him to do but be willing. Before the barkentine had gone the length of the cable, it had been run between the bitts and lashed. Darrow soon steadied the yawing of the tug and kept her headed along after the sailing vessel.

"Salvage," said Happy Hanrahan, mate of the *Jeanne d'Arc*, to Captain Grenier, as he grinned broadly, winked and pointed his thumb aft. It was a word known to sailors of all nations.

"Oui, oui!" bubbled Captain Grenier, and also grinned gleefully. He understood that his ship was entitled to salvage for having rescued the tug while it was helpless at sea.

Flying before the gale meant a speed

of not less than eight knots, and, before noon, lookouts on Point Reyes had sighted the barkentine with the tug behind her and wirelessed to San Francisco. It was a strange sight. South of Point Reyes, the gale eased, but the barkentine, considering she was dragging a tug with quiet propeller through the water, did not slacken her speed.

If anything, she increased it. The big foresail was set. The tug seemed to hold her back not at all, and any navigator would have said she was doing ten knots. To Hanrahan, who knew the landmarks, this speed seemed incredible.

Captain Grenier still wore his smile of gleeful satisfaction when the pilot boat was sighted, beating to intercept the barkentine. He went into the flag locker and brought out the pilot flag. It would be necessary, of course, to pick up a pilot, and he ordered his faithful sailmaker, who acted as boatswain, to muster the hands at the foresail clews and to stand by to back the sails.

Far ahead, racing toward them, was a fleet of tugboats, every available tug having been rushed out to an apparent salvage job.

Those tugs puzzled Hanrahan. When he had left port, the *Sea Monarch* was the only tug moving, and here was a fleet of tugs, representative of the three towing companies, six tugs altogether. There was just one thing he did not want to do, and that was to take a tow and take any chances on relinquishing the barkentine's right to claim salvage.

What he wanted to do was to get inside the Gate, into the quiet waters of the bay and to safe anchorage. The fact that he did not know how he was going to do this did not deter him.

He engaged Captain Grenier in lengthy pantomime. "*Non!*" he said, wheezing it through his nose, for he was fast picking up a rich French accent. The negative was directed at the pilot's flag. While it would have been proper to have taken a pilot aboard, to have waited for one meant that one of those red-stack tugs ahead would have time to get a line on the queen of the fleet, the *Sea Monarch*. Hanrahan did wish for a pilot, for they knew how to speak his language as well as how to handle sailing ships.

"*Non!*" he insisted, pointing ahead to the sails, and sending a man forward to order away the sailmaker, who was mustering the battered tug men at the clews. All this he made clear to Captain Grenier, particularly when he said, "*Non* salvage."

The pilots were amazed when the barkentine kept bearing swiftly down toward them, with no sign of coming about. Hanrahan waved them off. They had no worries because every foreign ship must pay a pilotage fee, whether taking a pilot or not on entering port. They made out the tug with only one man in sight and were the most curious bunch of pilots that ever manned a pilot boat. And pilots have nothing to do between ships but speculate on things strange and curious about the sea.

Now came the plunging, rolling tugs, their bows shooting high out of the water as they breasted the seas that the barkentine was running before.

"Take a line!" shouted the skipper on the first one, swinging stern on, his deck hands standing with heaving lines on the rocking deck. The tug came around and hovered near the stern of the sailing ship.

"Take a line?" yelled the skipper again through his short megaphone, with a trifle less of the first curt assurance. He failed to recognize the crowd on the poop deck.

"How much?" sang Hanrahan.

"Three hundred!"

"Go to hell!"

"Two hundred," urged the tug skipper.

"Make it one hundred," bargained the

man on the barkentine, pointing to the next tug.

"You'll hit the rocks in ten minutes, you poor pig," the tug skipper informed him. "Take my line for one fifty."

Hanrahan and his men had been too often on the opposite end of these arguments not to appreciate the situation.

"You can't sail in—tide's against you."

"You're a liar!"

"All right, one and a quarter. How about it?"

"Better take your coffee pot inside. We're not wanting to buy it."

The barkentine plowed on, the tugs clinging to her heels. Those owned by the same company as the *Sea Monarch* talked to Skipper Darrow, but he was busy at the helm. Pepper knew what Hanrahan wanted—to get the *Sea Monarch* into port without help, and he was going to see that it was done on his end of the tow.

Darrow would have given anything to have gotten down on deck and cast off from the barkentine, his cable and all, but at any moment the *Sea Monarch* might have veered and smashed into one of those tugs. He had awakened to the fact that he might have to face a salvage claim from a windjammer, and the situation galled his tugboat man's soul.

The speed of the *Jeanne d'Arc* did not let up when she was inside the Gate. There was a full flood tide under her now, and the channel breeze that sweeps through the entrance to the harbor of San Francisco is known the world over. A sailing ship, with a skipper who has any pride, never thinks of taking a tow when the tide is right, for, without fog, it is easy sailing.

Hanrahan's troubles, after he tired of baiting the tugs, began in earnest. He knew the bay. One of his men had the wheel and needed never an order as to the channel markings. But how was he to stop the headway of the *Jeanne d'Arc*?

He had seen sailing ships come about under shortened sail and drop anchor, but he did not know how to do it. If he let go the hook at that speed, something would have given way. "The whole insides of the ship will be torn out," was the way he put it to himself.

Having started something and got it well under way, Hanrahan did not know just how to finish it. He could not take his men into his confidence and admit his inability to stop the ship, or rather lack of knowledge as how properly to stop her, for they would have laughed at him and told a story ashore that he would never have been allowed to forget. Oh! he could stop her, even if he snapped the foremast, and would. His mind was made up.

When they breasted Lime Point, the anchorage not far ahead, but with Alcatraz Island looming ominously just beyond, Hanrahan began to make signs. In the air, he drew the picture of an anchor and animated that anchor in the act of falling. He signified he would go forward and see that the anchor did fall and that Captain Grenier could do anything else that he wished. The skipper, quite to Hanrahan's surprise, nodded his assent.

Forward with his men, the anchor overhauled. Hanrahan watched the mustering of the limping crew at the clew lines by the old sailmaker, who talked impassioned French to them. With a measure of relief, Hanrahan saw the foresail clewed up and the topsail lowered. Captain Grenier put the helm hard over himself and the barkentine slowly answered, coming half around.

The captain yelled, but his yell was anticipated by Hanrahan, who tripped the anchor when he saw the barkentine try to get her bow into the wind. The rumble of chain out of the locker was the sweetest music Hanrahan had ever

heard. The barkentine paid off and then swung to the tide, sails flapping protests for furling.

Then, by all the signs of the tides, the *Sea Monarch* should have come drifting along, but she didn't. She stopped, turned, and backed slowly around to the stern of the barkentine, winding in her cable on the towing machine as she came.

"Cast off my cable, Hanrahan," called Darrow.

"I will not. You stay where you are."

A launch came out. In it were Captain Jackson and an interpreter representing the French consul. Aboard the *Jeanne d'Arc,* they came aft to where Hanrahan paced the poop, waiting for them. He addressed himself to Captain Jackson.

"We claims salvage on the tug. Picked her up at sea disabled and in distress and towed her to port," he said.

Captain Jackson sent after Skipper Darrow. His chief interest was in getting the barkentine to Puget Sound as speedily as possible. Darrow had been pleased, immensely so, when Deeber whistled through the tube from the engine room and told him he would take bells to clear the cable, and not without purpose did he invite his engineer to go to the barkentine with him.

By the time the launch brought the two to the barkentine, Captain Jackson had heard the story and had the matter pretty straight in his mind, he thought.

"Boys, take my advice and listen to reason. You may get some salvage out of this job, but by that time you'll all have gray whiskers. I don't think there'll be any objection to your getting your old jobs back on the *Sea Monarch.*"

But Hanrahan was not convinced by any means, and he stuck by his guns. "We allus listens to reason, cap'n, when we likes it. But Cap'n Darrow has a crew, and where do we come in? We wants salvage," he said.

Before Captain Jackson could reply, there came a sharp yell for help from alongside, and at once the yell was smothered by the chugging of a launch. The launchman had been lured to the ladder, overpowered, and eight men were headed for Meigg's wharf, as fast as the launch could go toward that nearest point of land. There was no "more recent" crew of the *Sea Monarch.*

"The dirty deserters. Bring 'em back, and we'll make 'em jump overboard." Various other remarks and epithets, more or less opprobrious and denoting utter lack of sympathy and understanding, were hurled after them. The incident seemed to please Captain Jackson and Captain Darrow also.

"As I was saying, the strike's over and you can have your old jobs back, men. Under the circumstances, Captain Darrow should have no objections," he continued.

Further negotiations were interrupted by a volume of explanation and voluble expostulation between the interpreter and Captain Grenier.

"Captain Grenier insists on a claim for salvage," explained the interpreter, throwing a monkey wrench into the gears Captain Jackson was adjusting.

"He does, does he?" broke in Darrow. "You tell him this for me. A disabled vessel at sea may be salvaged if she is given a line and brought safely to port. The line of the *Sea Monarch* was never cast off, and it was only for a short time that she was towed. Most of the time her engines were running and she could have done the towing—isn't that the fact, Deeber?" he asked, turning to his engineer for confirmation.

"I soon had the engines running, but knowin' what the old *Sea Monarch* men wanted, I refused to take orders—plugged the bells and just kept her turning over easy until you dropped anchor," was the truthful answer.

"I guess that pretty near settles the

salvage argument," said Darrow. "The captain is entitled to something off his towing bill for the loss of time, and that's all. And speaking of gray hairs —by the time admiralty courts decide this question, Hanrahan and the rest of you would get your money to buy wheel chairs for yourselves. Nobody ever heard of the likes of this before."

"A fine, mixed-up towing job. Suppose we start it over again to-morrow morning," suggested Jackson. "I'll get another crew to-night for the barkentine, and I don't suppose you'll have to look far for your crew."

"Suits me," agreed Darrow.

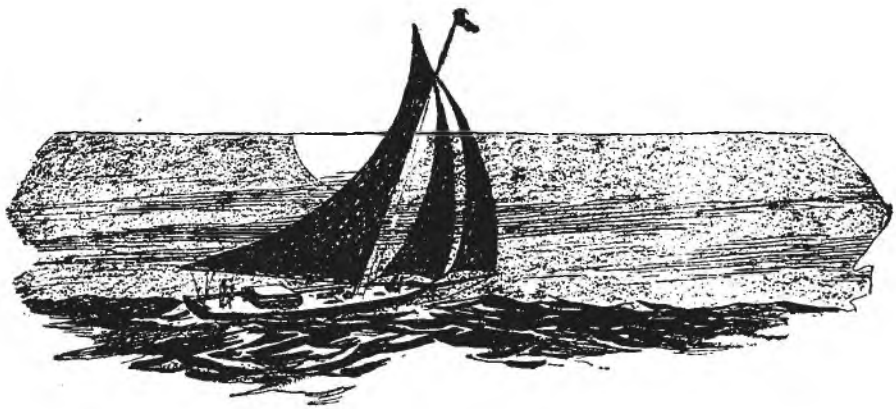
"Oui," said Captain Grenier with elevated shoulders and eyebrows.

"Avast talking aboard the barkentine! What's doing? I've had no coffee," yelled Pepper from the tug.

"The *Sea Monarch's* men's j'ining you, all hands, together with Tow Chow, cook. Take up the slack of your belt till we gets there!"

Soon the barkentine was left alone for the night. Aboard her were a French skipper, a black dog, and an old sailmaker.

The *Sea Monarch* tied up at the dock. The crew headed for Jean Casserly's to tell him all about it.



The Controlling Interest

By Donovan Bayley

The schooner, *Sara Helen*, and her skipper were part and parcel of each other, a sympathetic combination, for both had been, for the last five years, half a mile inland. The schooner got overgrown and the skipper aged fast, waiting for a record tide to come in after her. A tide finally did come—from the maelstrom of American business, though Captain Brooke did not approve at first.

ONE of Destiny's most outrageous tricks is her habit of picking upon two people who have never seen or heard of each other, and pitchforking them into the same orbit to react upon one another.

That half the world safely separates them is no bar to her when she wishes to try the experiment. With supreme indifference to their desires or plans, she removes them from their stations and planks them down where she wants them. She might do it to you to-morrow.

Just about the time that Charles P. Kirwan, the well-known American factory owner, collapsed with nerves across his office desk in New York City, ex-Captain James Raxworthy gave up his last hope on the island of Aphui, which was equivalent to his last hope on earth. Neither of these men had any knowledge whatever of each other's worldly existence.

The millionaire had the best medical attention, stunt and otherwise, that his great country could provide, while the one-time sea captain had nothing except the memory of four years of solid bad luck, beginning with a sea fog and a wreck, and ending in a fire which wound up the shore job he had held in Aphui.

Thereafter, perhaps reasonably, owners refused to avail themselves of the services of a man with a star like his. So he sat about on the beach, watched the surf smash itself on the reef outside, lived on fruit and fish, asked no pity, and refused all drinks or sympathy.

"I can't pay for a drink for you," he explained, "and I'm not taking charity, liquid or solid. Well, good morning to you."

Pressed to have a drink, it was: "Get

back to hell before your return ticket expires."

He combed the beach industriously and systematically, by which he usually kept himself in tobacco, and he had one friend, an old man, hag ridden by just the same sort of luck as his own.

The old man was skipper and part owner of a large, roomy schooner. There was nothing much wrong with her, except that she was half a mile inland, mastless, covered with the most beautiful flowering creepers, and not worth the expense of digging out and getting back to the sea from which the hurricane had blown her.

Charles P. Kirwan, in his colonial mansion up the Hudson River, lay and fought a hard fight with devils which tweaked his driven nerves. But those two sea captains on Aphui both fought one devil that gnawed his way into the heart. He was a determined fiend, never letting up for an instant and never yielding an inch to any counterattack.

Kirwan had all the help he cared to pay for—these two had none. So he began to get well, while they got worse, though it is very doubtful indeed if he was a more valuable human being than either of them, looked at from any standard but his "roll of bucks."

The time came when, shakily, but unaided, he was able to get about, and he talked of going to his office to see how they had been mismanaging things in his absence.

"Just now," said his doctor, "the door of your vault is right inside that office. You can stand what you've just been through—once. You can't stand it twice."

"I can't stand any more of doing nothing. I can't stand that. I won't stand that."

"Keep calm while we talk it out."

"Calm? I've forgotten how to keep calm."

"What you need," said the doctor, "is fresh, interesting work in the great outdoors, where there's sun and sea air, and it takes a month to hear from N'York."

"I'm like my father—I've got to do something, and then do something else. How do you think we built up the Kirwan Corporation?"

"I'm getting to see how you broke up your nervous organization. Mr. Kirwan, go on a voyage."

"Out and home, for what?"

"To get well."

"I'd never get well, I tell you, doing nothing." He walked the floor. "If there was a darned thing to do. If you get right down to it, I'm a man, not a clam."

An idea came to the doctor.

"Say, I've thought of something," he said. "Down in those islands they're always having wrecks, if you can believe what you read."

"I can't."

"Some of it's true, Mr. Kirwan. Look here, if you've got to do something, buy a wreck off a nice, warm island, and amuse yourself getting her up and making her seaworthy. Work on the job yourself, out on the sea in the sun and the wind, and get interested in it."

"I never have raised a wreck. I don't know the least thing about it. I'm here to allow there's something in that idea. How do you raise a wreck?"

"If you knew how, it wouldn't help you. You might as well go back to real work. I want to get your mind about a million miles away from your office."

"I've never been out of America, either. How do you buy a wreck?"

"From an insurance concern, I guess. You think about it, but don't buy one in cold waters. You want to go and get interested somewhere where there's always sun. And don't touch anything that means a lot of money, or you'll worry about that. You can't idle, and yet you mustn't go back to the work that knocked you over, and you must

have all of the outdoors there is. You'll never beat buying a wreck."

Raxworthy found the old man in despair on the fitted deck of the *Saru Helen.*

"What's the matter, Captain Brooke?" he asked. These two were always very punctilious about giving each other their titles.

"What's the matter? Why, my luck's hitting me again." He produced a typewritten letter. "Look what I get just when it's next door to sure that that extra high tide'll set in soon now, and float off my *Saru Helen,* after all the years I've stood by her, and never lost heart. Now have I?"

"Never once, Captain Brooke." Raxworthy took the letter, and read it.

This is to inform you that we have sold all our interest in *Saru Helen,* wreck, to Mr. Charles P. Kirwan. With regard to your own one-fifth share in the schooner, we would remind you that as he owns the remaining four fifths, he has the controlling interest, and we would suggest you come to some arrangement with him before he sees her.

"And if they'd only given me a little longer, I'd ha' sailed her into port. You know I would, Captain Raxworthy, now don't you? You're a man, too, that has had cruel hard luck, and, the minute she was afloat, I was going to ha' made you first mate."

Raxworthy did not know what to say. The *Saru Helen* was high and dry above the spring-tide high-water mark, and the creepers bloomed all over her, and her seams gaped.

"It was kind of you to think of me like that, Captain Brooke."

"No, no, no! I'm a man that's had bad luck, too. But I'm done, Captain Raxworthy, I'm done." He seemed to be aging as he sat there, and Raxworthy swore.

"What on earth can the fool want with her?" he wondered. "It couldn't be a profitable speculation if he did float her. Neither would it pay him to break her up where she lies. What's the fellow at?"

"At? God knows! Captain Raxworthy, I can't give her up like this, now. I must sail her in, or what will people say about me? Won't they say I lost my ship? And is that the sort of thing a master wants said about him?"

"It is not, indeed."

"One fifth of her's mine, worked, and earned, and bought, and paid for. Why should he be able to take it away from me?"

"Because of his four fifths."

"Well, let him leave my share alone. He shan't touch what's mine. If I have a fifth, I have a fifth. I might as well have nothing, to judge by the way he goes on. Have I a fifth, or haven't I?"

"You have."

"Then he must let what's mine alone." The logic of that seemed to ease him a little, as though, somehow, it had settled something. Impending happenings often prove anything but amenable to the preparations made to deal with them, for the shadows cast before themselves by coming events are usually too distorted to be useful guides.

Kirwan, when he landed, already a sounder man for the long, dawdling voyage, was watched out of the shore boat by two ex-masters—one youngish, one old—and they saw nothing of the villain about him. He was a slight, alert man, with a humorous, interested smile, and something of the air of a lad just done with school.

Hs asked his way to the one hotel, but rather for information than for the hard drinks his own country denied him. He was not secretive about himself or his aims. To Alexandros Stephanopoulos, the Greek proprietor, he opened his mind.

"I'm an American manufacturer," he said, "and I've been mighty sick. That's why I'm here."

"You get well soon, I hope."

"I thank you. For an object, to keep

my mind fixed down here, I've bought the wreck of the *Saru Helen*, schooner, lying three quarters of a mile north of the main gap in the reef. How many fathoms does she lie in?"

There was laughter at that. He misinterpreted.

"You do call it fathoms, don't you?"

"Not in this case," Raxworthy said, sipping from a glass. "You'd better go back to the States."

Kirwan looked searchingly at him.

"Seems as if you knew a whole lot more than I do. Sea captain, aren't you?"

"Yes."

"What did I say that was funny?"

"Did they tell you the *Saru Helen* was sunk?"

"She's wrecked all right, isn't she?"

"Yes, she's wrecked right enough, but if they fooled you she was sunk, you get your money back."

"Spill it, captain," Kirwan invited.

"I see you don't know. Mister, she's high and dry, well inland, put there by a hurricane. She's got flowers in her hair."

"I've been stung. But who'd imagine a wreck anywhere but in water? Captain, this should teach me there's a nigger in every woodpile."

"It'd cost twice what she was worth new to get her down to the water, and refit her. There isn't a penn'orth of pitch left in her seams, for one thing."

"That's nothing. I'm doing it for other reasons. In fact, when you get right down to it, the more difficult the proposition is, the better it'll suit me."

"She'd fall to pieces if you tried to move her."

"Are you keeping hens in her?" Kirwan asked. "You don't much seem to want her shifted."

"You never will shift her."

"I will, if I take her to pieces, bit by bit, and rebuild her on the beach."

Raxworthy sighed. He was sorry for old Captain Brooke and more than half afraid he would not live a month after the *Saru Helen* had been taken from him.

"There's more in this than I understand," Kirwan said. "Captain, what's your time worth to you?"

"Nothing. I'm on the beach, too."

"Then we were made for each other. You're a seaman and you understand these things. It's like this: I've been very ill, and I had to have a rest, but I can't idle, so I started in on this as an interesting holiday. Will you come in on it with me? Name your figure."

"It's not a job I care about," Raxworthy said.

"Too much like work?" Kirwan asked acidly.

"Too much like murder," Raxworthy retorted, leaving him abruptly.

Kirwan turned to Stephanopoulos.

"What's back of all this?" he asked.

The Greek, knowing Raxworthy, felt that nothing would be lost by a truly abysmal ignorance, concealed, however, in a cloud of words. Kirwan, having listened attentively, finished his drink.

"I'll go and look at her," he said, and he went out into the blazing sunlight.

He walked along the beach, and, though he sweated at every pore, he was happy. The sea always made him that, but this sea was a wonder and a magic, and the land it lipped was a brilliant mosaic of colored jewels. It was as though it had been made sheerly for the delight of the eye, without one dull thing in it, and without one tint that clashed.

"My, this is good all through," said Kirwan, swabbing his face contentedly.

In getting him away from New York, with its million million lights, its never-ending clang, reverberating in its restless streets, with its buildings like cliff-sided mountains, and its unceasing fret of strife, Kirwan's doctor had won half his battle for him. Perhaps, too, there was wisdom after all in the stunt idea of laboring at something utterly new.

The hard-bitten crew of a salvage ship

might, conversely, find pleasure and nerve rest in the sales department of a highly competitive manufactory, where the whole problem is to hear of trade one second sooner than the other man, and start out two seconds more quickly to get it.

Kirwan halted, turned himself slowly as on a pivot, and looked about him.

"I see nothing wrong with any of this," he told his quieting soul.

Ahead of him, Raxworthy reached old Captain Brooke and found him clearing away riotous creepers with a rusted ax, "to make things more shipshape."

"He'll be coming along soon," Raxworthy said. "He's doing it as a sort of game because he's had the jumps. He knows nothing. He even thought she was under water."

"Then, maybe, he'll let her be?"

"He said he'd float her if he had to take her to pieces and carry her to the water bit by bit."

"And then what happens to my master's certificate? Tell me that. And I've stood by her five years. I'm not too old to command a ship, but I'm not young enough to waste five years out of my life, Captain Raxworthy. Five years I've stood by her, five years."

"If it was just business with him, he might see it wouldn't pay him, and go. But he's taking it as medicine."

Kirwan came along the narrow path that had been kept open by the two men and, standing in the shadow of the hull, grinned amiably.

"How in Hades did she ever poke her snout in here?" he asked.

"The wind blew a little that day," Raxworthy said. "Also, the sea was high. Some people said that must have been because of a submarine earthquake. Others considered the force of the hurricane was enough. Anyway, she floated here and settled down like a petrified hen on a china egg."

"You!" said Captain Brooke. "You Yank! One fifth of this ship's mine, and I'm not going to have my fifth moved."

"No?" Kirwan's jaw stuck out, but, seeing the age of his attacker, he softened. "Why not?" he asked.

"Because I prefer it should stay here."

"But, you hard-shelled, rubber-lined barnacle, how am I to pick out your fifth?"

"That's your problem."

"Oh, is it? Well, as largest owner, my word goes, daddy."

"But the *Saru Helen* doesn't."

"Doesn't she? Stay around a while, and you'll watch her do it."

"Not if I stand by her till she grows wings. I'll clip 'em if she does."

"This situation's getting very interesting."

"Come aboard and examine her for yourself, Mr. Kirwan," Raxworthy suggested. "You'll agree then, I think, that she's not—that you'll hardly want to try to shift her." He frowned warningly at Brooke, who scowled and turned away.

Kirwan helped himself on deck by creeper stems and looked round. The planks were gaping, their wood was bone dry and warped, the pitch had trickled down the slope, and lay in rills and blots.

Between decks it was as bad, and, here and there, a tendril of creeper had pushed through, to grow, blanched and brittle, in the gloom.

"It's a very pretty problem," Kirwan said, coming up on deck again. "Now listen, you two—there are good dollars waiting for both of you if you'll come in on this with me."

"I've stood by my ship for five years," Brooke reiterated, "waiting for her to float off, so that I could sail her into port. Where the sea's come once, it'll come again."

"Help me float her, and you shall sail me into N'York."

"She's bound for Sydney," Brooke said stiffly. "When the high tide comes to float her, as it will soon, now, that's where she'll go."

"Has he only that one idea in his head?" Kirwan asked Raxworthy.

"That one idea. I don't know what he'd be without it."

Kirwan looked at the schooner, lying in a sea of creepers, and she seemed to him to be a pathetic thing, so inert there, and capable of such grace and high courage on the lifting salt water, with her white sails spread out in the sun to catch the winds, and the ripple whispering and muttering at her curved bows.

"I'd give a lot to make her live again," he said. "I don't look on this as a commercial proposition." As to the old man with the pointed, white beard, it was a clear case of an obsession.

"Too much reaction," he thought. "He's distorted."

He turned to Raxworthy.

"See here," he said, "you could do with a good job, or I know nothing. And you're conversant with this island. I can use you." He drew him aside, and lowered his voice. "It's doing that old fellow no good to coop himself up here waiting for a miracle. Come in with me, help me to hire labor, and he shall sail us both to N'York."

Brooke caught the name of that city.

"Sydney she's bound for," he said, "and to Sydney she goes. What'll happen to my ticket otherwise? They'll say I lost my ship. Can I have that?" He looked anxiously at Kirwan, to see what impression he had made upon him. "Why do you want to rob me of my ticket? Don't you know it's all I've got left?"

"Can't you see why I'm not coming with you?" Raxworthy said. "You're going to make me first mate, aren't you, Captain Brooke, when she floats off again?"

"I am, Captain Raxworthy. You may rely on it."

"I don't know which of you's the madder," Kirwan exclaimed.

"Besides," Raxworthy whispered, "she'd be no good if she were floated."

"You know, I suppose, there's nothing to stop me hiring labor, importing it if necessary, and going ahead?"

"The day you start," said Brooke, "I blow my brains out on the deck. I'm telling you now, for you wouldn't know otherwise. You'll get the first bullet, and I'll get the second."

