



The STRIFE of
THE SEA



By T · JENKINS HAINS



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IN THE WAKE OF THE WEATHER CLOTH.—See Pages 305-320.

THE STRIFE OF THE SEA

T. JENKINS HAINS

AUTHOR OF "THE WIND-JAMMERS," ETC.



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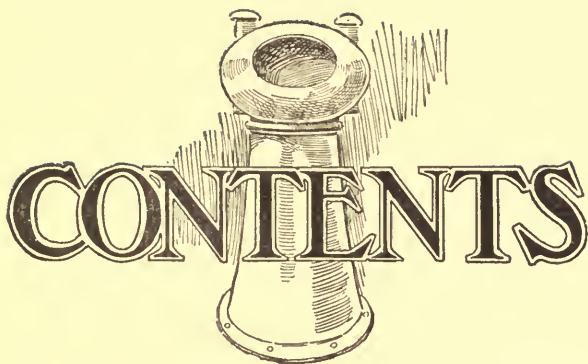
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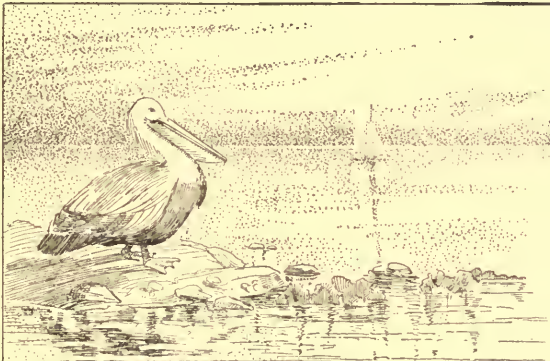


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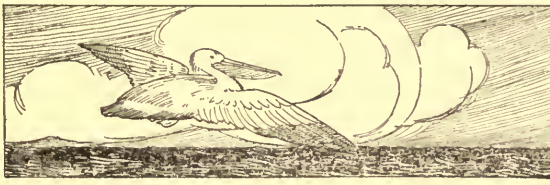
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THE
OLD MAN
OF
SANDKEY



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THE STRIFE OF THE SEA

THE OLD MAN OF SAND KEY

HE was an old man when he first made his appearance on the reef at the Sand Key Light. This was years ago, but one could tell it even then by the way he drew in his chin, or rather pouch, in a dignified manner as he soared in short circles over the outlying coral ledges which shone vari-colored in the sunshine beneath the blue waters of the Gulf Stream. He had fished alone for many seasons without joining the smaller and more social birds, and the keepers had grown to know him. He was a dignified and silent bird, and his stately flight and ponderous waddle over the dry reef had made it quite evident that he was a bird with a past. Sandy Shackford, the head keeper, knew him well and relied implicitly upon his judgment

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as to the location of certain denizens of the warm Stream. He had come back again after a month's absence, and was circling majestically over the coral banks not a hundred fathoms from the light.

The day was beautiful and the sunshine was hot. The warm current of the Gulf flowed silently now with the gentle southwest wind, and the white sails of the spongers from Havana and Key West began to dot the horizon. Here and there a large barracouta or albacore would dart like a streak of shimmering silver through the liquid, and the old man would cast his glance in the direction of the vanishing point with a ready pinion to sweep headlong at the mullet or sailor's-choice which were being pursued.

His gray head was streaked with penciled feathers which grew longer as they reached his neck, and his breast was colored a dull, mottled lead. His back and wings gave a general impression of gray and black, the long pinions of the latter being furnished with stiff quills which

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tapered with a lighter shade to the tips. His beak and pouch were of more than ordinary proportions, for the former was heavy and hooked at the end and the latter was large and elastic, capable of holding a three-pound mullet.

He soared slowly over the reef for some time, and the keeper watched him, sitting upon the rail of the lantern smoking his pipe, while his assistant filled the body of the huge lamp and trimmed its several wicks.

To the westward a slight ripple showed upon the surface of the quiet sea. The pelican sighted it and stood away toward it, for it looked like a mackerel that had come to the surface to take in the sunshine and general beauty of the day. In a moment the old man had swung over the spot at a height of about a hundred feet; then suddenly folding his wings, he straightened out his body, opened his beak, and shot straight downwards upon the doomed fish. It was literally a bolt from heaven from out of a clear sky. The lower beak expanded as it hit the water and

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opened the pouch into a dipper which scooped up the mackerel, while the weight of the heavy body falling from the great height carried everything below the surface with a resounding splash that could be heard distinctly upon the light. Then up he came from the dive with the fish struggling frantically in his tough leathern sack. He rested a moment to get his breath and then stretched forth his pinions again and rose in a great circle into the clear blue air.

“The old man’s fishin’ mackerel this mornin’,” said Sandy, “an’ I reckon I’ll get the dory an’ try a squid over along the edge o’ the Stream as soon as the breeze makes.”

“Well, take care you don’t lose nothin’,” said Bill with a grin.

“Whatcher mean?” snarled the older keeper.

“Nothin’,” answered the assistant.

“Then don’t say it,” said Sandy, and he walked down the steps of the spider-like structure, muttering ominously, until he reached the reef a hundred feet below, where, hauled high and

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dry, lay his boat. Sandy was an old man, and had depended upon false teeth for some years. The last time he had gone fishing he had lost them from his boat, and as he could not leave the light he had nearly starved to death. In desperation at last he had set the ensign union down and signaled for assistance, the second keeper Bill being ashore on leave, and after the U. S. S. *Ohio* had come all the way from Key West to find out the cause of the trouble he had been forced to explain to the officer his humiliating disaster. As the danger of landing in the surf had been great and the services of the man-of-war had been required for a whole day, he had been forced to listen to a lecture upon the absurdity of his behavior that did little to encourage him, and it was only his emaciated appearance and unfeigned weakness from loss of food that saved him his position as keeper.

He shoved his small boat off and sprang into her. Then he stepped the mast, and hauling aft the sheet swung her head around and stood off

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the reef, riding easily over the low swell. High above him was the lantern, and he looked up to see Bill gazing down at him and pointing toward the southward, where a ripple showed the breaching fish. His lines were in the after locker, and he soon had them out, one of them with a wooden squid trolling over the stern as the little craft gathered headway.

The memory of his former disaster now came upon him, and he took out his teeth, which were new, and examined the plates upon which they were fastened. A small hole in either side showed, and through these he rove a piece of line. Then he placed the teeth back in his mouth and fastened the ends of the line back of his ear.

“ Let ’em drop an’ be danged to it, they’ll git back mighty quick this time,” he muttered. “ I wonder where that old pelican left the school of fish? ”

The old bird had satisfied his present needs and had flown away to a distant