"That's a plain threat of murder, Captain Raxworthy," Kirwan protested.

"There are times when I'm quite deaf," Raxworthy said.

"Well, I've only this to say: I came here to float the *Saru Helen*, with full powers to deal with her, and float her I will. As to your homicidal mossback, he's a sea captain, and it's doing him no good and his ship no good to roost in these glades, even if the flowers are pretty. I'm going to cut a swath through this forest, make a cord road with the trunks, and the *Saru Helen's* going along that road. I haven't enjoyed myself so much in years."

"Well, you'll be responsible for what happens," Raxworthy warned.

"You're right first guess."

Kirwan left them, and they held a long discussion as to what was to be done to prevent him from carrying out his threat. They could see no way.

There was no way. Kirwan arrived a week later, with a gang of natives under a white man who had once been an architect, but was now a beach comber when sober, and a poisonous nuisance when drunk. They arrived in the middle of the night, crept on board, took Captain Brooke in his sleep, found the deadly, but out-of-date, revolver under his pillow, and told him to go away and play.

It was a broken old man who came to Raxworthy's hut before the dawn.

"He's brought a mob of Kanakas and a mean white, and he's turned me out," he said.

"There was no shooting?" Raxworthy asked anxiously.

"No, I'm a windbag who can't even keep a watch. They got me when I was in my bunk below, and they had my barker from under my head before I'd time to rouse. I'm not fit to command a ship." He was near to collapse, and Raxworthy made him lie down. In a little while, the old man sorrowed himself into a heavy, senile sleep.

At dawn, Raxworthy went to the *Saru Helen,* and Kirwan came to meet him.

"Well, we've started," he said. "Seen the old man?"

"I have. He's at my place, as much a wreck now as his ship. Is it worth it, Mr. Kirwan?"

"Anything's better than moldering your life away here. Captain, I've cabled for a couple of boat builders, and I've got a thing here that used to be an architect. It thinks it's going to do a little work in between drinks, but I know it's going to teach these Kanakas ten hours a day how to chop down trees and make a road."

"Is it all worth it?"

"I'm not asking myself fool questions. When these trees are down, he's going to get busy pulling this schooner to bits, and he's going to number and letter each bit, so that the boat builders can put them together again when we've moved the job to the beach."

"Mr. Kirwan, it'd cost you less to build a new schooner."

"I haven't figured it out, and I won't have time to, either, till this old hooker's in the water again. Let's get right back to this architect. He's fifty-fifty rum and man, and, when he perspires, it isn't safe for him to smoke. Take his job, and I'll give him a hint to return to his avocation. You need the money, and you're one hundred per cent white."

"You don't know that."

"I do. Otherwise, you wouldn't let good dollars for honest work go by you, with a chance of having command of the ship later, for the sake of an old man who's tied himself up in his own hard luck."

"You may easily kill him."

"Do you believe that bunk?"

"It wouldn't surprise me."

"Well, then, I should say he hadn't long to go in any case," said Kirwan. "Will you take the job I offer? I want you. You know every part of a ship, from her basement to her flag."

"She's not worth the time and money."

"Her timber's dry as a bone, but it's sound as a bell. Can I say to that damn architect: 'Mr. Architect, meet my toe?' "

"I'm Captain Brooke's friend, and I'm not going back on him."

"Then it's my busy day, if you'll excuse me. He's just about due for another attack of his hallucination that he's got something coming to him out of a bottle, and that won't happen to him in reality till his day's work is done."

Had his doctor seen him then, he would have said that Kirwan was convalescent.

Captain Brooke never went back to the *Saru Helen.* He could not have borne to see them dismantling her, and he seemed to have lost interest in his one-fifth share in her. Kirwan sent him his personal belongings, even including the log, but the old man took no interest in them. He ate little, slept a great deal, and wearied Raxworthy with oft-told stories of things he had seen and done at sea in her. It was as though his mind had stopped at the point where he was surprised in his bunk and put over the side.

To give him an interest in life, Raxworthy got him to go fishing for food for both of them, but he caught so lit-

tle that it was very clear he either could not, or would not, attend to his line.

He only spoke of Kirwan once.

"If I had that man's money," he said, "I'd try to do some good with it. But the more a man has, the more selfish it makes him. Captain Raxworthy, who was to have been my first mate, would you have got the law on your side to take a man's last chance away from him?"

"Not to save my life, Captain Brooke. But he's doing it, it seems, to save his reason."

"It isn't in reason to do what he's doing, slaving away there, spending money like water, just to get my vessel away from me."

"He says it worries him to see a good ship on dry land."

"Does he now? Does he now?" That point of view vaguely interested the old man.

From time to time, Raxworthy went to watch their labors with the *Saru Helen,* and, on each occasion, Kirwan looked a year younger and appeared to be a year more dynamic.

As to the architect, he had, in the past few weeks, concentrated upon him, and the effects of it showed.

"It isn't fair, Mr. Kirwan," he had protested. "You're from a country where you can't get a drink when you want it, so you've got seasoned to going without it."

"I come from a country where they expect a dollar's worth of work out of a man for every dollar he's paid, and you get under my feet when you're soaked. All of the hard drinks you bring into this camp are going to be smashed on the same boulder. The Kanakas are beginning to worship that rock. They think I do poojah to it."

"With my whisky."

"That's right. You ought to be glad I put it where it does most good. If it kills all the weeds around that stone, what would it do to your impaired gizzard if I let it make contact? Get, and do some work—I've bought your time."

"At least you ought to pay me for the whisky you've spilled."

"It surely is a hard world for you. You get no justice in it at all. Now, you listen. I owe you a week's wages, don't I?"

"Yes."

"Well, you won't get them. You won't get any more money till I'm through with you. Then you'll get all that's coming to you in one wad, and you'll be able to bathe in rum. I shan't care if some one throws a lighted match into the bath then. I shall have put you behind me with the other drawbacks to this island."

"You're a hard man." He was thirsty.

"Cut that out. You won't get round me by flattery. You ought to know that. You were a gentleman once, and you must have had sand in you then to get your degrees. Go and work, and you'll forget how dry your neck is. Your poor stomach must be thankful for having such a let-up."

Quite calmly, Kirwan mixed himself a weak whisky with a large soda, and drank the architect's health.

"Here's how, Mr. Reever," he said amiably. "I'm glad you're learning to see another man drink without having to have one, too."

Reever took it out on the Kanakas, which was not just, but it got the work done. So do all things assist the man with pep, and Kirwan's pep was welling up in him like the water in a spring when the drought has broken.

At last—and it amused and astonished the whole island—they got the *Saru Helen* piecemeal down to the sea, and the two boat builders erected ways and began to fit the jig-saw puzzle together again, making new parts where necessary. Kirwan, from amazing dawn to sudden sunset, sat by the work and watched it, and, as it grew, and the gra-

cious lines of the hull took shape, greater peace than he had ever known flooded his healing soul. And, as he sat by her, he tried to imagine all the queer ports to which she had sailed, and to which she would, thanks to him, sail again. It seemed to him that she must be beginning to feel very glad.

"So you've done it!" Raxworthy said, coming on him unexpectedly.

"She's stanch, but she's a gull without wings."

"Oh?"

"I've wood for masts and spars, but there's no one here who can rig her. Must I tow her to N'York?"

A new shadow fell on the sand, and Kirwan looked up to see old Captain Brooke, with his beard untrimmed and his clothes hanging loose on his bones.

"What's that? Tow her to N'York? Not my fifth. My fifth goes to Sydney."

"Without rigging or sails? Masts and spars I have."

"And you can't reeve the rigging of a fore-and-aft schooner? You can't fit a suit of sails to her? Why did you meddle with her, then?"

"Why? To-morrow she'll be afloat, or to-night, if the grease comes in time. That's why." He put his hand on the old man's shoulder. "Maybe you've forgotten how to rig her," he said.

"A landsman's thought, then. Not a sheet or a shroud have I forgotten, not a block or running line, not one atom of all her gear."

"That's some boast after taking to the trees for six years."

"Five years, and it's no boast."

"I'd offer you the job, if you weren't too old, just to prove you've forgotten. You'd have the ropes like a spider's web in an hour if you tried to fix 'em to the masts."

"Ropes he calls them, Captain Raxworthy!"

"Call them strings if you like. The point is, you've forgotten," Kirwan insisted. "Captain Raxworthy, where's the nearest place I can get an efficient rigger? I've a notion I'd like her to leave here under sail—not at the end of a leash."

Brooke walked over to the hull and went all round it, slowly, letting his hands rest on it here and there. Not a seam gaped, and the new paint was smooth as a yacht's. Kirwan had seen to it that the Kanakas made a thorough job of it. They had learned about the stabbing qualities of the English tongue as used in New York, but they had done the work as it ought to be done. What else they had learned was thrown in with their pay.

"The lines of her—look at the lines of her!" Captain Brooke said, coming back.

"Lines?" Kirwan said. "Lines? Are you batty? There isn't a yard of string in the whole blame vessel. What lines? It's lines I want. Otherwise she'll go to N'York like a stray cur attached to a cop. Say, Captain Raxworthy, you can rig her."

"I could."

"And you're not a fossil out of a forest. Will you rig her?"

"Shall we rig her, Captain Brooke? You rig her, and I'll be mate."

The old man looked eager, but he held his tongue.

"Wait, I've a notion," Kirwan said. "I could send to N'York for a gasoline engine, a shaft, and a propeller. Then she'd only want masts for the radio. That'd let you out, Captain Brooke. You'd always be able to say you'd have rigged her if I'd let you. Don't you get to feeling sore. Old men do forget."

"I tell you I've forgotten nothing."

"Shucks! Look here, I'll give you my four fifths if you can rig her."

Captain Raxworthy looked at the American, who winked at him very cheerfully. He looked harder, and Kirwan winked more meaningly. Captain

Raxworthy looked away, because his Adam's apple was misbehaving, and, curious coincidence, a speck of sand had got into each eye.

"You say I can't rig her? By Godfrey, can't I! You—you damned Yank."

"Oh, you can gas, but I've told you I'll give you the blamed ship if you can rig her as one ought to be rigged. I've said it before a witness, and I'll make him umpire. If he says you've rigged her as she ought to be rigged, and if he tells me her sails are what they ought to be, the *Saru Helen's* yours that minute. But you won't take it on. All you Britishers can do is talk big."

Captain Brooke spat.

"Is it a bet?" Kirwan asked.

"You know one man couldn't do it."

"I do, but all you've got to do is stand on the deck in your best hat and give the necessary orders."

"Take him on, Captain Brooke."

"And I want your fifth if you make a fool of yourself."

"I'll accept the wager."

With energy and determination showing once more in his gait, Captain Brooke walked away to make the arrangements for winning that wager.

Kirwan swung round toward Raxworthy. "No. We'll take it as said," he broke out, before the other could speak. "What in Hades do I want with windjammers?"

"Then that was all true?"

"Every last word. You might just as well have had some of the dollars. Tell me, do you always stick to your friends like that?"

"I expect so. It's only decent."

"I'm open to hire decency like that. You understand bills of lading?"

"Naturally, being a sea captain."

"Then you'd fit into my export department like blood in a vein."

"I should be very grateful for——"

"Will you do your work properly?"

"I'll try to."

"Then what'll you have to be grateful for, if you give me value for money?"

He went away to find and pay the architect.

"Here's your money, and good-by," he said. "We'll be away in a week, and you'll be drunk for a month on that."

"It occurs to me that it might be a good egg if I don't drink any more." He smiled ruefully. "It's so long since you let me have any that I've lost the desire."

"Is that so?"

"So why begin it again?"

"Why? Only you won't keep to that."

"I imagine I shall."

"Well, here's an offer. You've enough to live on for a year here. If, having paid your own passage out of that roll of bills, you come to me in N'York in six months' time, I can do a lot for you. I'll bet you fifty to one I never see you again."

"I'll double it."

"And I'll double you again. When you're sober, you surely can work."

In the fullness of time, Kirwan paid.

With new canvas, white as snow, and a fair breeze teaching the new rigging its first deep-sea chantey, the *Saru Helen* felt her way out through the gap in the reef. She cleared, and the Pacific rollers caught her, and she bobbed and curtsied to them like the lady she was. Kirwan leaned over the rail, with a long cigar in his mouth, and meditated evil to those who had not served him well in his absence.

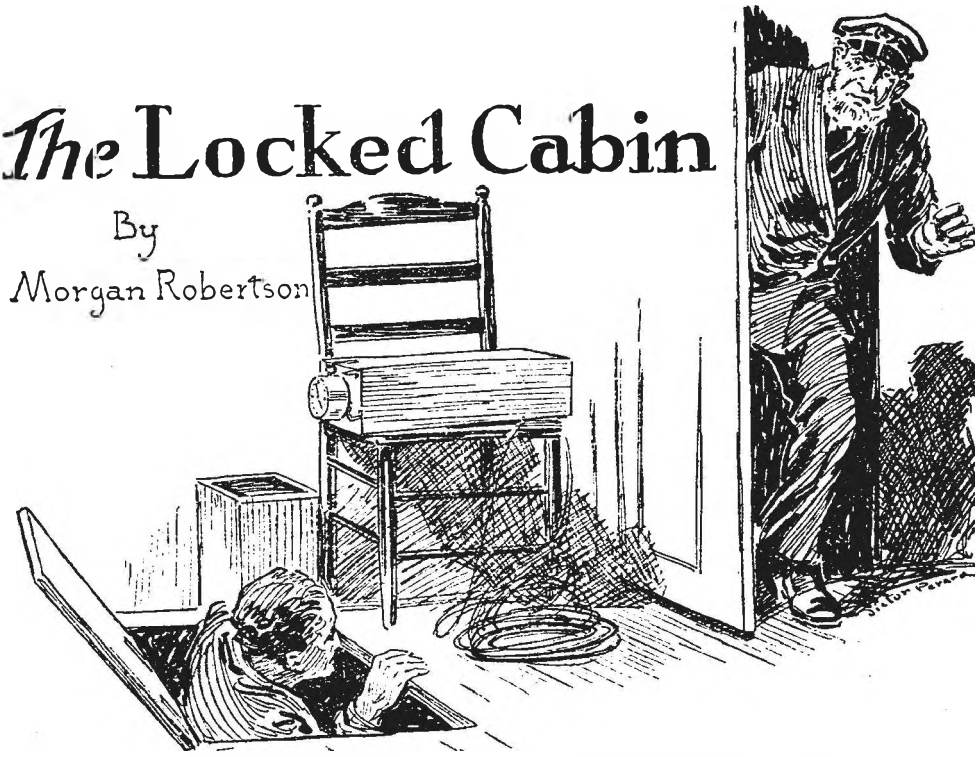
Captain Brooke looked alow and aloft, and then turned to stare at the American's back.

"That's an obstinate man, Mr. Mate," he said, "an obstinate man. But, since he's a man of his word, I'm breaking her voyage to Sydney for his sake."

"I'm glad you did, sir," said the mate.

The Locked Cabin

By
Morgan Robertson



Captain Ransom warned every one on his ship that under no circumstances must that one cabin be entered, save by himself. Of course, there was curiosity about this—professional as well as amateur. And out of that room came strange things before the solution was brought to light.

I WAS exceedingly gratified at securing my berth with Captain Ransom, for I was young—very young, to sign as steward in a big, deep-water ship, since my experience in the culinary department had been confined to one voyage as cook in a small Scotch bark. And I was more than gratified at Captain Ransom's cordial reception of me when I joined the ship at the dock with my dunnage. He shook me warmly by the hand, ordered a couple of ordinary seamen to drop their work and attend to my trunk, then led me to my room, off the forward cabin, or mess room.

"Here is your nest," he said, "and the room opposite is the storeroom. I'll give you a list of stores soon, so you'll know how you stand. These other rooms are staterooms, but we have no passengers. Now, come aft, and I'll show you my quarters."

He led me into his cabin, a square apartment lighted by the skylight overhead, and by windows in its three exposed sides. In the port after corner were the steps leading to the companion above, and in the starboard forward corner was his sleeping room, partitioned off and entered by a door, which now was closed.

"There are two definite points of instruction, steward," he said, "that I want to impress upon you now. You will have the care of this cabin, but you are never to enter that room of mine, either when I am there, or when I am on deck. And if I am in there when eight bells at noon strikes, and do not come out, you are to wind the chro-

nometer. If I am awake and on deck, I will attend to it myself. Don't forget these two things, now. That room is my retiring place. There are times when I must be alone with my thoughts. I have had much trouble lately."

I acceded and promised, then went back to my room to unpack my trunk, and prepare for my duties. I understood his allusion to trouble—I had heard on shore that Captain Ransom was considered an unlucky skipper, having lost three ships in three years, and belonging to the same employ. His owners must have had supreme confidence in him, I had thought—and it was this thought that induced me to seek a berth with him—for here he was, going out in command of the biggest ship in the line, though, perhaps, the oldest. But she had been overhauled, repaired, and painted under Captain Ransom's supervision, and, except for the rough and splintered appearance of her rails and deck fittings under the paint, she looked as trim and substantial as though just off the ways.

Captain Ransom was a tall, handsome man, with iron-gray hair and beard, and with piercing eyes of the same color. He was quick and nervous in speech and manner, well educated as seamen go, and in his face were traces of deep study and thought, but there was also in his face an expression of anxiety—almost of sadness, as though the hard luck that had followed him had marked him for all time.

The first mate, who came on board that afternoon, was a different kind of man; he was tall as the captain, and bearded, but broader of shoulder, louder of voice, and educated but little above the standards of the forecastle. He had no sooner stowed his dunnage than he began making life a burden to the two ordinary seamen, who, on a later occasion, informed me that Mr. Pritchard was merely disgruntled at not getting command himself, having sailed two voyages in the ship as mate.

The second mate, who was already on board, was a smaller, weaker, and quieter imitation of the first, but with an equal knowledge of navigation. His name was Billings, and, like the mate and the two ordinary seamen, he was a left-over from the last voyage.

The ship was loaded with a ballast layer of soft coal in the lower hold, above which, and extending to the beams, was cotton. In the 'tween-deck was case oil—an inflammable cargo. The captain knew this, for at supper he strongly enjoined upon the mate the necessity of daily ventilation in fine weather, and of securely battening down all hatches at the first sign of wind or rain.

"For if a little water hits the cotton," he said, "it may generate spontaneous combustion, and with all the gas from the coal and leaky oil cans, we'd have a fire that we couldn't put out. I've lost my last three ships, and I don't want to lose this one."

To which the mate assented with a grunt.

The crew came aboard next morning—twenty able seamen, two boatswains, a carpenter, sailmaker, and cook, the last a Chinaman, subordinate to me. The men were a mixed lot, representative of most of the maritime nations, and only the boatswains and one of the crew were American. The carpenter was English, and the sailmaker French. But, with the exception of one man, they all seemed to know their work, and there was little occasion for the profanity and abuse with which the mates broke them in as we towed down the bay. All caught it, even the boatswains, the two mates seeming to vie with one another in their efforts to convince the crew that their masters lived aft. This, I knew, was the usual method in these ships, and I knew, also, that it would end in a day or two, when the men were

thoroughly impressed—and so it did in this case, except for one man, the sole American of the crew.

His name was Allen. He was a slim-built man in middle life, with a pale but keen and intelligent face, and soft, white hands that grew painfully inflamed from the harsh contact of wet, hard ropes. It made him involuntarily and momentarily shrink from a sudden task of pulling ropes, and brought the first criticism from the mate.

This is an affliction common to all sailors whose hands have softened during a stay on shore, and I judged that Allen had remained several years away from the sea. For while he displayed a marked inadequacy in some details of his calling, he was surprisingly efficient in others. He did not know the ropes, or where they led, but he was a good helmsman—steering his trick alone in a following gale off Hatteras that had demanded two men at the wheel before.

When we left the Gulf Stream, and routine work began, he put a shipshape splice in a new hawser, but in making sennit for robands he could not knot a rope yarn. He could furl a royal at his first attempt, but, in loosing it later on, he cast off the weather gaskets first and was nearly knocked off the yard by the mistake. He was willing and respectful, but Mr. Pritchard, in whose watch he was placed, continued the criticism, cursing and threatening him upon all possible occasions.

Allen would have developed, before long, into the most efficient man of the crew, but Mr. Pritchard did not chose to wait for this, and continued the heckling. I think the real reason was that the presence of an intelligent man in the forecastle is always an affront to officers of the Pritchard type. Allen stood it all meekly, but often, when the mate had finished a tirade of abuse, and had departed, I saw a peculiar snapping of Allen's gray eyes that promised reprisal.

Captain Ransom was invariably civil and kindly spoken toward every man on board, and what he thought of his first mate's ill-treatment of Allen I could not judge at the time. Only, an occasional frown upon his sad face seemed to indicate that he did not approve of it. It is one of the first mate's rights that he be not interfered with in his handling or management of the men, and this, perhaps, was as far as Captain Ransom cared to go.

As for the mate, he also reached the limitations. While scrupulously careful to observe every expressed wish, and obey every order of Captain Ransom—especially was he careful about ventilating the 'tween-deck—yet he only stopped short of deadly assault upon Allen, and in his attitude toward the captain was sullen, abrupt in speech, and uncommunicative. They ate together at the first table, but there was no conversation, and Captain Ransom could not have been ignorant of the animus in the mind of the mate—his resentment at not getting command of the ship.

Then came a time when all three—the captain, the mate, and Allen—overstepped their limitations. It was just before we caught the southeast trades, when we were south of the line, but still in the doldrums, where the dead calm was varied only by minute-long cat's paws, with an occasional rain squall, and the hatch covers were off and on a dozen times a day.

We had just passed through a drenching squall, and the hatches had been opened, pending the arrival of the next, which was raising astern. The watch on deck had returned to work, scouring the white paint of the rails and deck fittings with sand and salt water.

Allen was working in the starboard alley on the poop, nearly abreast of the captain's window, when Mr. Pritchard came along and inadvertently rubbed the sleeve of his coat against the house,

bringing away with it some of the mixture of wet sand and pulverized white paint. I was in the steward's storeroom, and through the open window could hear all that was said.

"You infernal poor man's dog," roared the officer, "what d'you want to get so far ahead o' your work for, hey? Look at my coat, now. I've a good mind to knock your teeth down your throat."

"Don't do that, sir," answered Allen quietly.

"What? You talk back to me, do you?"

"No, sir, not at all. I did not arrange this purposely for you, and will cheerfully clean your coat in my watch below. I supposed you could see what you were rubbing against."

"Shut up."

"All right, sir."

"Shut up, I said."

Allen did not answer, and the mate continued:

"I'll take the conceit out o' you before long, and I've a good mind to do it now." Then followed a burst of profanity and foul abuse that, in border towns, will arouse men to murder.

Then Allen's voice, high-pitched and strident, broke in, "Take care, sir. Don't you strike me."

There was a moment of silence, and Allen repeated: "Don't you strike me, Mr. Pritchard. I've stood your insult and abuse patiently, because I comprehend that you don't know any better, but I will not be struck. If you strike me I will kill you as soon as I can, and swing for it. Understand me, sir?"

"You—you threaten my life?" queried the mate, in utter astonishment.

"I do. If you lay hands upon me I will kill you, at once or later, asleep or awake, by night or by day, as is most convenient to me."

"Well, I'll be—— Kill me, will you?" The mate backed away, and then Captain Ransom's footsteps sounded in the after cabin as he left his room. In a moment, the captain's voice sang out on deck, and there was a ring and a snap to it that I had not heard before.

"Mr. Pritchard," he yelled, "what are you doing? Quarreling with the men while you neglect the ship and your work? Get those hatches on at once. Don't you see that squall?"

"All right, sir," answered the mate. Then followed his roar to the men, and the shuffling and stamping of many footsteps as they rushed to the hatches. My work in the storeroom finished, I went to the forward companion and looked out. As most of the men had been working forward, they had gone first to the fore and main hatches, leaving the mizzen to the last. They quickly covered and battened down these two, but before they came aft to the third the squall hit us, and for a few moments voices could not be heard over the screaming of wind through the rigging.

It was a vicious squall, but, coming from astern, it did not catch the canvas aback, though it blew away all three royals. The main damage was to the cargo. The mizzen hatch was covered by a booby, or hatch house, and to lift this over the opening was a job for the whole watch under favorable conditions. As it was, in that screaming squall, with its deafening wind and blinding rain, the men bungled the job, and before the booby was placed fully, a barrel of water must have gone down the hatch onto the cotton.

The squall passed soon, and Captain Ransom came down to the main deck and faced the mate, while I looked on and listened in the companion.

"You vicious, incompetent bully!" snapped the skipper, in the hearing of the whole watch. "This comes of your tendency to browbeat men that know more than you do. Heaven knows now what will happen in that hold. If the

cargo takes fire, it will be your fault, and I will see that you are held responsible."

"But he threatened my life, cap'n," spluttered the mate.

"I heard him, and I heard what preceded the threat. It was a useless waste of words. He ought to have killed you without the warning."

"That's what I get from the cap'n of the ship, is it?" answered the officer angrily. "And before the men, too! Well, I'll tell you, Cap'n Ransom. I know my work, and I know my place, and I can do one and keep the other. And I've sailed wi' skippers that know their place, and kept it, too——"

"That will do," interrupted the captain. "I'll say one thing more before we close this discussion. Swear at the men all you like, but keep your hands off them. If you strike Allen, or any other man of my crew, I'll give you your choice, to go 'fore the mast with them, or go in irons."

"That's all right, sir," blustered Mr. Pritchard, now thoroughly enraged. "It'll be the irons, and maybe I'll deserve 'em, for my life's been threatened, and if there's any killing done, I'll do my share, and I'll try and do it first."

"Send men aloft and get down those rags," answered the captain calmly, "then bend new royals."

"Aye, aye, sir," answered the mate, his seamanship overtopping his sense of injury. "New royals, you said, or old? We have an old suit."

"Old ones will do for the present," said the captain, stepping past me into the cabin.

And so it ended. The royals were bent, and what was left of the squall blew us into the southeast trades, and in the glorious weather that followed, scrubbing of paint gave way to seamanly work in the rigging and on deck. The English carpenter began a new topgallant mast from the spare spar in the scuppers, and the French sailmaker a new awning for the poop, working on his bench at the booby hatch, where occasional spray from the bow would not wet the canvas. The crew grew cheerful, and even Mr. Billings, the second mate, responded to the influence of sunshine, warm, dry wind, and blue sky flecked with racing balls of white cloud —ceasing his bullying of the men. But two on board did not respond, the captain and the first mate.

In spite of the fact that the wet cotton bales had been hauled on deck to dry, Captain Ransom was palpably anxious. When he was not in his room he walked the main deck, often pausing at the open mizzen hatch to look down at the cargo. So far he had not required that I wind the chronometer for him, but now he again enjoined upon me to attend to this task, and also informed the mate that he would leave the navigation of the ship to him until we lost the trades. I never tried his door, but noticed that, entering or leaving his room, he always locked it.

As for the mate, his grievance seemed to be consuming him. The healthy, officerlike note of command in his voice became a snarl, and he spoke to his watch as though the next speech would be a curse and the next act an assault. He had furious quarrels with the carpenter and sailmaker, two men who, while under his authority in a way, yet received their orders and instructions regarding work from the captain. He spoke to no one except in the line of duty. The second mate began to dislike him, while the men hated him. He stood alone. As the carpenter expressed it, he suffered from "hingrowin' self-respect," but I know that he suffered from more than this—from fear of his life.

When a heavy marlinspike came down from aloft one day, barely missing his head, he did not call the offender down for forcible rebuke. In-

stead, he hurried aft with a face ghastly as death, and streaming with perspiration, to the lazaret hatch, an opening in the poop just abaft and to starboard of the wheel, which led to the space below in which ropes, canvas, and such stores are kept. It extends to the stern, and around forward on each side of the cabin trunk to the break of the poop. Descending, he emerged soon with an armful of iron belaying pins, which he inserted in every vacant hole in the poop-deck pinrail, and as far forward on the main deck as they would go. There was no mistaking the reason of it. He wanted missiles at hand in case of need.

Allen was well liked by the men. He was cheerful and companionable, and now that his aches and pains had left him, was as able a man as any of them. He seemed to have taken a liking to me, from a sort of fellow feeling, I thought—I being the only other man on board beside the captain with any pretense to an education—and often, when I was forward in his watch below, we would talk. Once he asked me about the captain.

"He's a fine fellow," he said, "and he stood by me like a brother. It isn't every skipper that would do it against his first mate. But say, tell me. What keeps him below so much?"

"Don't know," I answered. "He sticks to his room, and locks his door. Reading, I suppose."

"Where is his room, forward or aft? Starboard side, of course."

"Yes, forward starboard corner of the after cabin."

Our next talk was short. It was just after Allen had been berated for some small dereliction by Mr. Pritchard, and as he was on his way aft one morning to take the ten-to-twelve wheel. He stopped at the galley door with an earnest, anxious look in his eyes, and handed me a large notebook.

"Keep this, steward," he said, "and if anything happens to me, mail it to the——"

He did not finish. The mate interrupted with a bellowing roar from amidships:

"Get aft there to that wheel, you farmer, or I'll lay you out right here."

He had his hand on an iron belaying pin in the rail—one that he had placed there himself, and Allen hurriedly departed, passing the mate with bowed head, as though he expected to be struck. I saw the captain watching from the weather alley on the poop, but he made no comment, and I took the notebook aft and stowed it in my trunk, intending to speak to Allen again about it. But I did not.

My work required that I remain in the galley for the rest of the morning, preparing the cabin dinner, but I noticed that Captain Ransom had gone below, and could hear occasional outbursts from the mate, now on the poop. He was in a furious rage at Allen. We had dropped the trades, and were wallowing along toward the Cape before a brisk quartering wind and following sea, and Allen, though an expert helmsman, could not keep the ship from yawning at least a point each side of the course. Once, I heard Allen's high-pitched voice in reply, but could not distinguish the words on account of the strong breeze.

At seven bells—half past eleven—the mate brought up his sextant for the daily midday observation of the sun, and, instead of taking a position on the poop, where he was clear of all shadows, he stationed himself in the alley, where the quarter boat, hanging on its davits above, interfered with him. Perhaps it was from a sulky desire to avoid the presence of the captain, who, if inclined to take an observation, would likely choose the best spot. Perhaps it was from a devilish desire to get Allen in further fault. As the ship unavoidably swung to star-

board and port, and the boat clouded his view, he cursed luridly and insanely.

At about five minutes to twelve by the galley clock I took the dinner aft in a basket, set the table, and went to the captain's quarters to wind the chronometer, and set the clock when the mate called out eight bells. Captain Ransom was in his room, and must have heard, as plainly as myself, the foul language and threats emanating from the mate above, but he made no sign, and soon there was an interval of silence, and I judged that Mr. Pritchard was now too busy with his tangent screw to give any thought to Allen. And in this silence I distinctly heard a heavy thud. Then came more grumbling and growling from the mate, and the words: "I'll show you who's boss. I'll show you."

A minute later Captain Ransom burst out of his room and rushed by me to the companion. His face was white and strained.

"I'm tired of this billingsgate and blackguardism," he exclaimed. "I'll stop it."

He bounded up the steps to the deck, then I heard his voice again.

"Who did this?" he yelled.

"Eight bells," called the harsh voice of the mate, and I began winding the chronometer.

"Eight bells be d——d," shouted the captain. "Who killed this man? Come here. Lay aft, here, the watch. Call all hands. One hand to the wheel. Oh, you cowardly murderer. I'll hang you for this.'

I finished my small task and sprang up the stairs. Allen lay on the deck, his body jammed under the wheel, preventing it from spinning. Beside him lay an iron belaying pin, and in the quarter rail was the vacant hole it had occupied. Above him stood the captain, holding the wheel, and at the corner of the alley stood the mate, holding his sextant, both with strangely working faces. The captain's was white and tense, the mate's bewildered and foolish, his under jaw dropping.

"I didn't touch him, cap'n," he said.

"You lie," answered the skipper. "Steward, strike eight bells, and call the second mate."

I struck the bell on the wheel box, and went to Mr. Billings' room, finding him just strolling out, with sleepy eyes. The bell had wakened him. We went out the forward companion and joined the rush of men up the poop steps, and found the captain holding a pistol at the head of the mate.

"You lie, you unconscionable dog," he was saying. "You lie. No one else could have done it. The second mate was asleep, and had no grudge, anyway. The steward was in the cabin. I was in my room. I heard no footsteps but yours. Did you hear any, steward?"

I shook my head. If any one had come aft I surely would have heard.

"Men, carry Allen forward and lay him on the main hatch. He's stone dead, and there's the belaying pin that did it."

I looked at Allen's head as the men, with sorrowful oaths and comments, lifted him clear of the wheel, which one of them took from the captain. Allen had worn a sou'wester, and the crown of this had been driven into a cylindrical-shaped depression in his skull.

"Now, Mr. Billings," said the captain. "Get a pair of wrist irons out of this murderer's room, iron him, and confine him in the lazaret."

"I tell you I didn't do it," shouted the mate. "And if I did I'd claim self-defense. He threatened to kill me, and he meant to."

The captain made no reply. The second mate appeared soon with the irons, and before the men had carried Allen's body to the hatch, Pritchard was ironed, still protesting his innocence, and lashed to the port quarter-bitt in the lazaret.

"Hard bread and water for him, steward," the captain said, as I left the poop, "and a full meal every fifth day."

We gave Allen sea burial at four that afternoon, and in a day or two the crew, except for an occasional hearty curse for the man in the lazaret, seemed to have forgotten the incident, after the manner of sailors. And Mr. Billings, who had taken the mate's place, while a boatswain had taken his, seemed willing to forget it. But not so the captain. He remained in a condition of nervous excitement, referring to the murder again and again at the table, and adducing this point and that in evidence that no one but the mate could possibly have killed Allen.

It grew upon him, and at last he became irritable—he had the hatches lifted at every recurrence of sunshine, and would peer down them and sniff for any casual odor of gas or smoke. The mood increased upon him, so that I was not in the least surprised or hurt at his ordering me out of the after cabin one noon when I stood at the chronometer, waiting for eight bells.

He went into his room, and I went forward—to kill time—then, as the bell struck eight, I turned and went aft to serve the dinner. But I had not reached the main hatch before I was knocked on my back by what seemed a physical force, while my eyes were blinded with light, and my ears filled with a deafening sound that transcended in volume all the explosions I had heard in my life.

When I could see, I looked aft. The whole cabin, but for the forward side, was gone, and up from the gaping hole came flame and smoke, while out of the forward companion staggered the newly installed second mate. He was shocked almost out of his senses, but not materially injured.

Luckily for Mr. Billings, he had chosen to take the sun from the topgallant forecastle that day, as we were now heading nearly east, and the cold draft from the spanker had bothered him on the poop. He came running aft, calling for all hands, the deck pump and hose, and for one man to take the wheel, as the helmsman had disappeared from sight. We played water into the black and smoking hole until the last flame went out, then investigated.

The man at the wheel had been knocked unconscious, but, like the second mate, was not injured. The whole after part of the cabin trunk and most of the forward part had gone up in matchwood, but the stronger-built deck of the alleys and flooring and the sides of the ship had resisted the shock. But in the lazaret we found the dead body of Mr. Pritchard, blown to full length, and with extended arms still held to the bitt by the lashing through the manacles.

We buried him, but not the captain, who was in his room at the time of the explosion. We did not find a vestige of his body, but we found, on the damp and scorched cotton bales close to where his room had been, a pinch bar.

It was long after I had shipped out of Capetown, where Mr. Billings took the ship, and where all hands were paid off, that I examined the notebook given me by Allen. It contained shorthand notes, Greek to me at the time, and not a word of the address that he was about to give me when interrupted by Mr. Pritchard. So I never was able to forward it. But after many years I found a skilled stenographer, able to read the notes of another, and from him received the following:

April 4th. Three days out. Will jot down notes of what happens, to freshen my memory in case I succeed, and in the full belief that no one aboard this ship can transcribe them. First, I have nothing to hang a suspicion upon ex-

cept what I saw in the hold during the three days of man-killing work I put in stowing the coal in the stevedore's gang. That square wooden pipe leading up from the skin, through the 'tween-deck and into the cabin—I should judge about halfway along the starboard side, and close to the keelson—must have a purpose. I asked one carpenter, and he said a pump well. Bosh! A pump well aft in the run, where no water goes! Another carpenter said a ventilator for the hold leading into the captain's room. This was more like it, but what lunatic would lead a ventilator into a closed cabin, or, if to lead up the foul gases from smoldering coal, who would have it open into a sleeping room? Nothing else wrong in the hold. One box and bale is like another.

April 16th. If the first mate were square or in any way decent, I would take him into my confidence. I am positive now that the skipper recognizes in me one of the stevedore's gang. My clothing is new, my hands and face white. I do not act and look like a sailor. Too long ashore. This is why the mate is down on me. I caught the furtive, hateful look in Ransom's eye to-day that means suspicion.

May 1st. Down in hot weather. Lost my head to-day, and threatened to kill the mate if he did not ease up. Skipper came up and took my part. Kind of him, in a way, but if the mate is impressed, I think it will be on my account as much as on the skipper's. Skipper is worried much about wetting the cotton. Very thoughtful, careful, and considerate of the underwriters.

May 5th. Got the southeast trade wind. Fine weather, but the mate is getting worse. One of the men tried to brain him from aloft on the fore with a marlinspike. Foolish. I was up on the mizzen, so I was not suspected. He has a whole arsenal of iron belaying pins along the rail now, for use on us.

May 11th. Making friends with the steward, a peaceable young fellow. Could not pump him, for he knew only one thing that I did not. The square tube leads into the captain's room, which is in the for'ard starboard corner of the after half of the cabin. I know his bedroom window. I measured while pacing when I went to the wheel.

May 20th. A policeman's lot is not a happy one. How about mine? I could cheerfully hammer the mate's head off with a nightstick if there were no legal consequences. A more ignorant and stupidly malicious bully never lived. I've done my level best, aside from the one time when I threatened him, to please him, but it is no good. He has it in for me, and may come for me at any time with one of his belaying pins. My salvation depends upon avoiding this, or getting my belaying pin first. Then what? Would the skipper still stand by me if I killed his mate, even in self-defense? I fear not.

May 25th. This is my last entry in this log. I will give it to the steward with instructions to mail it to the president of the company. I am likely to pass in my checks at any time. I know the inviolability of shipmasters before the law, and their willingness to take advantage of it. There is a feeling in me that I never felt before, a premonition, perhaps. I am thinking of death, of all the friends I knew who have died. And I feel that my time is short. But how it will come, I do not know. Possibly a lift over the lee quarter rail as I go to the wheel some dark night. I can look out for this, however. But, at any rate, if the steward mails this, my work is done, and a man has got to die, and can't die twice. I am no longer a detective. I am now a witness, for I saw all that is necessary to convict, if anything happens to this ship. Yesterday, when relieved at eight bells by Dutch Sam, I gave him the wheel and the course, then, knowing that he was too sleepy to notice, I dropped down

the open lazaret hatch, instead of going forward by the alley. I crawled forward on the starboard side, until I got to where I judged the captain's room was situated. Here I listened. He was in there, for I heard him moving about. Then I noticed a crack in the cabin trunk, through which shone a little light, then found another crack, and I made out that there was a small, square door there that opened into the bedroom.

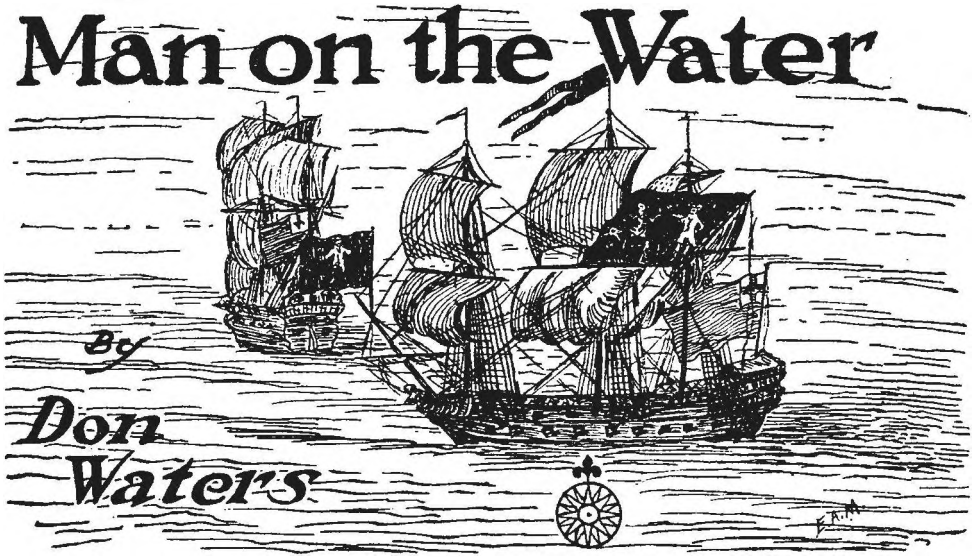
I was taking risks, for I might be missed on deck, but I stayed there until I heard him leave the room, then crawled aft, secured a pinch bar—a crowbar on shore—about as big around as one of the mate's belaying pins, and with a chisellike end. With this I pried open that door. Looking in, I saw what I had expected, the upper end of that square wooden pipe. Beside it, on a chair, rested a long, wooden box, just about big enough to slide easily into the pipe. At one end was fastened a common alarm clock, with a strip of brass soldered to the key of the alarm. And there was another strip of brass sticking up from the box alongside the clock.

I knew the contrivance—an infernal machine. There was a coil of spun yarn on the floor, and the whole thing was plain. When the time came, he would wind the clock, wind and set the alarm, lower it down the pipe to the ship's skin, and, when the alarm went off, the slowly turning key would swing the brass rod around to make contact with the other brass rod, and explode the contents. Had I left at once, I would feel better now. But I stayed too long. I do not know that he missed me on deck, but he rushed into the room and saw me crouching in the small door. His face became devilish. I had seen many criminal faces, but never a face like that of Tom Ransom, wrecker of ships. I got on deck and forward unnoticed, but the life and the soul of me is gone. I am afraid.

So ends Allen's diary. If what he wrote is true, I am forced to believe that Captain Ransom, in his defense of Allen, his antipathy to his mate, and his anxiety about his cargo, was playing a part—that, finding the pinch bar in the alley after Allen's departure, he killed him with the five-foot iron club next day, standing erect in the lazaret, head and shoulders out of the hatch, and screened by the cabin from the view of the mate and the men forward, and that only a fortuitous concurrence of time and place induced him to make a scapegoat of Mr. Pritchard to divert suspicion from himself.

As for his own death, I can only conclude that it was purely accidental, that his *genuine* nervousness for a few days prior to it was due to the failure of his machine to explode in the hold, that at last he had hauled it up for scrutiny and repair, and that it had exploded in his room, blowing him to atoms.

Man on the Water



By Don Waters

PIRATES AND FREEBOOTERS

In this, the sixth of a series of articles outlining the history of man's attempts to conquer the sea, the facts of the romantic story of piracy are set forth, without much loss of romance either, considering that these *are* the facts.

THE history of piracy and sea plundering is very old. The records reach back to the youth of the world.

Just as guerrilla warfare on land was the only method of combating a well-organized invader, so piracy at sea became the practice of harrying the ships and commerce of an enemy. In the early days, every state and, sometimes, even the adjoining cities, waged land warfare against their neighbors. It was only natural that they should extend their plundering operations to include the sea as well.

The Mediterranean waters were not only the birthplace of the ship, but the original home of the pirate. Piracy flourished there long after it had been driven from every other sea. The corn ships that carried the food supply to the Roman Empire from Egypt were constantly harassed by robbers. The Romans found it necessary for each merchant ship to carry a crew of soldiers for her defense.

These Roman soldiers had nothing to do with the management or sailing of the vessel. They merely protected the crew and cargo from interference. This, apparently, was the beginning of the sea soldier, our present-day marine.

A great number of these early pirates were the oppressed and defeated members of tribes conquered by the Roman legions who took to the sea to revenge themselves on their oppressors. From these isolated groups, "skimmers of the sea," as they were known, grew the savage robber powers which became known as the Barbary pirates.

They made their homes on the northern coast of Africa and carried on their lawless enterprises against the peoples on the shores of Europe opposite. Their existence was made possible by the practically uninterrupted warfare and unsettled conditions among the European nations. It can be asserted that piracy, in all times, is the result of lawlessness on land.

Naval warfare has always been carried on in part by privateers, armed with letters of marque and reprisal. These privateers during war times plun-

dered and destroyed the ships of the enemy with a license from their own government and divided the spoils to suit themselves.

After peace was declared, often the legal privateers refused to return to the humdrum routine of commerce, and continued as freebooters. There are many instances where the freebooters were praised as patriots in war times and hung as pirates after peace was made. The old adage that "war makes thieves and peace hangs them" proved all too true in numerous cases.

These were isolated cases. The Barbary pirates were the first example of organized piracy on a large scale. When Spain drove the Moors out of Granada, they revenged themselves by turning pirates and attacking the Spanish shipping at sea and raiding the Spanish ports.

For two hundred and fifty years, these pirates terrorized the East. They saw the beginning of the Turkish Empire, were governed by the Turks for a hundred years from the middle of the sixteenth to the middle of the seventeenth centuries and, finally, Tripoli, Algiers, and Tunis formed piratical republics and lived by plunder.

They were cruel and ferocious slave hunters, making captives of the native tribes on land, and unscrupulous pirates at sea. It was the dread of all Christian sailors to be shipwrecked on those shores, since it meant that they would be captured and sold as slaves by these heartless pirates.

During the latter part of the seventeenth century, many Christian renegades joined the Barbary pirates. These outlaws from Christendom soon taught them to use sailing ships, which increased their range over the rowing galleys they had used before.

After they had begun to use sailing vessels, they extended their scope of operations and cruised far north of their bases. In 1631, they sacked the town of Baltimore in Ireland and carried many of the inhabitants off to Algiers, where they were sold as slaves. So extensive was this slave trade that, at one time, there were twenty thousand captives in Algiers alone, and probably as many more in Tripoli and Tunis. Rich captives were exchanged for ransom. The poor were sold to the Turks.

The Barbary pirates continued only because of the jealousies between the European powers. The French encouraged them to raid the Spanish, and, in turn, Great Britain and Holland gave them aid and moral assistance in their wars against France.

In order that their own vessels might escape these robbers, the powers of Europe paid tribute either in the form of money or presents. Finally, however, an awakened public conscience, tired of paying ransoms to the pirates, decided upon their destruction. The British and Dutch coöperated in punitive expeditions during the reign of Charles II. The French fleet, in 1683, bombarded Algiers, and the pirates retaliated by shooting the French consul back at the fleet from a cannon.

However, the nations of Europe were too busy fighting one another to spend the time and money necessary to exterminate the pirates at this time. So a peace was patched up, and the Christian nations again paid tribute.

Great Britain was gradually acquiring land and subjects in the Mediterranean. The slave trade, so extensively carried on by the pirates, became more and more repugnant to Europe, and the end of the Barbary pirates was approaching. In 1804, Stephen Decatur, a young American lieutenant, led the daring expedition that burned the United States frigate *Philadelphia*, which had been captured by the pirates, under the guns of the pirate forts at Tripoli.

After the War of 1812, Decatur commanded the American fleet that severely punished the pirate lairs at Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli. These attacks crip-

pled, but did not suppress, piracy. Although the British, Dutch, and French carried on operations against them for several years, it was not until 1830 that the last great stronghold at Algiers was conquered by the French. This effectually broke up organized piracy in the Mediterranean, yet isolated crews of pirates occasionally attacked merchant vessels for years afterward.

Although England used stern methods in repressing the Barbary pirates, the Cinque Ports, or favored five ports in the southern part of England, were little better than pirates themselves. When the Romans evacuated England, the country was left unprotected, and, immediately, the vikings from the North and the French corsairs from across the channel began to prey upon the helpless coast towns.

During the reign of Henry III., the channel swarmed with pirates of all nationalities, and Britain was without any adequate means of defense. This led to the establishment of the Cinque Ports, which conferred many rights and favors upon these localities, in return for which they were to furnish ships and men to capture pirates and protect shipping.

Among these rights was that of receiving toll from passing craft, the right of flotsam and jetsam, recovering anything adrift in the sea or beached by the waves, and the right to regulate the Yarmouth fisheries. These privileges, broad as they were, were subjected to several interpretations, and it was not long before the Cinque Ports had become as ruthless robbers as the pirates whom they were supposed to bring to justice.

In those days, there was not much regard for law and order at any rate. It was a pretty safe bet that the French, Genoese, Venetian, and Spanish ships passing through the channel were craft of the enemy. Or, if they did not happen to be at that particular time, the seamen from the Cinque Ports, cruising the channel, ostensibly to protect rights of British commerce, knew they either had been or would be again, and took them as prizes.

Even British vessels from other towns were captured, as national feeling was not very strong. At sea in those days, practically every ship met with could, by a very slight stretch of the imagination, be called an enemy, a smuggler, or, failing in this, could be accused of trading with the enemy.

Since the Cinque Ports had their own courts and appointed their own judges, their system of piracy worked out very favorably to themselves. They carried on their robberies under cover of the law for several hundred years, and, to this day, they still retain a few of their ancient rights. While this monopoly lasted, the Cinque Ports were prosperous.

They had all the essentials necessary for successful piracy—a ragged coast affording many good hiding places, a tolerant community where their booty could be disposed of and no questions asked, and connivance of the authorities. Under these conditions, piracy has been most successful at every time and in many countries of the world.

The north coast of Ireland, the islands of Orkney and Shetland off Scotland, the fiords and inclosed bays of Norway and Sweden, in northern waters, have all been the homes and haunts of these lawless sea rovers. The Greek Islands, Madagascar, the Malay peninsula, and the coast of China have been dangerous areas for peaceful commerce in eastern waters.

But probably nowhere have conditions been so ideal and the prizes so rich as those which fell to the freebooters in the West Indies.

Spain, after her discovery of the New World, devoted her energies to subduing the native populations and stripping the countries of their wealth. When the

flag of Spain had been planted in a territory, the native population was soon subdued. Although the methods of the Spanish conquerors differed, they were all thorough in their bloody work. In some of the Bahama Islands, they found the native Caribs a mild, peace-loving people with great veneration for their ancestors.

The Spanish took advantage of this superstition and the reverence the natives had for their dead by promising to transport them to the dwelling place of their fathers, of which they painted a glowing picture. The easily deceived natives gathered in great numbers and boarded the waiting galleys. The Spaniards took them away from their homes to the mines of Central and South America, where they perished miserably as slaves.

The natives of Santo Domingo were of a more warlike disposition, and were not to be deceived so easily. Since the Spaniards could not make slaves of them, they were systematically hunted down and butchered. As the native population diminished, the hogs and cattle ran wild on the island and multiplied rapidly. The few remaining natives smoke-cured, or made buccan, of this meat. The method was to cut the flesh in long strips and cure it on frames over a slow fire. This was a rather gory process, and these roving hunters were called "buccaneers."

Spain, at this time, was a haughty nation, bloated with pride, rich with her ill-got spoils and increasing her riches rapidly from the new-found wealth of the West Indies and America. She claimed the New World by right of discovery—"From pole to pole for all times." Any who ventured into the territory were classed and treated as pirates.

But there were rivals in this rich continent. English gentlemen of fortune, French corsairs, and Dutch rovers, all naturally were drawn to the West Indies by the lure of gold and their hatred of Spain. These adventurers soon learned the trick of making buccan, and also gained the name of buccaneers.

Spain, at the height of her power, refused to recognize the rights of any other nation, and prohibited her subjects in the New World from trading with any foreign vessel. She could not supply the colonies with their necessities, being too busy stripping the new country of gold. Smuggling, therefore, became a profitable business.

It was but a short step for a reckless crew of smugglers to turn pirate and rob a defenseless merchantman. Since the smugglers were classed as pirates, by the Spanish authorities at any rate, the buccaneers traded with the enemy when he was strong and plundered him when he was weak.

The other European governments secretly countenanced and, at times, openly assisted the buccaneers. Their policy at that time seemed to be that whatever was an injury to Spain was an aid to themselves. So the buccaneers prospered and increased rapidly in numbers. Here was a grand field for their activities, a good market for their plundered stores and hundreds of islands that contained countless hiding places from the warships of Spain.

At first, the buccaneers ranged through the entire West Indies, but they soon established regular rendezvous. Tortuga, to the northward of Haiti, was fortified and became one of the centers from which the buccaneers sallied forth on their piratical ventures. Tortuga was named from the *tortuga de mar,* or sea turtle, as it was shaped very much like one of these reptiles, which were numerous in the Caribbean at this time, and furnished succulent addition to the tough buccan, the principal article of diet for the buccaneers.

Tortuga was well suited to their needs and easily defended. It was upon the track of Spain's treasure ships bound

from Cartagena, Vera Cruz, and Porto Bello, commanding the Windward and Mona passages. In the same year as the establishment of the settlement at Tortuga, 1630, the English buccaneers built a fort on Old Providence as a center for their operations. This stood for eleven years, when the Spaniards attacked and destroyed it.

In 1649, the Spaniards swooped down on Tortuga in a surprise attack while the greater part of the inhabitants were off on plundering expeditions. They captured the island from the garrison, but they knew they could not hold it when the main body of the buccaneers returned. So, destroying what they could and murdering the defenders, they sailed away.

This act of wanton cruelty so stirred the freebooters that they formed themselves into an organization and took the oath of the Brethren of the Main. This band of desperate men, skillful seamen, daring and often as cruel as the Spaniards they fought, began systematically to loot and plunder, burn and sack cities and destroy Spanish shipping. Really, they were not pirates at this time. Rather, they were mercenaries, ready to offer their services to any country that wanted them to fight against Spain.

They carried on all their larger enterprises in conjunction with regular war vessels. Generally, they were led by military and naval officers in these engagements. The fleets of the buccaneers figured in most of the naval operations of France and England in the West Indies, and the buccaneers themselves formed part of the fighting force.

In Jamaica, after the English had taken it from the Spanish, the royal council of 1666 published many good reasons for granting commissions to the buccaneers. One of the old state papers of Jamaica of this date declares:

> They furnished the island with necessary commodities at easy rates, and supplied coins, bullion, cocoa, logwood, indigo, and cochineal, helped poor planters by buying their produce and providing them with slaves, furnished work for artisans in the repair and building of their vessels, which constituted a navy for the colonies and often were able to give valuable information regarding the Spanish plans from captured prisoners and intercepted messages.

Tortuga had a varied and exciting career during the seventeenth century. In 1649, the French drove out the English. The Spanish recovered it again in 1664. Six years later the French drove the Spanish out. The English buccaneers made their headquarters in Jamaica, which they had assisted the British warships to capture from the Spanish in 1665.

Thus began the period when the buccaneers planned and executed the deeds that made them notorious. The French under L'Ollonois captured and sacked the Spanish towns, Maracaibo and Gibraltar, in the Gulf of Venezuela. L'Ollonois was as cruel and inhuman a monster as ever sailed the sea. At one time, he himself executed ninety seamen on a Spanish vessel that he had captured. But L'Ollonois was small fry compared to Sir Henry Morgan.

Morgan was granted a commission by the governor of Jamaica, Thomas Modyford, to carry on an attack on Panama. The city of Panama was the center where bullion was gathered for shipment from the South American mines to Porto Bello, the transshipment port for Spain.

At the death of Mansfield, Morgan was chosen by the buccaneers to command them. After several successes against the Spaniards, among which was the capture of Porto Bello and the collecting of a huge ransom, Morgan captured Maracaibo and Gibraltar. Then he decided upon this grand stroke of taking Panama. His only hope of reward was the booty that he might capture, so he decided on the plunder of Panama itself.

Gathering about two thousand of the buccaneers, after many perils and obstacles, including the capture of Santa Catalina and the castle of Chagres, he defeated an overwhelming force of Spaniards and took the city of Panama on the eighteenth of January, 1671. This was a brilliant exploit, considering the fact that Panama was well defended by trained soldiers. Morgan's men were forced to march inland, overcome fortifications, live off the country which had been denuded of food by the Spaniards, and, finally, take the city itself when they were weak from hunger and constant fighting.

Morgan, however, spoiled this wonderful exploit by the terrible cruelties and tortures to which he subjected the inhabitants of Panama in his efforts to obtain ransom and information as to where their wealth was secreted. And he further besmirched his name by deserting his men and returning to Jamaica with all the booty he could collect for himself. These cruelties were too much for the English, and both Morgan and Modyford were arrested and sent home to England to stand trial for piracy.

In spite of the fact that Morgan went to England under a cloud, he soon gained the king's favor. He was knighted and appointed lieutenant governor of Jamaica.

For fourteen years afterward, Morgan lived a hectic existence in Jamaica, mixed up in political intrigues, encouraging privateers at one time, sending out forces to hunt them down at another, and engaging in brawls and drunken orgies, until his death in August, 1688.

His was a remarkable career, starting out as he did. He was kidnaped as a boy from Plymouth, and began life as a slave in Barbados. From this humble start, he worked his way up to the command of a ship in Edward Mansfield's expedition that seized the island of Providence from the Spaniards who had previously held it.

At Mansfield's death, he was elected supreme head of the buccaneers in the Caribbean and was probably the only man who could control those wild, reckless ruffians. In all the annals of piracy, there is no more picturesque figure than this slave boy who disrupted Spain's power in the New World, went his own wild way, was finally knighted, and, at his death, left the name of Sir Henry Morgan to be carried down the ages as the greatest of pirates.

Another pirate known as Edward Teach or Thatch, born in Bristol, plundered the Spanish Main during Morgan's time, but he was not so fortunate, not having the personality or the brains that marked the career of Morgan. He engaged in privateering under the English flag during the War of the Spanish Succession and continued his actions after peace was declared in 1713.

In the *Queen Anne's Revenge,* a captured French merchantman, he robbed and plundered the Spanish Main, the West Indies, and along the coast of the Southern States. Being on good terms with the governor of North Carolina, who was a silent partner in his ventures, he made his winter quarters at an inlet on the coast of North Carolina.

Teach was a ferocious-looking ruffian. His long, black beard, which he tied up at the ends with ribbon and curled back over his ears, gave him the name of "Blackbeard." To terrify his victims, Blackbeard used to light the ends of his bushy whiskers, smear his face with gore, and utter bloodcurdling yells when he boarded a vessel. He became so notorious that the governor of Virginia finally decided to rid the sea of this monster.

In 1718, he commissioned Lieutenant Maynard to capture Blackbeard and bring him to trial. Maynard took two small sloops, loaded with picked men, and descended on Blackbeard, whose

ship was aground inside the inlet off North Carolina. The lieutenant boldly attacked the pirate and his superior force. After a fierce battle, Maynard himself with a blow of his saber almost severed Blackbeard's head from his body and finished him with a pistol shot. He then sailed back to report his success, with Blackbeard's head decorating the bowsprit of his sloop.

A curious effect of this fight was that several of the men under Maynard's command afterward went pirating themselves.

In fact, the official pirate who plundered with a license and the freebooter who robbed without one, were often one and the same person, as the history of Captain William Kidd shows. In 1691, Captain Kidd was awarded one hundred and fifty pounds for his services against the French, and he was commissioned, later, to chase hostile ships away from the coast of America and to give battle to the French in the West Indies. For this purpose, the thirty-gun vessel, *Adventure Galley,* was fitted out, and he sailed from New York in 1697 with orders from the colonial governor to attack the French wherever found and to hunt down all pirates and bring them to trial.

He sailed for Madagascar and met with the pirates. Evidently these gentlemen of fortune were to his liking for, instead of using his authority against them, the next we hear of Kidd, he was plundering the coast of Malabar in company with the pirates he was sent out to destroy. For several years, Kidd cruised either alone or in company with other pirates, looting and plundering any ship he met.

Knowing that the governor of New York was his friend, in a couple of years he returned with enormous quantities of rich booty. However, the name of Captain Kidd had become too well known as that of an archpirate, and his friend, the governor, could not shield him from the righteous anger that he had brought upon himself. He was sent to England, tried, and hanged as a pirate on May 23, 1701.

Kidd left a wife and a child in New York and secreted considerable treasure on Gardiner's Island, off Long Island. Some of this was found afterward, and, to this day, Kidd's buried treasure still lures many seekers.

In fact, every year or so, expeditions are formed to hunt for pirate treasure and the names of Kidd and Morgan, Blackbeard and Rounsval, are linked with tales of fabulously rich buried treasure. To one who studies the lives of the pirates, these tales may be taken with a grain of salt. For, although the pirate of days gone by often captured fortunes in gold and silver, it is doubtful that he buried much of it.

There were strong drink and riotous living in Tortuga and Martinique. There was a friendly welcome in Jamaica and Nassau, and the gold stolen from a prize was soon spent in a carousal. It is only natural that the hard-drinking ruffians and buccaneers would rather spend their money freely while they lived and plied their uncertain trade than to bury it in a hole in the ground for some one else to find later.

It may be taken as a surety that, when a pirate did bury his treasure, it was only because he was unable to spend it immediately. Whatever other qualities the pirate had, frugality was not one of them.

The old freebooter and buccaneer, with his skull and crossbones at the masthead, and his bloodstained boarding cutlass, his custom of forcing his victims to destroy themselves by walking the plank, blindfolded, thereby escaping the stigma of murderer—these are figures of the past. Yet piracy, in spite of all the laws against it and all the weight of modern law and order on land, still raises its ugly head at times.

The China seas were once the scene

of many a pirate attack upon the richly ladened opium and tea clippers, but, with the coming of steam, the sailing junks and Chinese pirates stood very little chance. The maritime world was therefore astonished when, in December, 1921, the steamer *Kwang Lee* was captured and looted by pirates.

The vessel left Shanghai with Chinese passengers and freight on board on December 13. On December 15, between twenty and thirty of the Chinese passengers brought out hidden weapons, overpowered the crew, shot one of the peaceful Chinese passengers for refusing to hand over his money, and looted the ship thoroughly.

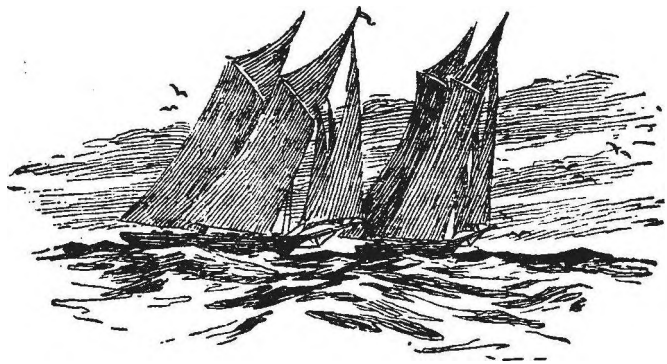
For thirty-two hours, these modern pirates forced the captain and mates to maneuver so as to dodge all other steamers. Finally, after opening the ship's strong box and minutely searching all the passengers' baggage, they made the captain overtake a fishing junk and, in it, escaped with almost two hundred thousand dollars' worth of loot. Before they left, they dismantled the engines and gave the captain orders not to move from the anchorage before next morning.

However, the engine-room crew repaired the damage, and the ship steamed to Hongkong with this almost unbelievable tale of modern piracy.

These pirates, however, are more like sneak thieves than the old buccaneers who cruised the Spanish Main of bygone days. While they were cruel and avaricious, yet they had some admirable qualities. They were excellent seamen, and their courage, at times, was superb.

And, all in all, perhaps the best way to dispose of the Brethren of the Main is suggested by one of their own songs:

Oh, we wrapped them all in the mainsail tight
With twice ten fathoms of hawser's bight,
And heaved them over and out of sight,
With a yo, heave ho! and a fare ye well!
Ten fathoms along the road to hell
In a sullen sea and a sudden swell,
With a yo, heave ho! and a bottle of rum!



Cap'n Alf

By James R. Hanna

The marine superintendent had called Captain Morrison "our best master." But from the very appearance of the ship, it was a little difficult to believe, and when you came into contact with him, it was almost impossible. Things were done because he was so helpless other people had to do them. But that wasn't all there was to Cap'n Alf.

OLD MAN KEHOE, marine superintendent, turned in his swivel chair, his deep-set, gray eyes surveying the young, fair-haired man standing, hat in hand, before his desk.

"Good morning, Mr. Conley."

Old man Kehoe was a sailor, and there is a world of difference between "Mister" and just plain "Mr." The orthodox methods of describing sailors —the sunburn, use of nautical terms, and so on—is often misleading, but his mode of address never is. The A. B.'s "Mister Mate" and the captain's "Mister Jones" are basically the same, and into it he puts the heritage of five thousand years of command of obedience in the oldest trade in the world.

"Good morning, Mr. Kehoe."

"Only been home a few days, haven't you?"

"That's right, sir."

"The *Kaltaqua* is fitting out at Baltimore for the German trade, Mr. Conley. Want to go second mate in her?" Old man Kehoe was a man of few words.

Conley thought of the lights, music, restaurants and theaters, of his young wife, of his last voyage's pay clamoring in his trousers' pockets, and his soul rebelled. But he was not of the stuff that defies the shipping commissioner in all his majesty.

"Yes, sir," he replied.

"All right." Old man Kehoe relented slightly. "You won't have to go down for a couple of days. Know Captain Morrison?"

"I've met him."

"Ah! Good man! Very good man! In fact, I think he is our best master. Glad you know him. Saves an introductory letter. That'll be all. I'll call you up."

Later, Conley leaned against the soda fountain and considered. He remembered Morrison: Genoa—a small, grimy, second-story office in the Via Carlo Felice—his captain leaning against the desk, signing a paper, and the agitation of the door knob as some one tried to open the door.

"Ah! Capitan Morrizone!" grinned the agent. "Always he try to open my door wrong ways."

A tall, fat man stepped into the room.

As he walked, each leg appeared longer than its mate, giving him a ludicrous roll, accentuated by the flapping of his open coat and vest. Three small urchins followed him, all talking at once, one of them hanging to his coat. A pair of weak, blue eyes gazed helplessly over a purple-veined nose at the agent.

"Good morning, capitan."

"H'lo. Say, I wish you'd chase them kids away. Here they been pesterin' me, an' devilin' me, an' jabberin' at me for a half hour." He turned to the persistent one at his coat tail.

"Hey! Leggo that! Why don't you go on an' leave me alone, or else talk English so I can understand you, hey?"

"Capitan," broke in the agent, "he say you leave da—wat you call heem?—beeg coat in shop wat hees fadder keep, no?"

"Uh? Mebbe so. Say, son, get it for me, huh?"

What was it old man Kehoe had said? "Best man we have!" Cap'n Alf!

The giggles of two young girls beside him brought him back to New York, and he realized with embarrassment that his right foot was searching for an appendage not furnished with soda fountains. He hurriedly paid his check and left.

The Baltimore sky line frowned at him through a drizzling rain as he discharged his taxi at the yard gates three days later. The gateman examined his pass with an indifferent eye and jerked his thumb over his shoulder.

"End o' pier two," he grunted, and vanished.

Conley continued his pilgrimage through the rain, and, sure enough, at the end of the pier was a ship. He knew she was a ship, for she possessed two masts and a funnel, but, even as a new ship, she had certainly been far from either beautiful or good. Now, after a year in the bone yard, she was a wreck.

He stood on the pier and looked her over, tallying the glaring defects: foremast sprung, shrouds sagging, funnel rust-eaten, sides rusty and bridge warped. In fact, if there was anything in fair condition about her, it failed to meet the eye. Beauty, in her case, was represented by twenty-eight inches of vacuum, and she had the swift lines and graceful contour of an old orange crate, broken at one end.

Salvaging his grip from the puddle it was resting in, he disgustedly mounted the oil-coated jacob's ladder and was about to step down on deck, when a voice sang out:

"Hey! Watch yer step!"

Conley watched. No, she had never been a smart ship, but she might well have been called slick. Fuel oil! From the gantline block at the masthead to the lapping water line, stem to stern, she was full of it.

A figure in oilskins, standing in the lee of the deck house, again spoke up.

"You come down for second mate?"

"That's me," answered Conley.

"Well, my name's Wilson, an' I'm third. Glad to know ya. Wait a second an' I'll getcha a board to walk on." He dodged around the corner of the house.

Standing precariously balanced on the bulwark, Conley surveyed the miserable scene. He heartily wished that he had not accepted the berth, but the fact remained that he had, and it was too late to back out now. Moreover, he would have to crawl back down that ladder.

Wilson reappeared with his board, and, by its aid, Conley mounted to the saloon deck, with scarcely any oil above his shoe tops.

"Pretty tough lookin', eh?" said Wilson. "Say, are you goin' to be around for a while, huh?"

"Sure."

"Then I'm goin' to slip out on Cross Street an' get a couple o' shots o' home-brew. Ain't nothin' doin'. Your room is for'ard end o' the port passageway."

Fuel oil dripping from his sea boots, he climbed over the side, but, evidently struck by an afterthought, he called up:

"Keep out o' the skipper's way, else he'll have ya always doin'——"

The rest was lost in the gurgling of the scuppers, and he was gone up the dock.

As Conley turned the corner of the deck house, he was interrupted by the lumbering form of Cap'n Alf, minus coat and collar, in pursuit of a small gray kitten.

"Here, kitty, kitty," he wailed.

The kitten, seeing Conley, stopped, and Cap'n Alf made a dive for it, but he missed and fell sprawling.

"Here!" he said, holding up his hand. "Help me up!"

Conley did so. "Captain Morrison?"

"I'm him," he replied. "You the second mate?"

"Yes, sir. My name is Conley, out of the *El Dorado*. Met you once in Genoa, I believe."

"Pleased to meet you again," said Cap'n Alf. "Come inside. Your room —lemme see—I don't just remember, but it's in here some place."

Paying Conley no further attention, he rolled across the saloon and entered his cabin. His head immediately popped out of his door, however.

"Mr. Conway. Ketch that cat an' bring it to me."

Conley stared at him.

"The cat," he spoke, encouragingly. "You know, the li'l'—li'l'—black one." Conley nodded, and his door banged shut.

The passage door burst open, and a small old man, wearing a slouch hat back on his ears, and a blue cotton shirt outside his trousers, galloped through the saloon and out the opposite door. Following him came a sallow skeleton, with a smear of oil on his face and a spanner in his hand. The latter stopped and inquired, "Where's the first assistant?"

"Don't know him," stated Conley shortly. "Why?"

"He's got the last of my liquor with him," he intoned mournfully.

"That will be a calamity," sympathized Conley, "if you don't find him."

"It is, whether I find him or not, 'cause he's already gone an' drunk it. But when I *do* find him, it's goin' to be a calamity for *him!*" With an angry wave of his spanner, the chief stamped out.

"Good Jupiter!" thought Conley. "Every one on here is either crazy or drunk." And, as he recalled the figure the captain had cut out on deck, he was inclined to believe the latter.

Looking up, he beheld a sign at the end of the passageway—"Second Officer." Opening the door, wary from recent experiences, he tested the carpet for fuel oil. To his surprise, there was none, and he cautiously stepped in and surveyed the room. Outside of a few footprints on the desk top, and a rude, but masterly, finger-tip sketch of the engine-room bilges on the bulkhead, the room was clean, and he sank wearily into a chair.

It was long after midnight when Wilson returned to blunder in at Conley's door.

"Hello!" exclaimed Conley, sleepily. "Who is it?"

"Oh! Zis you, eh? They mush have move' my damn room again. Never can treep kack of that—oop!"

Mr. Wilson had plainly received his home-brew.

"Shay," he informed Conley, confidentially, "oncet I read in a book about a rish feller, what had another feller—painter, the book had it, but I gesh y' could take that for engineer, too—do him in oils." He teetered backward

on his heels until the absolute danger angle was reached, recovering by a sharp forward thrust of the shoulders.

"Never used to know what that meant."

Conley had noticed the position of his room, so, pushing past him, he opened the door.

"Here you are, old chap," said he.

"Tha's so. Thank ya. But shay! What d'ya suppose that rish feller——"

Conley closed the door.

The *Kaltaqua* sailed the next morning for Tampa. From Baltimore to Tampa is fourteen hundred miles, and, halting and protesting, but with slowly increasing efficiency, she kicked the miles behind, her decks meanwhile becoming more shipshape. Men worked for Cap'n Alf. Not that he knew his job, or was a slave driver or a leader of men, but because he was so totally helpless.

By the time she reached Tampa, she actually moved with some semblance of speed, and her decks and rigging had lost much of their woebegone appearance.

Sailing date arrived, and in the hatches the last of the cotton was being stamped in by the grunting gangs of negroes, when Cap'n Alf appeared on deck.

"Mr. Conley! Get into your shore clothes and come up to the agent's with me. I want to get some—let's see—what charts do we need?"

"Several of the North Sea and the Channel, sir."

"Certainly! Certainly! North Sea Channel. Is that all?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, let's go!"

"But, cap'n," protested Conley, "I've got to change, and you'll be wanting your shoes, too, won't you?"

He glanced down at his stockinged feet.

"Yes. Uh—see if you can find 'em for me, will you?"

Conley gave them to him from under a chair, and, an hour later the taxi stopped before the agent's office. The agent met him with a smile.

"Ah! Here you are, captain. All clear." He held a sheaf of papers in his hand, which he delivered to Cap'n Alf.

"Good!" said Cap'n Alf. "Everything all ready, huh?"

"Yes, sir!" replied the agent.

"Everything all fixed up now, eh?"

"Yes, sir, assuredly," returned the agent, with a trace of irritation.

"Then I can sail now, can I?"

The agent was French, and in moments of stress, he showed it.

"Captain, you can now sail aroun' the whole damn world, if you like!"

The irritation was entirely wasted on Cap'n Alf, however. He was used to it.

"Good!" he repeated, seating himself heavily in the nearest chair, and beginning to read.

From previous knowledge of his reading abilities, Conley judged him good for a couple of hours, and he selected a marine magazine and walked to the window. When he had finished it, he looked at Cap'n Alf. He was still elbows deep in papers, and Conley crossed the room and stood behind him. In his hands he held a circular letter from the office, regarding the merits of various paints. It was in triplicate form, for distribution on the ship, and he was laboriously finishing the duplicate:

He looked up. "Mr. Carley, you can stop around an' git them charts now, if you want to." He heaved a little sigh, turned the sheet and commenced on the triplicate.

Conley purchased the charts, tucked the bill in his pocket and returned to find Cap'n Alf just emerging.

"Been waitin' for you. Jump in. Let's get back to the ship."

The cab lurched along over the rough

mud on the way to the docks, and Conley fished the chart bill from his pocket.

"Here is the account for those charts, cap'n."

"Put it in here," muttered Cap'n Alf, fumbling at the straps on his brief case.

The taxi driver, showing iron nerve but poor judgment, beat a rival cab to the crossing. His back wheels struck an extra large rut with a heavy jar, and Cap'n Alf, along with the contents of his brief case, sought first the roof and then the deck.

"Why don't you put more ballast in this thing?" he inquired, without heat, of the driver. "Mr. Conlon, pick them things up for me, will you?"

Conley obediently collected the varied assortment of letters, pencils, collars, handkerchiefs, tooth paste, pocketknife and other miscellaneous gear, and replaced it in the case.

Cap'n Alf interrupted him.

"My craw is gone."

Conley gravely inspected Cap'n Alf's third vest button. Anything was to be expected of him.

"My craw," he repeated. "See if you can find it for me. Little brass thing, what you wear."

Scarcely knowing what he was looking for, Conley ran his fingers across the cab floor. In a corner by the door, his fingers encountered it, and he held it up to the light for inspection. It was a croix de guerre, its red-green ribbon faded and somewhat dirty.

"That's it!" announced Cap'n Alf. "Ever see one of 'em? That's a craw digger. Used to fight with 'em in the old days. That's why they calls 'em that. Course," he added complacently, "they was lots bigger then."

"Where'd you get it, cap'n?" inquired Conley, returning the cross to the brief case.

"Frogs give it to me durin' the war for somethin' or other. Don't remember just what."

"The old four-flusher!" mused Conley, thinking of the many shops in Europe where such articles, scavenged from the battlefields, are sold to souvenir-mad foreigners for so much cash.

Two days out, with Jupiter Lighthouse under the port bow, Cap'n Alf appeared on the bridge. Conley was engaged in sorting out the charts, those full of fuel oil in one pile and those only smeared in another.

"Ever been in this here place we're goin' to, Mr. Conover?"

"Once or twice, sir," replied Conley.

"Well, I never. But I been to this Met—Messr——"

"Mediterranean?"

"That's it. I been there, but this place, now, it's to the north'ard of that, eh?"

Conley nodded. "Considerable."

"What course do you gen'ally take after you leave the Azores?"

"Well, cap'n, this time of the year, ships very seldom go that way. They usually take the northern route, past the Banks."

"Come to think on it, I guess we'd better go that way ourselves. What's that light house over there?"

He squinted shoreward and answered himself. "Jupiter. When that's abeam, you can let her go!"

He pulled his handkerchief from his pocket and scrubbed furiously at a paint fleck on the window glass. Failing to remove it, he shambled down the chartroom steps.

"Don't forget what I told you, Mr. Conway."

"He hasn't told me anything yet," thought Conley, "but I suppose it's just as well."

Now, coming south, Cap'n Alf had shown a surprising knowledge of the American coast, but, after the first week out from the Florida Straits, all regarded him as hopeless. He had evidently learned what rudiments of navi-

gation he knew in the summer, and in low latitudes, for the fact that the sun's position is south in the winter was a matter of indifference to him. Similarly, in the only other calculation he could perform, the chronometer sight for longitude, he used an unvarying formula no matter what the factors were.

All this resulted in impossible positions, but that worried him not at all. His method of navigation was simple. He would ask what the others had and, with a heavy frown, mark it below his own figures. At noon, he would announce that he was "right on the line," and show the figures for proof. Thereupon, crumpling his morning's work and placing it in his pocket, he would descend to lunch.

"Give her what she made."

The Channel smiled on the *Kaltaqua* as she plowed slowly past the Lizard. Cap'n Alf, in his shirt sleeves, with a battered straw hat over his eyes, leaned over the rail.

"So that's England, eh? Sure is fine weather they have around here."

"Sometimes it's not so good," replied Conley. "The North Sea in November has a big reputation to sustain."

Cap'n Alf eyed him suspiciously. He eyed every one suspiciously who used other than monosyllabic expressions.

"Who said anything about stainin'?"

"I mean," Conley explained, patiently, "wait until we tie up to the dock before you boast about the weather. It's liable to blow up a gale inside of an hour around here."

And so, indeed, it proved, for, off the Noord Hinder the following day, the golden evening sky turned to a brassy one, and the light southeast breeze hauled to the southwest. The little, brown-sailed fishing luggers that sail these waters well know the meaning of those signs, and, from grim experience, they do not need to lose their sticks before taking the hint. All of them had every rag and the cook's dress set and drawing, traveling homeward. By nightfall, it was blowing a strong gale.

"Keep her offshore," was Cap'n Alf's general instruction as he got out the poker chips after supper.

"One bell, sir."

A figure in oilskins stood in Conley's door. The mournful sound of the whistle informed him that the weather was thick.

"All right, Tony," said he, and swung his feet over the edge of the bunk.

He clambered back with a grunt of surprise, for a few inches of ice-cold water sloshed backward and forward across the deck.

"Darned submarine," he grumbled sleepily, as he fished his sea boots from the overturned chair and thrust his feet into them, after draining their contents onto the deck.

The wind struck him as if it were solid and nearly tore his grasp from the handrail of the bridge ladder, as he mounted it, step by step, eyes unseeing, because of the rapid transition from the light. At the top, he dodged behind the rail, gasping for breath, until his eyes became accustomed to the darkness. Cap'n Alf stood beside hima.

"She won't make much speed in this!" he shouted.

"No," replied Cap'n Alf. "Got a cigarette on you?"

Conley proffered his pack, which Cap'n Alf calmly placed in his pocket as he climbed down the ladder.

"That you, Mr. Conley?" a voice called.

"What's left of me," he replied, crossing to the opposite rail. "He's got my cigarettes again!"

"Haw! haw!" laughed Wilson. "I'm glad he's gettin' into somebody else. He's about a carton to windward of me. Seems like he smokes his heaviest from eight to twelve."

"Where is she?"

"Inshore a bit, I guess, 'cause they was a break in the snow about eleven thirty, an' I see a light. Figger it was Scheveningen, so I hauled her off half a point."

Conley calculated mentally.

"At that rate, then, we should make the Texel about three o'clock, eh?"

"Yes."

"Old Man been up here all night?"

"Naw. Come up a little before twelve. Game busted up, prob'ly. Well, she's all yours. I'm gonna turn in."

He slid down the ladder and dived into the companionway, and Conley turned and faced the weather, collar about his ears. Pulling the whistle cord mechanically, his thoughts wandered.

Flash!

One hand on the engine telegraph and one on the whistle cord, he strained his eyes through the murk. Sure enough, again came the flash. Still he waited, timing the interval. Flash!

"Ijmuiden," he spoke to himself, aloud. "Sure is inshore. Starboard a point," he ordered the helmsman.

He watched him a moment as he slowly put the wheel over, and then he stepped down into the chart room. On the settee sat Cap'n Alf.

"See anything?" he inquired.

"Yes, sir. Ijmuiden Light a point forward of the beam. Looked to be about ten miles off."

"Good! Now git a soundin', Mr. Conners, an' we'll know exactly how far off we are. Exactly. Never say 'about so and so.' That's the way with all you young fellers. Never think!"

Conley answered him in a voice slightly tinged with contempt.

"We are now on the 'broad fourteens' cap'n, and at three or a hundred an' three miles, you'll get fourteen fathoms."

"Let's see it."

Conley placed his finger on the approximate position of the ship.

"That says twelve," triumphantly announced Cap'n Alf.

"You're looking at the variation of the compass, cap'n," wearily explained Conley.

"Uh—guess you're right. Anyway, I'm goin' below. Tell the mate to call me at seven o'clock."

Conley fought his way back to the bridge. The wind, which had eased off a bit, was now blowing harder than ever, and the swirls of sleet and snow entirely obscured everything, even the masthead light being invisible most of the time.

"Might be worse," Conley consoled himself, "if this wind stays where it is, but if she hauls around, that'll make the German coast a lee shore."

The rasp of a fog siren interrupted his musings. He looked at his watch.

"Quarter to three," he muttered. "The old lightship is right on the job. She'll be abeam in a few minutes."

He walked to the compass and changed the course for the next one. That seemed to be the signal to cease firing, for the wind commenced to lull, and the lines of snow slowly changed from the horizontal to the vertical, as the ragged edge of the cloud passed the ship. The moon, which was now revealed astern, shone on the retreating cloud with a pale glimmer and formed on it a perfect rainbow—perfect, that is, except for color, it being all a dim white, a ghost of a rainbow.

"Pretty, isn't it?" he spoke, half to himself, half to the man at the wheel.

"Many years haf I sailed on diss sea," the helmsman answered, "und always ven we see dat t'ing, dere iss heavy wedder, und many boats bin lost. Ja! Und de vimmens in der liddle trawler hafens, dey see it und dey——"

"You'll be crying in a minute, Pete," broke in Conley. "That's only the reflection of the light from the moon. What's that got to do with heavy weather?"

"You vait und see. But den, diss iss big ship." He relapsed into silence.

The low and sandy Dutch mainland ends at the Texel, and the chain of the Friesian Islands, even lower and sandier, begins. They stretch in the form of a half moon around the southern shore of the North Sea, from the Zuider Zee to Helgoland, and, in fine weather, are quite peaceful. In bad weather they are not, for then the sand bars and reefs show their teeth, and they bite hard and often, to the sorrow of the underwriters.

All went well until one of the larger islands was rounded, when the *Kaltaqua's* old enemy, the wind, fell on her tooth and nail, out of the northwest. The mate cursed as he came on the bridge at eight bells.

"Hard luck! What time will we be to the pilot station, d'ye reckon?"

"About eight thirty," replied Conley, "but I don't think it will do us much good. Probably, we'll stand off and on for the next few days."

"Guess so. Either that or run for Helgoland."

Later, at breakfast, Cap'n Alf was in a happy mood.

"When'll she git there, Mr.—Collen?"

"About nine o'clock, sir."

"Well, you've been here before. Come up on the bridge when you finish, will you?"

Cap'n Alf balanced his coffee neatly on the uproll, but failed on the down, spilling it on his shirt front. He wiped it off with Conley's napkin.

"Certainly, sir."

When the meal—if one could so dignify coffee and toast—was over, Conley followed Cap'n Alf on the bridge. The wind and sea were worse, if anything, than when he had gone below, but the hail and snow were not as steady, coming now rather as squalls, with patches of fair visibility in between. Close aboard, to starboard, a red-painted lightship frantically ducked and dived into the smothering seas.

"Here's the entrance, cap'n," said the mate, as he put the telegraph on "slow."

"Good! Where's the pilot?"

"Ain't none," said the mate shortly.

"Why? Where they at?"

The third mate spoke. "See 'at flag on the port yardarm of the lightship, cap'n? 'At means they ain't no pilots on station."

"Funny," grumbled Cap'n Alf. "Pilot station an' no pilots. Go to the wireless and tell him to send in a message for 'em to send a pilot."

"I'm afraid we won't get a pilot, cap'n," said Conley. "Look, here are several ships out here now."

"What kind o' ships?"

Binoculars in hand, Conley answered him.

"Two 'Heinies,' an American, a squarehead, and two lime-juicers."

"Huh!" said Cap'n Alf. "When didja ever come up to Ambrose an' couldn't get a pilot, eh?"

He stamped across the bridge, mumbling to himself. Presently Wilson came up with the answer to his radiogram.

"Read it, Mr. Thompson. My hands is too cold."

"It says, 'No pilot service available until better weather.'"

"Well," said Cap'n Alf, "you reely couldn't expect no better of these dagos." He leaned over the rail, drumming with his finger tips.

"Think we'd better get off shore a little, cap'n?" asked Conley.

Cap'n Alf looked at him oddly for the fraction of a second and wet his lips before replying.

"No! We're goin' in." His voice held a tone that Conley had never heard before. "Hook 'er up, Mr. Conley. Mr. Wilson, take the wheel. Mr. Bonham, stand by your anchors."

Conley stared at him, noting vaguely that, for the first time on the voyage, he

had used their respective names correctly.

"But cap'n," he protested, "we've not even a large-scale chart of this entrance, and——"

At the look in Cap'n Alf's eyes, he stopped.

"I said 'full speed,' Mr. Conley."

Conley shoved the telegraph all the way down. The mate, in an uncertain manner, scrambled down the ladder.

"Where is the channel leading in an' how does it go?"

"There are two or three channels, cap'n, but I only know one, and it's not very good for large ships."

"Where is it?" he demanded sharply.

"See that lightship between those two steamers?" said Conley, pointing. "Haul for that. From there, go straight across the sands, leaving the lighthouse in the middle on the starboard hand. Turn there, and keep the inner lightship to port. That's as much as I can remember, but if we get that far, it will be smoother water, sir."

"H'm."

The humming note of the turbine, gathering speed, floated up from the engine room, and the *Kaltaqua,* with a sluggish heave, began to move. She had been hove to, bow to wind, and, to go in, would have to turn around.

"Hard a-port."

The bow swung slowly off to starboard, and Conley waited, gripping the rail, for her to fall into the trough. A huge wave flung its mass at her quarter, and the bow, lifting, flew around. Then, as the stern, with its madly racing propeller, rose in the air, she glided broadside down the slope of that wave and into the path of the next.

Conley looked at Cap'n Alf. His eyes were on the lightship, but he looked, somehow, as if they were focused miles beyond. Down she rolled, beam to, in the trough. A towering wave, with the top breaking over, reared above her. Below, Conley could hear the crash of breaking dishes in the pantry.

"Hold fast!" he called to Wilson, at the wheel, and ducked below the bridge rail.

Crash!

Water was on, around and over the bridge, and the *Kaltaqua* lurched and shuddered. For a minute she was a sea of rushing foam, and then it was gone. She was stern to, and running before the wind, bucking and rolling, but shipping no dangerous seas. Safe enough for the moment, but dashing toward the breakers, full speed, and the gale behind. Conley shivered.

"Starboard a little. Starboard a little."

Conley gazed at the other ships. All hands lined the rails, watching, but he soon had other things to think about, for in a smother of foam, they drove by the lightship on the bar. He could see their faces, vacant stolid faces, as they pulled and hauled at the danger-signal gun, and a fierce snow squall blotted everything from sight.

"Starboard your hellum. Hard a-starboard!" spoke Cap'n Alf, and she plunged into the welter of water over the sands. The danger gun on the lightship spoke.

Boom!

Conley glanced at Cap'n Alf. His lips twitched, but he gave no sign otherwise. "Starboard a little—steady." His eyes were riveted on the water in front. "Port—meet her. Steady."

From out of the white wall ahead came the dolorous sound of a whistle buoy.

"Port. Hard over!"

The buoy was now close to, by the sound, and Conley saw it as the stern swept it under. The moan did not recommence.

"Guess our wheel is still altogether," remarked Cap'n Alf.

A momentary rift came in the flying snow, and the tall, red-white-black light-

house loomed to starboard. Astern, a German vessel wallowed along on their trail to the outer bar. A buoy was visible on the port hand, and then came the snow again.

"Port easy!" ordered the Old Man.

The bulking form of the lighthouse dashed toward them as they rounded it, and, from the balcony around the lantern, there broke a string of flags, dimly seen through the whirling snow. Conley translated by a hasty glance at the code book.

"It says 'Inner bar impassable,' cap'n."

Cap'n Alf looked around, blankly, at the lighthouse, ship, steering wheel and mainmast, where the ensign whipped in the gale.

"Huh!" was his only comment.

With a shower of spray, she struck the line of breakers, Cap'n Alf giving his commands in the same certain, quiet way.

"Port a bit. Ease her—as you go."

The inner lightship leaped into view as the squall passed. With a tremble, the *Kaltaqua* shot forward into safe water.

"Full astern!"

The whine of the turbine sank to a moan, and, picking up stern board, recommenced.

"Let go your anchor, sir," thundered Cap'n Alf to the mate on the forecastle head.

A rumble of chain and a cloud of rust, and she brought up sharply, the heavy chain squealing over the wild cat.

"Ninety fathoms, sir," called the mate.

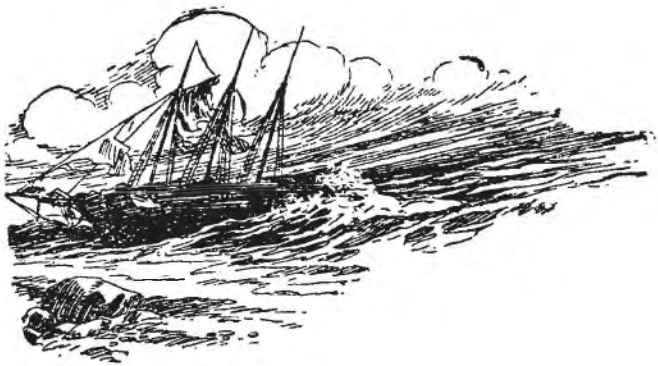
"Let go the other one."

A second roar, more rust, and the *Kaltaqua* rounded to, riding safely behind the two anchors. Conley glanced at the horizon before stepping back into the chart room. The foolhardy German ship was beating back to open sea, from the outer bar.

On the settee sat Wilson and Bonham. They looked at each other, but spoke not a word. Cap'n Alf stumbled in the door.

"Mr.—oh—Conners," said he, searching through his pockets—a procedure he always went through before asking for a cigarette—"what, now, is the name o' this place what we're goin' to?"

"Bremen, sir," answered Conley, very respectfully.



A Deep Sea Diary

By F. L. Rounds

Extracts from a diary, written on an early trip from England to California, are given, and the items of sea life they suggest are expounded with a simplicity and clearness that sets forth the romance of the sea as well as the most imaginative tale could.

THE following extracts from a diary, kept during a passage from England to California thirty years ago, with the accompanying and supplemental writings, are irregular, but are given because they in some measure picture a passage in the life of an ordinary sailor in the merchant marine of that time.

The diary, as originally written, was not a daily record, but was composed of occasional jottings regarding occurrences and impressions, and perhaps it does not fit present-day sailings at all.

A landsman may find it difficult to supply the hiatuses between entries, but it is believed that fellow sailors will not have that trouble. If the former will understand that these writings deal only with the less monotonous happenings and imagine the remainder to consist mainly of the uninteresting routine of the daily work, he may fail to see in what the attraction of a sea life consists.

The sailor, reading between the lines, may again have called to his memory sights and scenes such as never have been put on paper or canvas, and again feel the thrill that comes after an exhausting but successful struggle with nature's most potential forces, sea and wind.

With this prelude we can turn to the diary.

Saturday, April twenty-second—Went to Barry and signed the articles of the *Valkyrie* of Greenock, Maitland master, two thousand one hundred and seventy-two tons, for a voyage to San Diego, California, thence to Portland, Oregon, and return, said voyage not to exceed twenty-four calendar months, and so forth. This ends a very pleasant spell ashore and begins another chapter of the old story. I have not seen all I would like to of this locality yet, and am not likely to have another chance for a good while.

It is the general custom in English ports that those sailors desiring to ship in a certain vessel apply beforehand to the captain or mate, presenting their discharges from other vessels as

credentials of character and ability. These, if the owner is accepted, are kept, to be returned on completion of the voyage and serve as a guarantee of the good faith of the applicant. They are necessary if the sailor wishes to secure a good berth.

As evidence of the care with which the records are kept, let me cite an instance. Some years after this passage in the *Valkyrie,* wishing to secure proof of my whereabouts at that date, I applied to the board of trade for a certificate of my having shipped in the vessel. In return came not only the certificate asked for, completely filled out and indorsed "Deserted in San Diego, October 9th," but, attached to it, were my discharges from former vessels, intrusted to the captain in Barry, and by him delivered to the board of trade with his report on completion of the voyage.

Tuesday, April twenty-fifth—Came on board last evening, riding down from Cardiff in the cart used to carry our dunnage. This morning, in town of the *Black Cock,* and in company with the ships *Terpsichore* and *Susannah,* towed by the *Storm Cock* and *Knight of St. John* respectively, we passed out through the dock gate at high tide. These three are among the strongest seagoing tugs afloat.

The wind being fair, they only gave us a short pull, so that before noon our voyage had really commenced, with us standing down the Bristol Channel under all sail, the green squares of the Devonshire farms on our port hand fading away in the heat haze down toward Land's End and the whole Atlantic ahead of us.

The crew seems a willing and able one and the officers gentlemen. We have four apprentices aft, two of whom were in the ship last voyage to Calcutta.

The *Valkyrie* is only one year old, equipped with modern labor-saving appliances such as force pump and pipe system for washing decks, halyard winches by which two men may masthead any topsail on her, and so forth. But she steers badly because of her being "built to carry" and being loaded right down to her Plimsoll mark.

We have no royals, but the "square" yards make the sails large, our ninety-six-foot main yard carrying what the sailmaker says is one of the largest mainsails that ever left the Clyde. And with this we shall be off the Horn in midwinter. Well, my chest is fairly well filled, and there is no back door to slip out by.

That night, before calling the starboard watch at twelve, we clewed up the topgallant sails, the wind having hauled ahead and freshened. It brought down with it a light haze, though the bright moonlight made everything very clear close at hand. All hands went up to furl, and we of the mate's watch, first finished, were descending, when we saw a great four-master, under everything to a main skysail, with white false ports along her lead-colored sides, coming seemingly directly at us.

Evidently she had a good lookout, however, as she shifted her helm slightly and, in a few minutes, was rushing past astern of us, a short hundred yards, the roaring of the boiling water under her bow plainly audible. In another moment, she was gone to leeward. Naturally, the occurrence was discussed in our forecastle as we were turning in.

One man, old John Brown, who had been twenty-seven times around the Horn, remarked: "Well, boys, to-morrow night those fellows will sleep in a bed, but we have got five months ahead of us." He hit it remarkably close, as we took one hundred and forty-eight days.

Friday, April twenty-eighth—Spoke bark *Medea* and ships *Colony* and *Provence,* all bound for the Channel. They reported light northeast trades.

The international code, by which vessels of different nationalities may "speak" to each other by flags, at a distance only governed by the power of the glasses used to decipher the signals, has been of incalculable benefit to the maritime world, yet its principles, or even existence, are little understood by the average landsman.

The crude early systems of Marryat and others were replaced later by a code,

the work of an international commission, and this again enlarged after a couple of years by the addition of eight flags, making twenty-seven in all, representing the alphabetical letters and an answering pennant. By hoisting these in combinations of not more than four at a time, signals are made that can be read from the code books that are printed in the different languages, with the signals corresponding.

Simple rules classifying the combinations enable users to interpret them quickly, and as the vocabulary of over four hundred thousand signals covers all subjects, any questions and answers can thus be passed rapidly between people who possibly could not understand one word of each other's language. The code is also understood and used by life-saving crews and lighthouse keepers, and, in many cases, it has been of material service to them.

The general extent of the sections of the ocean's surface covered by the trade winds varies during different months, and these variations, with the probable boundaries of the areas, are so well understood now, having been computed from many records, that shipmasters lay their courses to cross the doldrums, or calm belt, at certain longitudes, differing with the months.

We in the *Valkyrie,* holding well to the eastward to be in good position for the long reach through the southeast trades, and congratulating ourselves on slipping so easily across the doldrums, were caught in a southwest wind that whirls like an eddy between the trades and the African coast. It took a week of beating to get us clear of this, but then we started off at a great pace, logging two hundred and fifty-nine and two hundred and seventy-two miles the first two days we had the trade winds.

Saturday, June tenth—We have averaged nearly two hundred miles daily now for over a week, and are fast drawing over to the South American side.

It is, on many ships, a difficult matter for a member of the crew to obtain data relating to the position of the ship, as the officers are reticent on the subject, and, generally, the man at the wheel endeavors to catch any remark he can, bearing on it. In some cases, as when running down the easting below the capes, where the change is mostly in longitude, the difference in time will enable one to calculate the distance run, and a smart ship will reduce the last trick at the wheel in the forenoon by twenty to twenty-five minutes daily.

It is during the days in the trade winds, where the weather is uniformly good and there is little handling of sails to do, that the painting or varnishing and such work is attended to, the rigging overhauled from truck to rail, and the ship put in good shape on deck and aloft. In the more unsettled weather on the Line, or in the forties, the many little jobs are done that will better fit into odd moments, and the variety and number of these are endless.

He is a poor officer, indeed, who ever has to stop to think of what he shall give the men to keep them going. Rather, it is that he has so many things to do that he must think what must be done first.

While there is always work that needs attending to, there are times in long voyages when, on account of cold or bad weather, little is possible, except the necessary handling of the sails, yet it is largely a matter dependent on the personality of the captain and hardly less so on that of the mate. I have stood by for forty days while making the passage through the East Indies from off Sandalwood Island to by Gilolo, doing nothing, except the absolutely unavoidable deck work, but hauling around the yards as many as eight or nine times in a watch.

I have also, in another ship, spent many an hour of the night watches when

the moon was bright enough, perched on a yard aloft, my watchmates similarly employed on others, scraping and sandpapering the oil-finished surfaces of these spars, and this when they were already in fine condition.

This, however, though a tedious job, had its compensations for me in a never-ending delight at the splendid panoramic view of the onrushing progress of the narrow hull, far below, through the foam that slid along her sides and ran into a ribbon of a wake out astern.

In this same ship, too, while hove to in bad weather, instead of being allowed to pass the time on deck, gathered under the lee of the galley or rail, we were kept busy under the forecastle head plaiting sennit of rope yarns, to be used possibly on some future voyage. Certainly there was a large stock of the completed braid on hand at the end of this one.

The manner of relieving the watch differs also. In many vessels, one bell is struck by the man at the wheel fifteen minutes before the end of the watch. The relief is then called, and, at the full hour, the change is made, generally after a muster of both watches in the waist, that the officers may see all present.

In bad weather, the preliminary fifteen minutes are sometimes extended to twenty, because of the greater time needed for the preparation of oilskins or warm clothing. In other vessels, no first call is given, but on the stroke of eight bells the sleepers are roused, and unless ten minutes at the most finds them aft to muster, there is apt to be trouble.

English ships—lime-juicers—are easy, as a rule, regarding work and watches, but many American and Nova Scotian mates will not allow the deck watch to slip into the forecastle to smoke a pipe, some even going so far as to lock the door to insure the remaining of the men on deck during their full four hours.

Sunday, June eighteenth—Off the Plate River. Spoke the ship *Holt Hill,* of and from Liverpool for San Francisco. Blowing heavily from the southeast. We lost the trades some days ago, but have had good fortune since in regard to winds. Were called out this morning for a pampero.

These pamperos are squally blows, peculiar to the locality, and having their origin on the pampas, or plains of the Argentine. Hence their name. Careful navigators are seldom caught unawares, as they generally give ample warning, but an inexperienced person, seeing their approach and realizing that a storm of some kind is brewing, would have little expectation of such a fierce blow as they generally amount to.

This one encountered by the *Valkyrie* was anticipated at least twelve hours before it actually struck us. It had thickened to leeward in the afternoon, a dull darkening of the lower sky through about fifty or sixty degrees of the western horizon, though we were then sailing with a fresh easterly breeze under a blue sky speckled with tiny, white clouds.

The dark bank rose a bit, so that the sun was lost behind it a half hour before time for sunset, but it remained stationary all the first watch, as we could tell by the stars. Our wind held steadily all that watch, but lightened considerably, and the night was remarkably quiet, the ship sliding along with hardly a sound.

The spirit of silence seemed to pervade even the men, and the change of watches at midnight was effected with only a quiet word from the mate, "Be ready for a call, boys," and his muttered "Look out for her, Mr. Young. Get the topgallant sails off her in time and see everything is clear for running."

About two o'clock, the watch on deck clewed up the topgallant sails and hauled down the staysails. Then we were called, to find all above us as black as ink, so dark, in fact, that one actually

could not distinguish his mates at his elbow, and it was only by sense of touch that the necessary ropes were found to carry out orders.

A dull moaning sounded to the westward, and the ship lay almost motionless except for a slight roll on the dead swell remaining from our former wind, now so light as to hardly give steerageway. The upper topsails had just been lowered, and the courses hauled up, when the first puff of the new wind caught us aback. Quickly bracing the yards around, we hurried up as best we could, our progress much hindered by the darkness, and were still up on the footropes when, with a series of sudden throbbing puffs as advance guard, the main body of the wind attacked us furiously.

It tore the sails from our fingers as fast as we grasped them. It yanked and pulled at our clothing, roared deafeningly in our ears, and beat at our faces, so that one had to turn to leeward in order to breathe. It shook the yards and rigging, with the bellying and slatting of such parts of the canvas as were still unconfined, so that, during the first few minutes of its fury, no gain was made toward furling the sails, and all our efforts were directed to holding what had been accomplished before. Then the intense darkness passed, to be succeeded by a steady and terribly strong wind, driving the heavy raindrops so hard that some swore it hailed. It became light enough to see around to leeward—the pelting rains prevented looking the other way—and, having passed turns of the gaskets to secure the now wet and stiff sails after a fashion, we finally crawled down on deck to find that eight bells had gone and it was our watch. The cook was in the galley by this time, however, and it was not long before we had a pot of coffee to take the chill out of our wet and tired bodies. By five o'clock, we commenced to set the sails again and, as fast as we could, sheeted home and hoisted everything, so that before we called the star-bowlines for their breakfast at half past seven, we had all set, the gear coiled up, and were busy with swabs and polishing cloths on the paint and brass work.

Wednesday. June twenty-first—Shifted sails to-day—topsails, foresail and main-topgallant sails.

All ships carry extra supplies of rigging and sails, though not to the extent that they did in years past, when a captain had to depend so much more on his own resources in such matters and when a dismasted vessel was sometimes rerigged from the deck up out of her spare stock.

Nowadays, few carry extra spars. At most, an unfinished topmast or yard is lashed along on deck, as was the case in the *Valkyrie*, but almost all have two or more sets of sails of varying degrees of strength, according to age, and these are used during different portions of the voyage.

We had left Barry with a fairly good suit of canvas spread and, when near the end of the northeast trades, had unbent the mainsail, putting up in its place another one, older, considerably patched, but lighter and larger. This, too, had been done with the topsails and a couple of other sails. Now, in preparation for the heavier weather we expected to be encountered soon, we bent a brand-new foresail and mainsail, three lower topsails, lower main-topgallant sail and fore-topmast staysail. All these were of hemp, as in most British ships.

We also changed the wire fore and main sheets for others of coir, the fibrous husk of the coconut, which had the advantage of being more pliable, but were so coarse and rough that it was sometimes almost a torture to haul on them with our hands already sore from cold and wet.

Our captain, since we had reached the stormy latitudes, had promulgated an order always to reef a sail before furl-

ing it, perhaps a prudent measure when near a possible lee shore, but simply extra and useless work with plenty of sea room.

He had commenced his career in the old Australian emigrant ships and had continued to sail in that trade until he took command of the *Valkyrie* the previous voyage. Probably this would account for his doing things so much by routine. Many were the growls indulged in after a cold half hour aloft, wrestling with a topsail, putting in the "Old Man's tuck," as we called it, when half the time would have sufficed merely to furl it.

Another captain, with whom I went around the Horn later, would never reef a sail, declaring that when it was time to reef, it was time to furl them. The reader can imagine which way commended itself most strongly to us.

Wednesday, July fifth—Between the Falkland Islands and the mainland. Wind south-southeast with frequent snow squalls. Saw first albatross to-day.

Just before dark that afternoon, we saw, in to the westward of us, a large steamer, with yards on the two foremost of her four masts, heading in as though to make Cape Virgins, at the entrance to the Straits of Magellan. This channel, impracticable for sailing ships on account of the strong currents and uncertain winds, is used as a short cut by steamers. Sandy Point, on its northern shore, is quite an important port of call and a coaling station.

Small schooners have worked their way through the Straits, but it is doubtful if any square-rigged vessel has done so since the days of the old explorers. A perusal of an account of one of their voyages gives one a realization of the difficulties of such an undertaking, and the wonder as to how they succeeded becomes greater when you take into consideration how clumsy the majority of these old vessels were and how lacking in labor-saving appliances.

The nights were now very cold, though the days were fairly comfortable. The captain came out with a pair of sabots, French shoes made with uppers of stiff leather and soles of wood, and in these he clumped up and down the poop on his regular and frequent promenades until we all wondered how the officer off watch, directly underneath, obtained his sleep.

From now on, too, until we were up on the Pacific, out of the cold weather, we were given an allowance of hot oatmeal every morning, a welcome addition to our bill of fare, and by trading my soft bread, which we received on Thursdays and Sundays, for the marmalade and butter of one of my shipmates, I lived high with these to top off the burgoo.

Our captain was a quiet, gentlemanly man, a good talker when once he started, but rather given to walking up and down the deck by himself, his hands behind his back, humming some tune, with his thoughts back in England. He never seemed fully in touch with the officers, though all ait seemed congenial.

While the discipline remained good throughout the voyage, the line between officers and men was never drawn as sharply as on American or Nova Scotian vessels, and remarks were often passed between them, apart from those in the way of orders regarding the work. In fact, the man at the wheel was often included in conversations to some extent, and I do not think that this relaxation, so contrary to the usual custom, abated in any degree the respect given by the men to the officers, although it would hardly do to make such a change at all common.

Our crew comprised the usual mixture of nationalities, but the British and Americans predominated, and the others were good sailormen and good shipmates, so that affairs went smoothly and, as a result, content reigned. I

only recall one fight. It took place in our forecastle, one night after we came below from a rather hard watch, with our tempers all pretty well on edge.

We were all in our bunks except Peter, a good-natured, but quick-tempered, Norwegian, and he sat finishing his pipe and talking away, though his audience was dropping off to sleep. A growling request, "Shut up and let us go to sleep," brought a tart reply, more words followed, and, in a trice, Larry, a young Birmingham fellow, was out on his feet and the two had it hammer and tongs. The rest of us finally urged them to call it a draw and sleep over it, and next morning they shook hands again.

This was the only occasion on the voyage when any such argument passed beyond words. To me, there was a great contrast between this unusually agreeable crowd and the shipmates of my last vessel, who counted it quite the usual thing to resort to fists, or anything that was handy, to settle a discussion of little or no importance.

It was about this time that an incident took place one night, laughable and yet very nearly serious, which had as its chief character a German in our watch. He was strong and active, but had the trait, quite common to his nationality, of being a very heavy sleeper. It seemed to be impossible for him to wake up thoroughly in the time between one bell that called us and eight bells, and it was a common thing to see Gus struggling into his coat as he went aft, the last man there generally.

This night was a calm one, and, there being nothing to do, we were nearly all on the main hatch, yarning or stealing a nap, while Gus, on lookout, paced the short walk across the forecastle head. A low railing of chain, rove through stanchions, ran around from bow to bow, and the clear space used by the lookout was across the after end, and probably thirty feet in length.

The fore hatch, in the lower deck, extended almost to below the edge of the upper one, and, sunk into the deck at the forward edge of this hatch, with the stock and shank let down through so that only the crown from bill to bill was above, was a great spare anchor.

Those of us who were awake heard a crash forward and, quickly running there, saw Gus arising from where he had landed right alongside of the anchor. He had gone to sleep while walking back and forth, and had stepped off the forecastle head, falling about eight feet. Had he gone to either rail, the low chain would not have kept him from going overboard, and it was only by a very small margin that he missed landing on the anchor. It was a standard joke for weeks after to ask him, when his turn came around for lookout, whether he had a piece of rope to tie himself to the capstan with so he would not fall off.

Thursday, July sixth—Sighted Staten Island at daybreak. Two vessels in company—one looks like the *Holt Hill*, the other is a small American ship—both bound west. Just before midnight were abreast of the light on St. John's Point, which surely must be about the most lonely station in the world.

The snow-covered hills of the island could hardly be distinguished from the low-lying clouds, and, as we drew slowly down toward the eastern point, we came near enough to make out more clearly the utterly barren slopes, all white except for the occasional black of barren rocks.

The Cape Horn pigeons were now around us in great numbers, several albatross also sailed about over our wake, and that evening, wind and sea having quieted down, we slipped along right into a large flock of birds that had apparently been sleeping, sending them squawking and splashing away on all sides. They were, I think, penguins, of which great numbers are seen in these localities.

July is the climax of the southern winter, and it is not uncommon for ves-

sels to be off the Horn at this season for six or seven weeks, fighting desperately at every opportunity to make headway against the almost unceasing westerly gales, the constant easterly current and the great, long seas that seldom slacken for more than a mere breathing spell as they pass this point on their roll along these stormy parallels.

Our craft had shown herself wet and uncomfortable in a seaway, slow in handling and hard to steer even in moderate weather, and it was therefore with feelings of resignation to expected hardship that we approached this, the turning point in our long journey. With the wind at west, we hauled up a little, the captain having spoken of his intention, if it held there, to go through the straits of Le Maire, between Staten Island and Tierra del Fuego.

It veered, however, and we stood outside, having the light abeam at midnight, distant about five or six miles. The wind continued to shift easterly, and our delight was unbounded when it settled fresh in the east-southeast, sending us along at a pace exceeding anything we had done so far on the voyage.

Friday, July seventh—Fair southeasterly wind all day. Overhauled and passed American ship *Sterling* in forenoon, and were in turn passed later by the *A. G. Ropes*. Sighted fleet of over dozen eastward-bound ships, beating against this unusual wind, so fair for us and so adverse for them.

We ran all day steadily westward and passed Lion Rock some time after midnight that night. It was during my trick at the wheel in the forenoon that we passed the *Sterling*, perhaps a mile outside her, and I had to listen to some disparaging remarks made by our captain to the mate regarding Yankee ships in general and, as he put it, the "far-famed New York and Frisco packets that they call the finest sailing vessels in existence." These were made for my benefit, jokingly, and my explanation that the *Sterling* was an old and small ship was scoffed at.

It was with great satisfaction, therefore, that, when we came on deck at four o'clock that afternoon, I saw astern of us a large ship, whose black hull, sheer and tall white sails proclaimed her Yankee origin, and whose superior speed was enabling her to overhaul us at a much greater rate than we had overhauled the *Sterling* earlier in the day. I took care to be within sight of the mate when he called for a hand to help signal her as she pulled out abreast of us.

As we hoisted the flags asking her name, I assured the mate, for the benefit of the captain standing near, that I recognized her as the *A. G. Ropes*, and that she could be accepted as a fair specimen of the American clipper of to-day. She proved to be the *Ropes*, and a prettier picture was never seen than that long hull under its heights of cloth, running so easily and smoothly, and so swiftly that our progress, rapid enough when alone, seemed checked to that of an old coaster. No fitter representative of the Stars and Stripes could have been wished for, and, under the circumstances, my expressions of admiration were not repressed. San Francisco papers seen later showed that she reached that port eighteen days before we made San Diego.

Our fine wind held, putting us in sight of and past the Diego Ramirez Islands before it commenced to veer around through north to the western quarters again. Then it freshened, and, for the next two weeks, heavy blows came alternately from the southwest and northwest. During the former, we managed to crawl along a little under shortened canvas, but for the latter winds we hove to. The decks were often filled by cross seas to which the vessel could not rise quickly enough, in several cases the galley being flooded.

The cooking showed the effect of these visitations.

It is a good test of patience and temper to experience a spell of such weather, especially in a ship that is "loggy" or "dead" in her movements. Any such mishap as being washed along the deck by an unexpected sea causes only merriment and elicits no sympathy.

The *Valkyrie's* main braces led in through the toprail in the waist, the most natural place for a sea to come over the side, and, more than once, when wearing ship, we who were stationed there had to drop everything and, leaving the yards uncontrolled, jump to higher footholds, in an effort to escape the green head of some great sea—an effort, by the way, that was rarely successful.

While hove to during this weather, a common amusement was to throw scraps of food on to the comparatively smooth water under the lee bow, thus attracting many of the smaller birds—the Cape Horn pigeons, Mother Carey's chickens, and so on. Then, with a hook made of a pin, and with linen thread for a line, these were caught and hauled in on deck, where they flapped and slid along the lee scuppers, exhibiting the unmistakable signs of seasickness.

The hook, being small and barbless, merely held in the bill while the captive was being hauled in, releasing him immediately the strain was slackened. After tying strips of colored cloth around their necks, or otherwise harmlessly marking them, the pretty creatures, which are unable to rise in flight from the deck, were held up where they could catch the wind and soared away, to be recognized, in many cases, for days afterward.

One day an enormous albatross was captured on a line that was being towed astern for bonito, and was killed by one of the apprentices, who preserved the skin and skeleton for a museum at home. From tip to tip of the extended wings, it measured over thirteen feet, and the weight of the body, as large as that of a large farmyard goose, was close to fifteen pounds. From two others, caught during the voyage, one of the men made several curious articles, mounting the stuffed and preserved heads, using the hollow wing bones as pipestems and fixing the wide feet, as large as a man's outspread hand, into tobacco pouches. Also, from the backbone of a young shark hooked and hoisted aboard in the tropics, he made a curious and handsome cane by stringing the vertebræ in their order on a thin steel rod, after boiling them thoroughly to remove the grease and to bleach them. Devoting all his spare time to the making of models and curiosities, he had gathered a collection before we reached port that was quite extensive and very interesting, and that was derived from queer sources. Beside the articles mentioned, he had several pair of flying-fish wings, dried flat and extended between the leaves of a book, a large set of shark jaws with their parallel rows of sharp incurving teeth, the curious skull of a porpoise, its long narrow projecting jaws set with little separated teeth like combs, the carapace of a sea turtle, speared as we passed it when sleeping on the surface, and several pretty mats made of colored yarns and rags.

Friday, July twenty-first—Wind south-southeast to-day, and we are making good progress in the desired direction. Sighted small bark in forenoon and spoke her just after midday, the *James Thompson* from Melbourne for Valparaiso.

Our first thoughts on sighting a vessel so small and on such an unusual course was that she must be a whaler, some of these craft still being seen occasionally in the south Pacific. As the distance separating us decreased, permitting more careful scrutiny, our first surmise was seen to be incorrect, and,

as her course and speed were to bring us very close, no flags were used.

She passed across our bows, a short distance ahead, then put her helm up and ran parallel to us as we crawled up, so close along her side that the captains had quite a long conversation. She was being taken to her destination for delivery to new owners, who had purchased her in Australia for use in the South American coasting trade. With a parting offer to report us all well, her course was again altered, the yards braced up, and, in a couple of hours, she was hull down on our starboard quarter, on her way to her new country.

This was the first day of fair wind in two weeks and proved to be the forerunner of a fine breeze that carried us into the influence of the southeast trades and gave us such a long and regular run as is seldom heard of. Without any material variations in force or direction, these fine winds wafted us through fifty degrees of latitude, under all sail and with yards squared. Such a period taxed even the ingenuity of our mate to provide work that would keep us well employed, and the vessel was put into as good condition as the stores on board would permit of.

Night after night we slept through from sunset to sunrise, without anybody except the wheelsmen, lookouts, and officers knowing which watch was on duty, and even they dozed at their posts. For four weeks we were almost alone, sighting very few vessels, and these generally at distances that would not permit signaling them. The days were perfect, being clear and warm. The cool and silent nights were, if possible, more ideal, and, in a routine that worked content, the time lapsed almost unnoticed.

Having so little work aloft, many of us reduced our limited wearing apparel even further by discarding shoes and contriving sandals of sennit for the protection of our feet from the hot deck planks. Even the ship herself seemed to have fallen into a groove, and the trick at the wheel, which heretofore had always meant two hours of work, was now a time to build castles, especially in the night watches, when the mate was leaning on the rail at the mizzen rigging, and one was entirely alone. The hardest part of such times was to remember to strike the bells every half hour.

Many fish were caught, mostly bonito and albacore, and several porpoises were harpooned, of which the liver is a delicacy, being of as good flavor as that of any calf. Flying fish were seen in schools, and we even saw several sperm whales, which swam along so close to us that we threw pieces of coal and wood at their broad, shiny backs. Perhaps they imagined us some new member of their species, and were trying to scrape acquaintance. At any rate, one of them actually rubbed against our ship's bilge one day, but, finding it hard and unsympathetic, he left us in a hurry.

Saturday, July twenty-ninth—Sighted ship on our starboard quarter, supposedly American.

To observant and practiced eyes, there are many distinctive peculiarities in rigging or sails by which the nationality of a ship may be recognized, and many old sailors, with wide acquaintance with different ships, formed during their years of service, can even name vessels at a distance and in a manner quite mysterious to a green hand, and have the history of great numbers of craft at their memory's call.

We had such an one in the *Valkyrie's* crew in the person of old Jack Doyle, who, in forty years of sea life, had sailed in vessels of nearly every country, spending a majority of his time in the hard school of the Western Ocean packets.

Monday, July thirty-first—Spoke her, the *Tillie E. Starbuck*, eighty-six days out, from New York for Astoria.

The *Starbuck* was, I believe, the first

steel sailing ship to be built in the United States.

Thursday, August third—*Starbuck* in sight again. Wind lightened a little, but picked up again.

Although of course steamers, especially on short runs, follow practically straight courses between points, sailing ships are dependent on so many changeable forces for their movements that two vessels may well, as has been the case often, leave port together with the same destination, and then hear or see no more of each other until that destination is reached. Many reliable accounts tell of such occurrences.

In one case that came to my knowledge, two American ships left New York within an hour of each other, both, according to their logs, encountered practically the same weather and followed the same general track and, strangest of all, the first one to take a tug off Sydney only beat her rival by six hours. Yet, in that passage of ninety-four days, neither ever sighted the other.

Also, two vessels in company, with the same wind and weather, may hold divergent courses because of differences in steering or because the captains do not think exactly alike regarding the probable or possible changes of the weather. Thus we had the *Starbuck* on our starboard quarter when first sighted, then on our port beam when we spoke her and, when we saw her again, she was away out on our starboard bow. This was the more odd in that the wind was nearly dead aft, and as steady as it could well be.

Our compass course was not altered, and the most probable cause of the difference in our tracks was the steering. This requires strict attention on the part of the man at the wheel, if a straight course is to be kept, and it is one of those things that come instinctively easy to some, while others, perhaps of much greater experience, can never keep the vessel's head on the appointed mark longer than while crossing it as they swing from side to side.

Many men, unable to hold the vessel steady, will keep more to one side than the other. A difference of, say, one quarter of a point, which means only slightly over an eighth of an inch on the circumference of the compass card, when extended through a day's run of, say, one hundred and fifty miles, makes a matter of nearly eight miles.

It can be easily seen why ability to steer takes so important a place in the qualifications of a sailor, and why much ignorance may be forgiven a willing man in regard to splicing or sailmaking if, to offset such inability, he can keep a ship steady on her course during his trick at the wheel.

Often entries in the diary for several days are no more than figures indicating position at noon. These scanty entries are evidence of the regularity and uneventfulness of our progress. One day was almost exactly like the other, and the only incidents outside the regular routine were the occasional catches of fish by Peter, who spent much of his time when off watch out on the headgear with grains or harpoon.

On the date of August 11th we crossed the Line late in the afternoon, and, the next night, we saw the North Star, which had been below the horizon for over two months.

However, on Sunday, August 13th, we had an experience that certainly was very unusual and that merits more circumstantial detailing. The morning watch had washed down and cleaned the brass work, so that, when we came on deck at eight o'clock, the only work to be done was to relieve the wheel. Chests and bags were brought around the fore hatch, and the contents hung and spread in the sun to air. Some of the men were shaving or sewing. Others smoked and yarned in lazy enjoyment of the idle hours.

Standing on the forecastle head were Peter and myself, watching a couple of porpoises that zigzagged across our bow, just beyond the rolls of foam that the ship pushed ahead of her as she dipped slightly to the following swell.

Tiring of this, we straightened up and, in doing so, mechanically glanced around the horizon in search of a possible sail. In the same moment, we both saw and exclaimed at what looked like breakers away out near the horizon, broad on the starboard bow. We almost doubted our eyes, but decided that it might have been a whale breaching, in doing which they sometimes throw themselves clear out of the water, landing with a mighty splash.

Watching closely, we soon saw whitecaps again and, this time, in numbers and extent sufficient to show that our surmise was incorrect. That left only one explanation, improbable though that was because of our distance from land. Such foaming seas could only be breakers, perhaps on some uncharted reef of coral or an islet recently formed by volcanic action.

This reasoning seemed a bit more plausible when we recalled rumors current only some months before of the subsidence into the depths of the island of Juan Fernandez, and many other cases of islands reported by one vessel, to be afterward mysteriously missing when others passed in their supposed vicinity.

Our mate was notified and he called the captain. We were running at a good speed, right before a fresh breeze, and, in a very few minutes, whitecaps were seen almost ahead. The mate started aloft for the topsail yard with his glasses, and the helm was shifted slightly. Soon, however, the line of foaming water was seen across the bow, and it seemed to be extending that way as we ran nearer to it, though as yet no land could be seen beyond it.

The lee braces were manned, and the ship brought by the wind, but her poor sailing abilities quickly made it apparent that we could never beat clear of the dangerous-looking surf that now formed a crescent within which we were embayed and that was inexplicably and rapidly working up toward us. Some of the men slipped into the forecastle, and secured such of their belongings as were most valuable and portable, and all hands were called.

The captain was as puzzled as any of us at this unexpected indication of a reef, as the nearest land on the chart was Clipperton Island, seven hundred miles northeast. Two years before, Oceana Shoal had been reported as slightly nearer our position, and the chart also showed Villa de Toulouse Rock, north-northeast of us about five hundred miles, but marked it "Doubtful."

The matter was getting serious, as, by this time, we were well inside a line from end to end of the crescent, and only a short half mile to windward of the center of the foaming turmoil. It was out of the question to clear and provision the boats in time to get off in them, though prospects of a long and uncomfortable boat voyage were before the eyes of all of us.

A few minutes more and the captain, seeing we could not clear it by sailing, determined at least to send the ship high and dry. The yards were squared, two men put at the wheel, and we were all prepared for the crashing of our vessel on this inhospitable reef, when our nearer approach revealed the harmless character of the breaking water. It was a gigantic rip, caused by the struggle of opposing currents, a thing often seen in narrow channels or off points of land, but never heard of by any of us in deep water such a distance from shore.

The strip of broken water extended by this time for a length of two and a half or three miles, and was perhaps

three hundred feet wide. Formed of choppy seas of considerable size that rolled and curled over against the wind, this wicked-appearing, but in reality not dangerous, stretch of foam and surf had gathered up all that lay in its path in the way of driftwood, seaweed, and so on. Many turtles floated there, of which we succeeded in spearing one, fish were thick near the surface, and above birds flew in great abundance and variety.

Strong cross currents made it impossible for the men at the wheel to keep the ship's head straight, but we were through and out in a few moments, and, in an hour, were out of sight of "Seldom-seen Shoal," as one of the men nicknamed it.

Wednesday, August sixteenth—Our fair wind dying out to-day. It has given us an extraordinarily long run and leaves us so far north that the prospects are good of quickly picking up its counterpart of the northern hemisphere.

For three or four days we had been expecting the end of the trades, but they died rather suddenly in the afternoon, leaving us almost motionless on a sea that lacked almost entirely even the underswell that so seldom ceases. That night was remarkably quiet. The water was phosphorescent to a wonderful degree, so much so that the fish under our bow swam outlined in fire, and our wake—for we still crept on our way—was to be seen for a short distance as a narrow gleaming streak.

The moonless sky was so dark and the atmosphere so clear that the evening star was visible from the very horizon, being mistaken by the lookout as he walked the forecastle head for a vessel's light. It required several minutes' steady watching on our part to convince us of his error.

The next day was calm and sultry, and advantage was taken of the opportunity to change our light-weather sails, somewhat chafed and worn, for heavier ones, in preparation for the windward work soon to come, and the stronger westerly winds to the north of the trades. From up aloft, the vessel appeared to be perfectly motionless, and, therefore, the suggestion of one that a swim would be refreshing received the hearty seconding of several others.

When we came off watch, however, only two of us finally decided to take a plunge. Larry slid down a rope at the fore rigging and wet his feet, but would not strike out from the side. Wishing to have more of a swim than that, I went up on the forecastle and dove from the cathead, which was about twenty feet above the water, springing well out and going deep in the deliciously cool water.

To my amazement, on reaching the surface, I found myself abreast of the main rigging, the vessel having really more headway than we had imagined. A few strokes brought me within reach of a rope's end thrown over aft by an apprentice, and by that I soon climbed aboard, thinking seriously of what the outcome would have been had I remained under water only a few seconds longer, enough to prevent my again reaching the side before she passed.

It would have been a long job to put a boat overboard, and my indifferent swimming would have been a poor dependence. These serious thoughts were considerably augmented a moment later, when, as some of us were looking over the side and speculating on our headway, there floated out into view from the shadow under the hull, without any apparent movement of fin or tail, a shark about eight or nine feet long.

We had seen none of these fish for a long time, and the coincidence of its arrival so soon after my going overboard caused some comment. Needless to say, our bathing afterward was confined to showers given by means of a bucket or the hose used in washing decks.

The *Valkyrie's* deck outfit contained

a force pump, bolted to a bulkhead forward, from which, by a pipe running along under the rail, water could be delivered to different connections, to which a short hose was attached. This was a great advance over the old way of drawing it in a canvas bucket, as any one can testify who has ever stood on the rail for a couple of hours and tried the latter method while a heedless boatswain or second mate threw the water, acquired in this back-breaking method, around in a manner that seemed wastefulness to the drawer of it.

When the heavy rains in the vicinity of the Line insured us a plentiful supply of fresh water, we also contrived a novel but efficient shower bath that elicited much merriment. The two forward boats were carried on skids that extended from the top of the deck house out and down to the rail, their keels being parallel to and about a foot out from the edge of the house.

When a rain squall came up, the covers were rolled back, and the tremendous precipitation of water would, in a few minutes, fill our improvised tank to a depth of a foot or so. The unplugging of the draining holes in their garboards would then allow the escape with considerable force of the streams of fine fresh water, under which the bather would stand. The suspension in this stream, immediately below the plug hole, of any small object would spread the flow into a remarkably good spray shower.

No one who has not actually experienced a tropical rain, and more preferably one at sea, can adequately realize the phenomenally heavy downpour of water. In the doldrums, the squalls can be seen, simply black, solid-looking clouds with a seemingly impenetrable mass of falling water below them, all so clearly defined in extent and progression that often, by altering the ship's course, they may be avoided entirely.

Sometimes they are escaped by so scanty a distance that the hiss of the falling drops will be clearly audible, and the margin of the beaten surface of the sea as sharply outlined as any beach line.

Though often consisting of rain only, many of these squalls contain within themselves a wind that makes up in fierceness what it lacks in duration. Therefore, when it is seen that an encounter with one of them is unavoidable, men are sent as a precautionary measure to the halyards and clew lines of the upper sails, such as the royals and topgallant sails, to take off all but the last turn on the belaying pin, holding themselves in readiness instantly to lower away and clew up if the force of the wind makes it necessary.

The thorough drenching incidental to such experiences is rather welcome than objectionable, a short while in the succeeding hot sunshine drying out the scanty raiment worn in those latitudes.

When there is no wind, such a squall becomes simply a cataract, the water falling in such terrible quantities and force as to shut out the light, producing a darkness equal to night and rendering it actually impossible to catch one's breath except with bowed head. A ship's scuppers are often incapable of delivering overboard the water as fast as it falls on deck, and it will stand four or five inches deep in the waist, or, if the vessel be rolling any, washing up along the waterways in depths making them available for the moment as bathtubs.

Monday, August twenty-first—Passed and spoke the *Kinkora* of Belfast, twenty days out of Vancouver with lumber for Callao.

We were stretching along a bowline, the *Kinkora* coming with fair wind, and she passed so close to us that flags were not needed to communicate with her. The speed of the vessels only left time for a few words, but her being so short a time from the coast to which

we were going brought home to us the fact that our passage was fast nearing completion. It was as though she marked the beginning of the end.

When next I heard of the *Kinkora,* it was several years later. One of her boats came into Acapulco harbor, where the Mexican steamer of which I was mate lay at anchor, and reported the casting away of their ship on Clipperton Island. The Mexican government dispatched the man-of-war *Democrata* to the relief of the rest of the crew, who had remained on the island while their mates made the six-hundred-mile trip for help in their only seaworthy boat.

Wednesday, August twenty-third—Could not find Southern Cross last night, as the horizon was hazy, though it is frequently seen as far north as Honolulu. The northeast trades, so far, are steady, though quite northerly.

The run through the northeast trades was a fine one, though they were comparatively narrow. From our going against the wind, its force seemed greater than that of the southeast trades, and cooler, too. Having had so long a spell of good weather in which to renew and repair the rigging, everything was in fine condition, and our work now was comparatively light.

Thursday, August twenty-fourth—Sighted ship to windward, hull down, going our way.

Friday, August twenty-fifth—Spoke her. The *Starbuck* again, now one hundred and eleven days out. We seem to have followed pretty closely the same track and to be evenly matched in speed.

Saturday, August twenty-sixth—*Starbuck* out of sight ahead. Main-skysail-yarder down to leeward, which Jack Doyle offers to bet on as the *Wm. G. Davis.* Discovered to-day that the supply of water is short, and henceforth our allowance for drinking will be cut down to a pint a day.

It is customary for the second mate to oversee the dealing out of the allowances of water, and our officer, on his first voyage as such, had perhaps been too liberal. However, a little ingenuity resulted in the construction, from some lead pipe luckily found aboard, of a condensing coil, and the cook, by keeping a good fire going under his large copper boiler full of salt water, was able to distill about five gallons daily, which helped materially. Our cargo being coal and coke, fuel was cheap and plentiful. This distilled water was sweet and good, but had an insipid taste that made it objectionable for drinking purposes, so it was used altogether by the cook. To keep the water cool in the barrel in which the coil was placed, and thus to hasten condensation, the pump was kept in constant operation sending a stream through the barrel.

Sunday, August twenty-seventh—At noon spoke the *Wm. G. Davis,* Doyle having been right. She is of Portland, Maine, and is now out one hundred and twenty-three days from New York for San Diego. This gives her the same starting day as ours, and considerable betting has taken place in the forecastle as to which ship will first make our destined port. Notwithstanding Doyle's opinion that the *Davis* can outsail us on even terms, "Sails" has let his local—he is a Greenock man—and national patriotism influence him to put a lot of tobacco and clothes on the *Valkyrie,* all of which was promptly covered by the American contingent of the crew.

Friday, September first—*Starbuck* in sight again, this time to leeward. At 6 p. m. tacked ship and soon lost sight of her. The wind is not very steady, varying from north-northeast to east by north, and, as it shifts, we tack accordingly. Our work is now a matter of routine, and things go on day after day without a hint of friction.

Friday, September fifteenth—Caught strong squally north wind at sunrise after a couple of days of intermittent and unsteady breezes. Started off at a great pace, making three degrees on our east-northeast course by night.

The night following this day was a perfect one. The stars were bright and, for the first time, looked cold, as they do in higher latitudes. The moon rose early, and at midnight, when roused from a warm bunk to take the lookout, there was a chill to the strong breeze that made a heavy coat feel comfortable and that quickly dispelled any remaining drowsiness.

Under all sail, the ship was tearing along, heeled over until the lee scuppers were awash, the rigging aloft snapping to the strain in a way that made the mate look up anxiously more than once. This was fine sailing, and the fact that we had reached the most northerly point of our course and might expect this wind to carry us close to our port gave rise to many thoughts and plans concerning the future.

Practically, the passage lay behind us. Before stretched a vista comprising a few weeks in port here, a short run to a loading port farther up the coast, another four or five months at sea again, and, as a climax, a spell ashore in England, where, no matter how much of interest might be seen, I was a foreigner.

The inevitable sequel must be another voyage, and the prospects gave no hope of it being materially different from the present one. Eventually, a time must come when a desire to see again my own home country and a growing disinclination, strong even now, for any more such long periods cut off from the news of the world, would be sufficiently strong to induce a change in this method of life.

If the break must come some time, far better soon, and surely no more tempting quarter of the earth could be chosen in which to commence life ashore than that land of gold and sunshine, California, toward whose sunniest port this splendid breeze was so swiftly taking us.

As the plans assumed more definite form, the indecision and doubtings accumulated during many hours of meditation at the wheel or lookout gave way to an impatience for the inauguration of the change.

It was in a more contented frame of mind that, on hearing the faintly sounding strokes of the small bell aft, I clambered inboard from the bowsprit end, from which I had been viewing the, to me, ever-fascinating sight of the tearing rush of our vessel, to repeat on the large bell the four strokes that ended my lookout. It was with fixed determination to leave the ship in San Diego and try my fortunes ashore that I dropped off to sleep after going below, two hours later.

Saturday, September sixteenth—Our fine beam wind holds fresh and at our present rate of speed, it will be only a few days until we go round past Point Loma. This afternoon a small brown owl, evidently exhausted, perched on our fore-topgallant yard and was captured in a cloth by one of the apprentices.

Monday, September eighteenth—Put out the taffrail log at 10.30 a. m. yesterday, and it registered one hundred and fifty-eight miles between that time and 4 a. m. to-day. In the forenoon, passed a three-masted schooner inside of us, a coaster. We are keeping a lookout for Catalina Island, but a light haze leaves everything indistinct that is over a couple of miles away.

Tuesday, September nineteenth—Made out land at midnight which it was decided was San Nicholas Island. Hove to from 2 to 4 a. m. on account of haze. At 8 a. m. sighted San Clemente, but wind was so light that it was 5 p. m. before we had it fairly abeam. Saw a large passenger steamer inside of us, which I recognized as the *Santa Rosa*.

Wednesday, September twentieth—Clear and fair, a lovely day in which to finish our passage. A light wind sent us along in the forenoon, and it was on the last of this breeze that we neared Point Loma, which we sighted a little before eight o'clock. All hands remained on deck, the division into watches being abandoned except as to the wheel, where the regular turns still held force. At 11 a. m. the pilot came aboard, our slow movements making it unnecessary to back the yards, and twenty minutes later the tug *Santa Fe* took our towline. As soon as dinner was over, the sails were clewed up and then, everybody working with a will in a way that earned encomiums from the pilot, they were unbent during the long tow up the narrow winding channel, so that, when at three o'clock we let go our anchor in the bay, our yards were bare. At anchor near us were the bark *Invercoe* and ships *Wm. Mitchell*, *Soudan*, and *Wm. G. Davis*, the latter having beaten us in by four days. We Yankees, as a result of this, are supplied with good Scotch tobacco and clothes.

This really ended that part of the

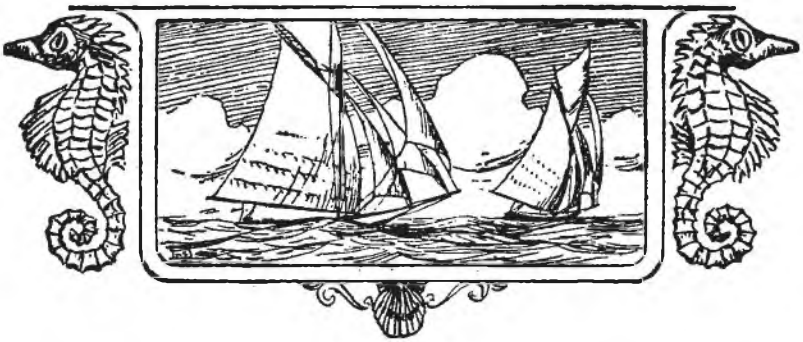
voyage. We remained at anchor over a week, then hauled in alongside Spreckel's wharf and commenced to discharge the coke from the between decks. As may be imagined, all were anxious to see what the town looked like. As very few of us had any money, our sight-seeing, though interesting, was inexpensive, and the planning of any little purchases of mementos, clothing, fresh fruit, or food was always made conditional on the amount of liberty money that would be allowed us the coming Saturday evening.

That time came and, after quitting work in the afternoon, we were called aft into the cabin one at a time, where sat the captain with the books on the table in front of him, and a very, very small pile of silver dollars at his hand. Several had gone in ahead of me so that it had become known that one dollar was the amount out of which we must make our purchases, and how inadequate that sum was can be realized by any one.

Being much in need of a new pair of shoes, I requested a more liberal allowance, but, although we now had four months' wages due us, one month's payment having been advanced in Cardiff, not one cent over the dollar could be had. That amount was invested in fruit and some little necessaries that evening. It may be said here in justice to Captain Maitland that this was no exceptional case, it being a custom, of such universal standing as almost to rank as a rule, among British ships in the Pacific coast ports to give only one dollar.

On Monday morning, two of us refused to turn to until we were allowed to obtain new shoes, and so an order was given us on a storekeeper, who was to furnish us what we needed, holding the account against the ship until the end of her stay in the port, when all such bills were paid at once.

The determination already formed to leave the vessel here having been communicated to a chum, he declared his intention of joining in the trip upcountry. Efforts to secure more capital failing, our preparations consisted simply in packing up a roll of blankets containing a change of clothes and some few little things, and disposing of the remainder by giving or trading it away to our shipmates. That night after dark, having bid good-by to them, we slung our "swags" over our shoulders, slipped ashore, and so ended our connection with the good ship *Valkyrie,* daylight finding us well on our way inland.



Furled Sails

By Harold Bradley Say

Giff Morris was in the worst sort of a hole and Captain Benner wasn't much better off than that. They got together on the proposition, but, while the combination was a good one, it didn't seem as though anything but a great upheaval of the earth could save them. Then something very much like that came along.

CAPTAIN JOHN BENNER glanced up and down the long corridor of lettered doors of the Marine Exchange Building. Hesitatingly, he started down the hall, and then, spying the number he sought, shot forward like a ship with "full ahead" just given. As he opened the door of Gifford Morris, Ship Charterer and Agent, he smiled like a college boy who has slipped home unexpectedly and is about to enjoy the greetings of his surprised family.

He was somewhat disappointed and slightly embarrassed when a bobbed-haired stenographer, instead of Gifford Morris, glanced up at him with an inquiring smile. He pulled off a dented brown felt with one hand and with the other removed from his mouth a long Manila cigar which shot out cornerwise under the tip of a rangy gray mustache.

The ruddy network on his cheeks seemed to stand out farther as he asked:

"Is Mr. Morris in, miss?"

"Mr. Morris is busy and can't be disturbed," explained the young lady. "You can wait or call later. What is your name?"

"I'm Captain Benner."

"Oh—that's different," answered the stenographer in a warmer tone. "Mr. Morris talks about you a great deal. He's rather provoked about something, and shut the door so I wouldn't hear some of the things he's been saying. Step in. Maybe you'll cheer him up."

"Well, I'm a whale's necktie if it isn't 'Cappy' Benner!" shouted Gifford Morris, jumping from his chair as Captain Benner's big form loomed in the inner office door. "I hardly knew you in civies, Cappy, and I haven't seen you since the war."

"You didn't look any too natural yourself when I stuck my head in," responded Captain Benner as he hammered Giff on the back with one fist and gave him a hearty handshake with the other.

"What's the idea?" queried Captain Benner, as he surveyed Giff's private office, taking in at a glance papers scat-

tered over the floor, a chair kicked over, and a wastebasket with its side crushed in. "With that hard-boiled face you had when I came in you didn't look much like the scared little devil I pulled out of the Willamette River one night back in 1903, when I had the old *Nome City.*"

A kaleidoscopic reel of pictures shot through Captain Benner's mind as he appraised the young man who had come into his life through the misplaced confidence of a dock-office boy in his ability to take a ship's heavy headline as successfully as a full-grown man. The captain's eyes twinkled as they surveyed the prize-fighter jaw, a pair of steady blue eyes, and a thatch of glossy black hair which overlapped a fair-skinned forehead.

"Giff, you would never have gone up in the steamship business except that you always shaved as slick as a female impersonator and brushed your hair like a clerk in a ladies' shoe store," joked Captain Benner. "It's too bad you have such a good noodle, because you'd made a devil of a fine cop."

Giff shrugged his big shoulders and forced a smile. "That's not the half of it, Cappy. I ought to have been a cop or a longshoreman. Anyway, I wouldn't be on the toboggan if I had stayed working for the other fellow. I haven't got the goods for putting over the big stuff myself."

"Humph!" grunted Captain Benner. "I knew something was wrong when I came in. Come on, why all this talk?"

"Cappy, I've just been trimmed by the dirtiest pirate who ever lived," explained Giff. "Six months from now all I'll own will be the clothes on my back. Nothing can save me but fool's luck and I'm too crazy to have it. Nobody but you is going to know I'm licked until the crash comes. I'm a youngster yet, just thirty, and I can come back, but I did want to make the first piece of real money I ever had a chance at.

"Some of these old heads at the game laughed at me when I went into business for myself. Others, who liked me, came around to urge me to stay out of a thing in which they figured I didn't have one chance in a thousand with lack of capital. So you see, Cappy, I'd like to pull out of this hole and show them something instead of having to take a licking and go from office to office looking for a clerk job. But it looks like the wise guys were right. I won't have a dime by the time the marshal comes down with a fist full of libels."

"Libels? What do you mean, Giff? You haven't gone and bought anything that floats?" queried Captain Benner.

"You guessed it, Cappy," answered Giff. "I've got three of the whitest elephants ever captured. I bought three old square-riggers that aren't worth the powder to blow 'em up, except as lumber carriers, and all the lumber I can get for them wouldn't make a toothpick for a canary bird. I couldn't get a nickel of insurance for any other cargo than lumber. It doesn't hurt rough timber to get wet, you know."

"Giff, what brainless guinea got you to buy the damned things?" snorted Captain Benner. "If I hadn't been a sucker and put fifty thousand dollars into a steamship proposition when things were good right after the war, I wouldn't need to go to sea to-day. With the fool laws and regulations of to-day, there's no money in the steamship business unless you're a Scandahoovian or some other kind of a foreigner. It cost me the savings of twenty years to find it out. All I hope is that I can land a port captain's job, or some other proposition ashore, so that I can be home with my wife the rest of my life.

"But that's off the point. As long as you've got these tubs, why can't you get lumber cargoes and hang on a while anyway? You might be able to unload them on another sucker."

"That's the harpoon," explained Giff.

"Charlie Morton, head of the Morton Lumber Company, has what is practically a corner on the lumber business from the Columbia River to Japan. The Pacific Exporting Company has been trying to get into the field. Three months ago I fixed three steamers to move twenty-five million feet to Japan for the Pacific outfit. The rate was sixteen dollars a thousand. When Morton got wise to the Pacific's order, he offered me two thousand dollars cold cash if I'd tip him off on the consignee and other details of the order. I told him that I wasn't doing business with thieves and that he could go choke if he wanted to.

"He was sore as a boil. He swore he'd get me, and he has. I've been on my guard, too. That's what makes it hurt worse.

"Langdon, a new lumber exporter, came to me a few weeks later and explained that he could break into the Australian market on a good scale if he could get guaranteed space for eighteen months. About that time, I got a tip that the Alaska Packing Company intended to sell its sailing ships and buy a steamer for taking supplies and men north each spring and for bringing the salmon pack home in the fall.

"The Alaska people offered me the three tubs, the *Chagnook*, *Larchwood*, and *Slocum*, cheap—twenty thousand dollars apiece. I hadn't the money, but some friends of mine induced the Northern National Bank to back me. I got the ships. The *Larchwood* and *Slocum* were out to sea just two days when the smash came. Langdon went broke. It was all prearranged. Langdon was going on the rocks before he came to me.

"His father, a millionaire back in Cleveland, had been backing him. The old man cut him off. Charlie Morton came to young Langdon and framed up to smash me. You see, Morton figured that without Langdon's lumber, I'd go under, as he himself controls the bulk of the movement out of here. Morton gave Langdon five thousand dollars to help wreck me, and he did a good job of it.

"If I could hold out, something might break my way, but I'll owe the bank thirty thousand dollars four months from now and thirty thousand dollars more six months later.

"The *Larchwood* and *Slocum* are on their way to Yokohama. I get control of the cargoes and receive my freight money before Langdon gets a cent. But that's only a temporary help. The old *Chagnook's* lying here at the Mersey dock with nothing in sight."

Captain Benner had controlled himself with effort while Giff told his story. What he said after Giff finished would not appear well in print. Giff was at a loss to understand Captain Benner's rage.

"Cappy, you act like he's stuck you, too," said Giff.

"He did," roared Captain Benner. "He handed me a dirty one. He time-chartered the *City of Rangoon* which I took to Capetown. I cabled for authority to buy some decent steaming coal instead of the rocks they were going to bunker me with. He told me to take the lower-grade stuff or turn the ship over to the mate. I brought her home just to show him I could, and then told him to stick the ship in his eye. The old stiff bet me an even five hundred dollars that I couldn't get a ship out of this port in six months. I took him, and I've just got a twenty spot left. I'm going to take a ship out if I steal one."

The telephone interrupted their talk.

"Hello," growled Giff. "Yes, I've got the *Chagnook*. If you've got a funny joke to unload, just drive on a block."

"I'm not joking," explained a peeved voice on the other end of the wire—that of Joe Loeb, importer and exporter.

"I've got an order for a lot of timbers long as flagpoles. They're for Yokohama. The rate's got to be low or I can't make the sale. If you'll quote me ten dollars a thousand, I'll try my best to give you a cargo of copra back from Cebu at five dollars a ton."

"Take you on it. Come on over and we'll sign up a charter party," responded Giff.

"Say, Giff, who's your skipper on the *Chagnook?*" asked Captain Benner.

"Haven't one yet, Cappy," answered Giff.

"Will you give her to me?" asked Captain Benner earnestly.

Giff gave his old friend a pained look.

"Trying to insult yourself, Cappy?" he asked.

"Insult be damned! I'll trim Charlie Morton of five hundred berries, won't I?" responded Captain Benner.

"Howling sea pups! I never thought of that, Cappy. She's yours," enthusiastically cried Giff. For a moment he forgot his troubles. "Maybe it will change my luck, too, Cappy," he smiled whimsically.

Two weeks later, the old *Chagnook* was leaving the Columbia River lightship, each minute a smaller speck on the horizon.

Captain Benner worried those days as he tramped the deck of the ancient craft. The aged timber creaked and the old gear rattled as the square-rigger wallowed over the summer seas toward Yokohama. It was a crew of "leavings" that Captain Benner had signed. Good sailors had too much pride to sign up on the relic which had worn itself out even before it had been obtained for the Alaska salmon-fishing voyages, ten years before.

But it was not the behavior of the *Chagnook* nor the quality of her crew that worried Captain Benner. It was of Giff that he was thinking as the days went by.

He was pacing automatically back and forth, occasionally glancing at the man at the wheel when Eric Swenson, the first mate, came up for his watch. Captain Benner looked up.

"Good evening, Mr. Swenson," he said.

"Good even'n', sir," responded the mate.

"We've been doing good sailing for the old tub," remarked Captain Benner. "We ought to make Yokohama about ten days after the *Larchwood* and *Slocum,* I figure. 'Sparks' was talking with the *Larchwood* to-night just about fifteen hundred miles ahead. It's too bad that Giff Morris spent money putting wireless rigs on these old traps."

"Guess he figured we might need 'em in any kind of a storm," replied Mr. Swenson. "I'm not exactly yellow or salt-water shy, but if I had an insurance policy I reckon it would be canceled on me if I was making this layout my regular home."

"Well, the only reason I took the old brute was because I wanted to win a bet off a certain pirate in Portland and because I liked Giff Morris. If Giff Morris didn't mean what he does to me, I'd rather have lost the bet. If you ever find me on another ship, except as a passenger, just walk up to me and collect one hundred bucks. Twice I've promised my wife and myself that I was making my last voyage. I intend to find a shore job even if I have to push a land scow around picking up rubbish on the street. When a man's been thirty-five years at sea, he's served his time. Of course, I like it and all that, but——"

Captain Benner's words were interrupted by a strange lurch of the ship. She seemed to rise straight up and then drop down as if lifted and lowered by a giant crane. The ocean was as smooth as a woodland lake, unbroken to the horizon.

"We've bumped something," cried Captain Benner excitedly, racing for-

ward to find out what the object was. The ship went on unchecked. A second bumping sensation. Then all was as before—as if nothing at all had happened.

"Sound your bilges," ordered Captain Benner, addressing the carpenter. The latter reported a few moments later that the ship had not taken any water.

The captain and the mate were speculating as to what submerged object the vessel might have glanced over when the ship experienced several jars in quick succession.

"Earthquake," declared Captain Benner. "I've read of ships feeling them, but this is my first one. Must have been a big shake-up down in Davy Jones' bar, eh?"

At supper, the captain and his mates were discussing the phenomena when Sparks called out from his room, his voice charged with excitement, "Captain! Yokohama's destroyed. Just picked it up from a fellow who's sending it out from the military station at Iwaki. Whole town's burning. So's Tokyo. Thousands been killed in an earthquake. People being burned to death."

"The devil, you say!" exclaimed Captain Benner. "Well, that means more hell for us. But they always overestimate those things. It probably isn't a fourth as bad as reported."

But Captain Benner found that he had been wrong in his opinion when the *Chagnook* entered Yokohama harbor, with all its frightful confusion. He dropped his anchors alongside the *Larchwood* and *Slocum*. It was impossible to locate any one knowing anything about the cargoes on the three windjammers. The masters of the *Larchwood* and *Slocum* held a conference with Captain Benner. They decided that he should endeavor to get to Kobe where he could cable to Giff. He was making arrangements to go next day when a navy cutter came alongside the *Chagnook*. It brought a cablegram from Giff. Captain Benner tore it open. He read:

> Captain Morris fleet take instructions from Captain Benner. Consignees cargoes killed. Communication nearly impossible. If cannot sell lumber take to Kobe. Cable when possible. Return copra charter cancelled.

"Poor Giff. I suppose the bank's hounding him for its dough already," thought Captain Benner with a feeling of sympathy.

Two days later, three Japanese government officials sat around Captain Benner's saloon table. They were pleased beyond measure to sign a contract purchasing the lumber, totaling four million five hundred thousand feet at fifty dollars per thousand. They took and paid for every stick on the three carriers. Captain Benner directed the unloading and rafting of the timbers in the water. When the last of it was over the side, Captain Benner locked two hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars in Japanese currency in his cabin safe.

"Mr. Swenson," he ordered, "you and Mr. Anderson will take turn about guarding that safe. I got five dollars more a thousand for that lumber than Giff Morris expected to sell it for. Seventy-six thousand five hundred dollars of that two hundred twenty-five thousand dollars is his. It'll just about pay for these old barges if he hasn't spent too blasted much fixing them up for sea. We'll run down to Kobe in a couple of days and I'll surprise the boy with a cable draft."

However, Captain Benner never made the run down to Kobe—that is, not on the old *Chagnook* or its sister ships, the *Slocum* and *Larchwood*.

Two Japanese officials came aboard the *Chagnook* when the last of the lumber had been towed away into the inner harbor of the ruined port of Yokohama. They wished to thank Captain Benner for selling them the lumber and to ex-

press their gratitude for the relief the United States was sending.

"We don't need free help. What we need is supplies," explained Mr. Himura. "Japan is not poor. She can buy supplies and rebuilding material. Our biggest problem is storage space. Shipments are on the way from everywhere and we have no place to store them except on what few idle ships we have tied up in the harbor. Every warehouse and nearly all the lighters, which were alongside docks, were destroyed by the earthquake and fire. It will be three months before we have nearly enough warehouse room."

Captain Benner had quit listening. He leaned forward and addressed Mr. Himura earnestly.

Captain Benner's officers on the *Chagnook* had never heard him sing or otherwise display entertaining talent on the voyage. That night after the Japs were gone, Mr. Swenson, the mate, tiptoed away shaking his head with a puzzle too deep to solve when he heard what he thought was a drunken sailor aboard and discovered it to be Captain Benner lustily setting to music "The End of a Perfect Day."

Four thousand miles across the Pacific, Giff Morris worried and fretted as he went about his day's work trying to devise some means for preventing the crash he knew was inevitable. He attributed the long silence from Captain Benner to the turmoil in Japan.

"I don't suppose I'll hear a word from Cappy until he's four or five days off the Columbia River with his fleet," Giff said to himself, laughing inwardly at the idea of the three old windjammers being a fleet. "There won't be enough money to buy a cigar with by the time all the men of the crews are paid off."

A telephone call broke in on his soliloquy.

"This is Mr. Brown's secretary of the Northern National Bank," said a voice, studiedly impersonal, Giff thought. "Can you come over to the bank?"

"What time do you want me?" asked Giff, his throat seeming strangely dry and tight.

"Right away."

"I'll be over," answered Giff. He hung up the receiver. His shoulders slumped forward. Dejection was written in his face and body.

Then he shook himself with a jerk as if to throw off his depression like a dog rids itself of a flea.

Deliberately he opened his check book and wrote out a month's pay for his stenographer.

"Better cash this right away, Miss Cameron," he remarked as he stepped out of the office on the way to the bank. "It may not be good this afternoon."

The girl shook her head sadly. She had never worked for a more considerate and pleasant employer. She, too, knew of the impending crash. She was aware of the fact that a thirty-thousand-dollar note was due at the bank next day.

"Morning, Giff," greeted Mr. Brown, the bank's vice president, as Giff stepped up to his desk. "I've got some pleasant news for you."

"Well, I don't think you need to be so sarcastic about it," growled Giff.

The bank executive frowned. For a second he did not comprehend Giff's manner. Then he burst out laughing.

"Oh, no, Giff. I'm not closing out on you—wouldn't have for a year, anyway. We figured you'd pull out, but we weren't telling you that. However, that's off the subject. I have a draft here for seventy-six thousand five hundred dollars for you. It's from a man named John Benner, sent from Kobe."

Giff was speechless. "Pinch me, Mr. Brown. Do I look all right? I think I've gone nutty and am imagining a lot of things."

"There's another draft here for

ninety-nine thousand dollars from Benner to one Robert Langdon, with the notation, 'Settlement in full for cargoes of *Larchwood* and *Slocum*.' There is also a draft for forty-nine thousand five hundred dollars as full settlement to Joe Loeb for cargo of the *Chagnook*. In addition, here are some confirmation-of-sale papers in connection with transfer of the *Chagnook*, *Larchwood* and *Slocum* to the Japanese Government Warehousing Corporation of Yokohama that you're to sign. This Captain Benner sold them at sixty thousand dollars each, subject to your approval."

Giff controlled himself. He wanted to whoop and jump. His impulse was to leap on Brown's back.

Instead, he said in an even tone, "Could you go out with me to lunch, Mr. Brown? I've got a nip of something you'd like."

The firm of Morris & Benner, Shipowners and Operators, is now handling a big share of the lumber business out of the Columbia River to the Orient. It has four big steel freighters fully paid for and is buying three more on payments.

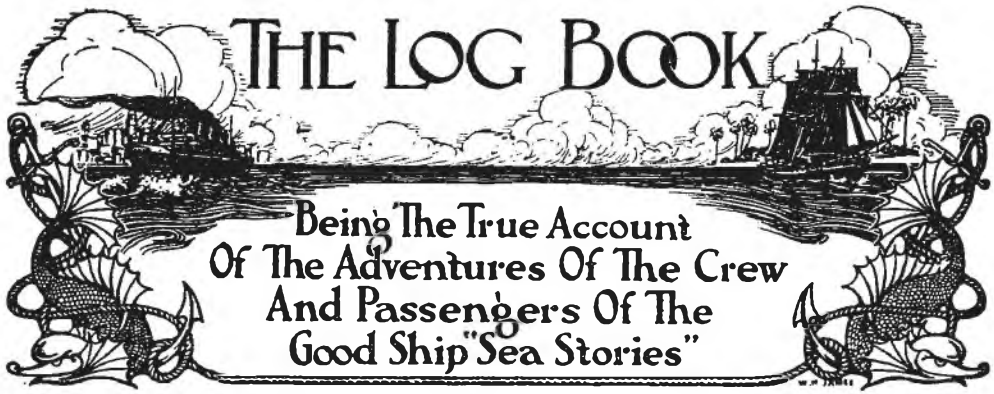
"I have just been reading an article in this sheet saying it's impossible for Americans to operate ships at a profit," snorted Captain Benner.

Giff Morris glanced up from a charter party which he was reading. "Lot those birds know about it, Cappy. You've wrung more salt water out of your sock than most of those wise writers have sailed over.

"Changing the subject, Cappy, don't you think we ought to let Charlie Morton have this ship I am working on? Otherwise he's stuck on a Japanese order. He did us a big favor once, you know, even if he didn't intend to."

A smile spread over Captain Benner's ruddy cheeks. His eyes twinkled.

"Sure. And just ask him if he wants to make any bets to-day."



This department is designed as a meeting place for all farers on the sea of life who wish to hail one another in passing by, who desire information in connection with maritime matters, or who have had unusual salty adventures, and wish to tell about them. In other words, it is designed to be a sort of get-together club for Sea Stories' readers, and we feel that the correspondence which follows is full evidence of how interesting this department may be made to all readers of this magazine.

We extend to you a cordial invitation to use these columns either to ask or to give information, or to tell some anecdote which you feel would interest or amuse a few hundred thousand fellow creatures. After all, a good yarn usually has a pleasant little trick of brightening things up for most of us.

THE disparaging remark is still frequently heard of the wooden men and iron ships of the present day, as compared with the iron men and wooden ships of the past. A constant reiteration of any fact, whether true or not, has one of the strongest psychological effects on us human beings and all too often is accepted without questioning.

The fallacy of this misstatement is proven, almost without exception, in every case of disaster on the high seas. Seamen of every nation can usually be depended on to live up to the highest traditions of the service and Americans, particularly, can point with pride to at least two incidents that occurred during the past winter—incidents that might well have turned out to be serious disasters but for the unfailing courage and devotion to their duty of American officers.

The first and most spectacular of these, from all points of view, was that of the Clyde liner *Mohawk*. Shortly after leaving New York, on her regular trip south, and during one of the worst storms ever known on the Atlantic coast, fire was discovered aboard. To turn back, which was the nearest distance to port, would have probably cost the lives of every one aboard but, sticking manfully to their posts, the entire officers and crew not only had to contend with the elements but that most dreaded of all disasters at sea, fire. Wireless calls were sent out for assistance and other vessels responded but nothing could be done in the way of taking off the passengers in the sea that was then raging. After an heroic struggle the ship was brought safely into Delaware Bay and there beached and the passengers safely removed without the loss of a single life. A bald statement of this sort cannot convey the heroism that was displayed in this fine piece of seamanship nor the horror that was endured until the vessel was beached and the rescue ships succeeded in completing this daring episode.

The other act which ranks with any in the annals of the coast guard occurred about the middle of January.

The United States submarine *S-19,* with a crew of forty aboard, went aground on Nauset Bar, off Orleans, Massachusetts, on the back side of Cape Cod.

The *S-19* ran ashore in a heavy sea and fog at 4:30 o'clock in the morning, and it was not until after a thrilling sixteen-hour struggle on the part of Captain Abbot Walker and his crew of coast guardsmen from the Nauset station, five miles away, that they succeeded in boarding the stranded craft. Upset twice, with nearly fatal results, and while clothed in the heavy gear that this season of the year made necessary, they gamely kept on until they accomplished what they had set out to do.

The fact that the crew of the submarine decided to remain on their craft does not in any way detract from the valiant efforts of the coast guard. No story of a similar occurrence could contain any better example of the high traditions that these doughty heroes of the present day lived up to.

A similar case of a rescue that corresponds with any rescue story of the past occurred early in the winter when Captain F. T. Burkhart, of the S. S. *The Lambs,* a shipping-board vessel, rescued the crew of the schooner *Henrietta Simmons* off Winter Quarter Lightship.

The *Simmons* was caught in a seventy-mile northwest gale and, being nearly sixty years old, was being slowly pounded to pieces by the high seas which were breaking over her. Despite the heavy seas a lifeboat was lowered, and although the men from *The Lambs* came dangerously near losing their own lives by being almost swamped several times, all of the crew of the *Henrietta Simmons* were taken off safely. This was not effected any too soon, for shortly after she sank in twenty-one fathoms of water.

The foregoing cases are not exceptional and frequently similar acts are passed over with no more than a small paragraph in the daily news. It is not until some popular writer depicts such acts in glowing terms that the average person pays the least attention to them.

At the tail end of January ceremonies were held in Lisbon, Portugal, commemorating the 400th anniversary of the death of Vasco da Gama, the Portugese navigator who discovered the overseas route to India. That the same spirit of adventure still lives is indicated in the long voyages that we frequently hear of taken, sometimes, by lone mariners—not with the idea of discovering new worlds as the first voyagers did, but rather with the love and lure of the sea and its mysteries. Several of these have been mentioned from time to time in the pages of the Log Book and now we hear of an expedition of fourteen men, under the command of Captain Norman Wilkin, of the Royal Naval Reserve, who sailed from Appledore, the Devonshire port where Drake weighed anchor many years ago, on New Year's Day.

The boat they are making this voyage in, the *Marion,* is hardly larger than that commanded by that doughty old Britisher and Captain Wilkins and his companions will follow minutely the route of his illustrious countryman, around the dangerous Straits of Magellan and up the Pacific coast. Theirs will be largely a cruise of adventure and also to prove that such is not alone confined to the stage and the films.

Then again we have the modern yachtsmen. With their long-distance races—from Atlantic ports to Bermuda, in small boats, and on the Pacific coast the race from there to Papeete, a distance of thirty-eight hundred miles, the way they carry on, cracking on sail and driving their boats to the limit, is worthy of the finest traditions of the old clipper-ship days. And theirs is not the lure of the olden days—supremacy in commerce and its monetary gain but rather for a love of the sea that has survived

in spite of the advent of steam and the trend of this mechanical age.

Some of the kites carried in previous races on the Pacific to Honolulu are reminiscent of the days when records were being made in the California gold rush days and the days of the tea and wool clippers—times when taking advantages of every puff while in the doldrums might mean days and many dollars, due to the high premiums on a quick passage.

Last month we quoted from the *Hydrographic Bulletin,* giving items which we thought might interest a majority of our readers, and this month we are going to quote further on a subject which should please our friends in the "black gang." It refers to the old question on whether a vessel moves faster—with or against the current. The answer may be summed up in the statement that there is no difference if we consider the vessel only as going through the water and without reference to an object on shore or the time of arrival at a destination. If considered with reference to distance traveled over the ground of course there is a very decided difference.

However, here is the query as it appeared in the *Hydrographic Bulletin* and their answer.

THE EFFECT OF CURRENT ON PROPELLER

I find myself standing alone among my shipmates with my theory as to the effect of current on the speed of revolutions of the screw propeller.

Consider a steamer in the Gulf Stream—she is a ten-knot vessel in slack water, no more or no less—the stream is moving along at a uniform rate to a depth exceeding the draft of the ship; there is no wind, no sea. This case, I believe, embodies all the conditions necessary to settle the question.

I claim that if the ship were to steam straight against the stream or with it, according to the stated conditions, the revolutions of the propeller would be in no way affected by the current.

My opponents in the argument say that going with the stream the water coming from astern would press against the screw and thus retard the speed of revolution, and, on the other hand, if she were steaming against the current the water would rush faster by the ship and thus increase the number of revolutions.

I ask the question, am I right in my theory?

Answer.—A ship at sea, steaming in a current of appreciable width and which has a depth much greater than the draft of the ship, will experience no variation in the hourly distance run through the water, whether this distance be measured by revolutions per minute of the propellers or by the patent log—properly calibrated—provided the weather conditions regarding wind and wave are negligible and the revolutions per minute are constant.

If the current is not of a depth of at least fifty feet more than the draft of the vessel, the propeller might experience some effect from this lower strata of still water or water running in a different direction to the water in contact with the vessel. From numerous experiences it has been found that vessels standardizing over a standard mile, in order to obtain accurate results, should run in water of at least one hundred feet greater depth than the draft of the vessel in order to eliminate interference with the bottom caused by the whorl of water thrown off by the propeller, and which extends to a considerable depth below the propeller.

Your request for information has been referred to Rear Admiral David W. Taylor, C. C., U. S. navy, and to Rear Admiral C. W. Dyson, U. S. navy, probably the highest authorities on ship design and propeller design, respectively, and they agree in substance with the above statements.

In summation, you are informed that you are absolutely correct in your contention regarding the nonvariance of propeller revolutions and patent log readings in a current at sea when only the effect of the current on each method of registering the speed is considered.

One of the old songs that have been referred to occasionally but which we have never seen in print has just been received. It was accompanied by an offer to furnish the music if we would write it down on hearing it played. The Old Man does not count this art among his few accomplishments but long be-

fore this reaches you he expects to have this done through either one of two friends.

In answer to the appeal of Shipmate McConnell, in the January issue of SEA STORIES, I am inclosing a copy of the words of the song, "The *Cumberland's* Crew." I do not know the author's name, but a friend of mine had the pleasure of being introduced to him, as he, the author, was singing the song in the street, in Philadelphia, and selling copies of the words. My friend could not recall his name, but stated that it was a short time after the sea fight had taken place, and that the author was one of the survivors of the crew of the *Cumberland*.

The *Cumberland* was a sloop-of-war and the *Merrimac* had been a frigate, but had been partially destroyed by fire and then sunk at the Gosport Navy Yard. It was raised and what was left of the spars removed and the hull converted into an ironclad.

I hope Shipmate "Mac" will continue to favor the Log readers with some more of his reminiscences. I read his letter over twice, and some time later I'll overhaul it again, to convince myself that I have not missed a letter of it.

I wish to compliment you on that able review on "Roll and Go," or "Songs of American Sailormen," by Miss Joanna C. Colcord, in the last issue of SEA STORIES. It is a collection on which she has spent a vast amount of patient research and labor to verify the words and music. From a historic point of view I think it is a worthy companion to Captain Arthur Clark's "Clipper Ship Era." It is good to know that some persons were thoughtful and gifted enough to place the history of the "White Winged Racers" and the songs and chanteys of the men who manned them before the public ere Father Time wiped out all recollection of them.

The *Cumberland's* Crew

Come, shipmates, gather and join in my ditty,
Of the terrible battle that has happened of late,
And let each Union tar shed a tear of pity
When he thinks of the once gallant *Cumberland's* fate.
On the eighth day of March, which will long be remembered,
When many a brave tar to this world bid adieu,
And the flag of our Union, how proudly it flaunted,
Sustained by the blood of the *Cumberland's* crew.

On that ill-fated day, about ten in the morning,
The sky it was clear, and bright shone the sun,
The drums of the *Cumberland* sounded a warning
That told every seaman to stand by his gun.
An ironclad frigate down on us came bearing,
And high in the air the rebel flag flew,
The pennant of treason, how proudly 'twas waving,
Determined to conquer the *Cumberland's* crew.

Now up spoke our captain, with stern resolution,
Saying, "My boys, of this monster do not be dismayed,
For we swore to maintain our beloved Constitution,
And to die for our country we are not afraid.
We fight for the Union, our cause it is glorious,
To the Stars and the Stripes we will ever prove true."
"We will sink at our quarters, or conquer victorious,"
Was answered with cheers by the *Cumberland's* crew.

Our gallant ship fired her guns' dreadful thunder,
Her shot, like hail, on the rebel did pour;
The people gazed on, struck with terror and wonder,
The shots struck her side, but glanced harmlessly o'er;
But the pride of our navy could never be daunted,
Though the dead and the wounded our decks did they strew,
And the flag of our Union above us was flying,
'Twas nailed to the mast by the *Cumberland's* crew.

She fought us three hours, with stern resolution,
Till the enemy found cannon would ne'er avail them,
For the flag of secession had no power to gall us,
Though the blood from our scuppers it crimsoned the tide.
She struck us amidships, our planks she did sever,
And her sharp iron prong pierced our noble ship through,

But still as they sank in the dark rolling waters,
"We'll die by our guns," said the *Cumberland's* crew.

Columbia's fair birthright, of freedom communion,
Your flag never floated so proudly before,
And the spirits of those who once fought for "Our Union,"
Above its broad folds now exultingly soar.
In their battle-stained graves they are silently sleeping,
Their spirits have bid adieu to this world evermore;
But the flag of "Our Union" above them is flying,
May their blood be avenged on Virginia's far shore.

COMPOSED BY ONE OF THE CREW.

If you happen to meet any person making a collection of sea songs, and that would like to publish the above I will gladly furnish the melody, the person seeking it to write it down as I play it on the violin. No sea song that I have ever heard has a more tuneful air than this one. JOS. F. MCGINNIS.
339 Fifth Street, Brooklyn, N. Y.

While on this subject of old-time songs we have just received a copy of "The *Dreadnought*," from the dean of naval architects in America to-day. Mr. Tams, while a constant reader, has never contributed to our columns before, but his contribution, which appears below, is doubly valuable in that he gives the author's name, a fact that too often is lost and frequently leads to endless controversy. This version is quite different from either Captain Whall's, in "Sea Songs and Shanties" or Miss Colcord's in "Roll and Go," both of which are set to music in these editions.

In the process of going over old books and other documents not worth saving, preparatory to moving uptown, I ran across the inclosed verses to the celebrated clipper ship *Dreadnought*, composed by an old and very dear friend of mine, the late S. Nicholson Kane, who gave them to me.

I do not recollect that I have ever seen them published in full, and, as they are so stirring, I thought they might contribute to the salty complexion of SEA STORIES, of which I am a faithful reader.

The *Dreadnought*

There's a saucy, wild packet, she's a packet of fame,
She's bound to New York and the *Dreadnought's* her name;
She is bound to the westward, where the wild winds do blow—
Bound away in the *Dreadnought*, to the westward we'll go.

The chorus repeats the last two lines in each stanza.

Oh, the day of our sailing is now drawing nigh,
Fare ye well, pretty Mary, I must bid you good-by.
Farewell to old England and all we hold dear,
As away in the *Dreadnought* to the westward we'll steer.

Chorus.

Oh, the *Dreadnought* she's a-hauling out of Liverpool dock,
And the boys and the girls on the piers do flock—
We'll give them three cheers while the tears down do flow,
With a curse on the calm and a hail to the blow.

Chorus.

Oh, the *Dreadnought* she's a-howling down the wild Irish Sea,
And the lights they're a-twinkling in the land on our lee—
Lay aloft, spread your royals, pipe the watch from below,
Here's "Good luck to the *Dreadnought*, wheresome'er she may go."

Chorus.

Oh, the *Dreadnought* she's becalmed off the Banks of Newfoundland—
Where the water 'tis green and the bottom it is sand,
And the fish of the ocean swim around to and fro,
As away in the *Dreadnought* to the westward we go.

Chorus.

Oh, the *Dreadnought* she's a-howlin' past old Nantucket Head—
And the man in the chains takes a cast with the lead—
Then up jumps the flounder just fresh from the ground,
Crying, "Blast your eyes, chucklehead, and mind where you sound!"

Chorus.

Oh, the *Dreadnought* she's a-howling down
the Long Island shore—
And the pilot comes aboard of us as he's oft-
times done before.
Fill away your main topsail, board your main
tack also,
When the Navesinks are sighted then the
grog it will flow.

Chorus.

Oh, the *Dreadnought* she's a-working up to
New York once more;
Pretty Polly will wed me, for I asked her be-
fore.
When the anchor is down then we'll all go
ashore,
Here's good luck to the *Dreadnought* both
now and evermore.

J. FREDERIC TAMS.
52 Pine Street, New York City.

Shipmate Branigan comes aft with a request for the whereabouts of several of the old time "windbags." One of the vessels he mentions was reported last month in Brother Wright's list of boats now laid up in and around San Francisco. This is the *Daylight*.

We are glad to also hear that Lloyd Kay's "Blacklock's Wood Nymphs," has found another rooter as one of the best stories that have appeared in the pages of SEA STORIES.

I am a reader of SEA STORIES and have pleasure in saying that I enjoy the yarns immensely. I read, with interest, John T. Gansel's letter regarding the *Tillie M. Starbuck*. Many a time I have been aboard her when she docked in New York.

I got to know the mate. He was a big, rangy fellow, a typical bucko mate, hard of jaw and hard of fist. I often wonder if he was in the *Starbuck* when she foundered.

Do any of the old salts recall the following ships? *A. G. Ropes, Henry B. Hyde, I. E. Chapman, John Ena, Hawaiian Isles, Shenandoah, Roanoke, Lawhill, Glendoon, Daylight, Astral?* The last four named were Standard Oil vessels.

I saw the *Glendoon* come up through the Narrows under her own sail—a sight which was seldom witnessed even in the days when there were quite a number of windjammers.

I was aboard the *Roanoke* when she docked in New York after a voyage lasting one hundred and fifty-seven days from China. She was becalmed in the China Sea for more than fifty days on that trip.

I join with Mr. C. E. Tallman in saying that Lloyd Kay's "Blacklock's Wood Nymphs" is one of the best sea stories I have ever read. W. I. BRANIGAN.
295 Whitford Avenue, Nutley, N. J.

IT is always a great pleasure to be able to locate, or help to locate, a lost shipmate. And, while in this case we are not exactly finding the gentleman in question, we are at least furnishing his address, but we hope that this information will not be received too late to be of service to Mr. Fairlee, who wrote the letter requesting it. Mr. Summers' address is: Box 455, Old Forge, N. Y.

Touching upon the other features of Mr. Fairlee's letter, we must say that, while there may have been a few such stories as he mentions in his communication, we do not feel that there have been enough to influence people's opinions about tugboat skippers as he suggests. There have been too many long, deep-water tows leaving the Atlantic seaboard in the last six months. Two of these were large transatlantic liners which were towed from New York to European ports where they were broken up. This is quite a feat that, in the minds of thinking people, would leave no doubt as to the capability of tugboat officers.

Captain, I appears by the chartroom door and doffs my lid respectfully, asking that you hearken to my tale of woe.

May I inquire through the Log Book for a seagoing wanderer of the engineering species—viz., one Robert G. Summers, who is presumably on a tug somewhere in New York State? I had a letter from him, but it had passed through a dynamited mail-car holdup near here, and the return address was unreadable. So I inquires for any trace of this shipmate. He will remember "Black Gang" Cralle.

Another thing, skipper, I happen to be a seafaring man, of the variety generally referred to by fiction writers as a "drunken tugboat pilot." S'funny, skipper, why we are always drunk. This tug I command is a seagoing one, and we always wander hither and yon over the festive ocean without leaving our keel marks in the beach sand.

Well, it's my watch on deck now, so I'll ring "stand by." Hoping that I may have a line in the Log Book inquiring for the said engineer, I remain, very truly yours,

CHARLES FAIRLEE.

456 Harrison Street, San Francisco, Calif.

I have followed up SEA STORIES for a good while now, and not having seen any account of the American barkentine *Herbert H. Fuller*, I would like to know if you could give me any information about her?

I have heard many accounts of a dastardly crime that was committed on one of her voyages in which the captain, captain's wife, and the second mate lost their lives.

What makes me so interested in this ship is that we are now carrying out pumping operations on a barkentine or what was such, which vessel was picked up by the tug I am on, a derelict, and towed into Bermuda. Talking to an old American shellback the other day he hinted to me that this ship, or at least barkentine, called the *John S. Emery*, was, at one time, named the *Herbert H. Fuller*, which at once recalled the yarns I had heard about her.

Do you or any of our shipmates know anything about this incident, and can you give me the correct account of it, if there was such a case? I. WOODALL.

Care of Tug *Baldrock*, St. Georges, Bermuda.

As the Old Man is unfamiliar with this, perhaps some of you who scan the pages of the Log Book know or have heard of it. If so we would appreciate your sending in the yarn so that we can add it to the list of valuable information that we have been able to gather and disseminate among all lovers of the sea.

T. Jenkins Hains, whose salty and interesting yarns have found a kind reception in the pages of the good ship SEA STORIES, is a master mariner who counts among his many experiences voyages around the Horn in sailing ships. His contribution to the "shakin's barrel" is an exceptional word picture of his conception of the spirit of Cape Horn. It really astonished the Old Man for he did not know that versifying was also one of Captain Hain's accomplishments.

THE GENIUS OF THE HORN

There was a song—a chantey croon—
Oft sung beneath the tropic moon;
When topsail yard, and royal, too,
Were swung aloft against the blue—
When all the dangers of the storm
Were lost within the trade wind warm;
One seldom hearkens to this tale
When plunging, hove to, in a gale.

We sang of barks with phantom crew
Whose misty sails the moon shone through,
Of ghostly ships that in the night
Tore past and vanished from the sight;
The grisly shapes of ghoulish sharks,
Those haunting fiends of slaving barks,
They followed far below the keel,
Full forty fathoms from the heel.

We also sang of a fiery pit,
Where like a game bird, on a spit,
Each rascal salt was deftly turned
And for his sins was fiercely burned;
All this we sang, with easy breath,
For sailors seldom think of death.
It little curbed my spirit proud
While heading toward Magellan's cloud.

For superstition, let it pass,
There was no priest, there was no Mass,
And if our lives were full of wrong
It served us right—so went the song.
Our sufferings here would naught avail,
To save us when our lives should fail;
Each cringing soul must face his end
Firm as the flint that cannot bend.

We had our luck—it did not last,
For soon the southeast trade was past.
With falling glass and skies to warn
We faced the storm fiends of the Horn.
Then followed always, day and night,
A giant bird, all snowy white;
One craven seaman signed the cross,
He feared the huge-winged albatross.

Our faith in winds that always shift
Was left in that antarctic drift,
Some favorite gales blew fast along,
Then turned to head winds, still more strong;
For nine long weeks and some days more
Our good ship to the westward bore.
Then came a gale of fiercer kind
Just as we left Cape Horn behind.

Before that roaring Cape Horn blast,
Through southern seas our ship flew fast.
Away in roaring, thundering boom,
Of seas that whitened in the gloom,
With yards stripped bare we tore along
While shrouds and backstay sung its song,
As tearing through the snowy froth
Our bowsprit pointed, to the north.

I was a sailor, old and tough,
With thews like close-laid ratline stuff,
I faced the yardarm's heaving sway,
A faithless, rotten lift gave way;
One parting shriek, one ghastly yell,
Then closed my eyes and downward fell,
With sudden rush and stinging pain
I struck the bosom of the main.

Then came wild moments, struggling fast,
To gain the flying ship that passed;
The frantic fight, the creeping sleep,
The awful silence of the deep.
Away a dim, drawn shadow bore
The news—a sailor was no more;
Some rushing feet, a line to save,
Then left me to my watery grave.

L'envoi.

The light that flashed back, my soul was born,
Again I saw the rugged Horn.
Far up above the wild sea's toss
I grew—a white-winged albatross;
Below me rolled the southern seas,
To southward stood the Ramirez.
With pinions bending from the land
I left wild Patagonia's strand.

I cruised to harbors bleak and bare,
And saw there moored, with curious care,
Those ships that long were overdue,
The ships whose end no mortal knew.
Their decks were white, their shrouds were black,
Their sails were clewed up, sheet and tack;
Above them rose a mournful cry,
Like winds that through the rigging sigh.

In darkening ports, a bristling gun
Sent flashing back the southern sun.
Some showed the marks of desperate fight,
Grim looking in that baleful light;
But all lay on that sheltered sea,
Moored there for all eternity.
And now this ghostly harbor's past
With folded wings, I stopped at last.

Silent and sad, I bore my cross,
Living the life of the albatross.
Passion was dead, desire was gone,
Left in that sea, just off the Horn,
All of the suffering, woe and care,
Even the aching, dead despair;
Nothing but peaceful calm and rest
Found place within the white bird's breast.

Slowly the black, antarctic night
Came dimming down the fading sight.
Some inward urge then shaped my course,
From off the land of Dead Remorse,
And toward the seas of sun and light
Away to the northward steered my flight.
Above the silent ships I flew
Nor heard a sound from ghostly crew.

Above that land, between the seas,
The lonely rocks of Ramirez,
I watch the ships from year to year,
The storm-torn crests the sailors fear,
On sleepless pinion, quick to warn
When comes the storm-fiend of the Horn.
To southward flares the Southern Cross,
To guide them comes the albatross.

The Next Voyage

The miscellaneous cargo stowed in the holds for the May clearance of the good ship Sea Stories includes an even proportion of valuable trade goods that are varied in bulk, but constant in their high worth. "Salvage," by George Allan England, is a novelette of that most interesting "graveyard of the Atlantic," Sable Island, the treacherous bars of which are almost one unbroken expanse of historic wrecks. "Rawson's Special Treatment," by Willis J. Rutledge, is a deep-water yarn of "the black gang." "Jonah Bill," by T. Jenkins Hains, and "The Way Out," by Arthur Lockwood, are short stories by two authors who are ever popular with Sea Stories readers, and the third installment of "The Cape Horn Snorters," by Lloyd Kay, continues the exploits of an intrepid crew of mariners. "Prunes," by Francis Rotch; "Sulphur Bottoms," by James K. Waterman, and "The Smoky Sou'wester," by Warren Elliot Carleton, are short stories of steam navigation, whaling, and swordfishing, and another installment of Don Waters' "Man on the Water" deals with pearls and pearling. "Opinion," by Chester L. Saxby, and several other items complete the cargo, which is covered by the assurance of the underwriters that it is one of the choicest ever loaded into the good ship. Then, too, the Old Man will make a number of noteworthy entries in the Log Book.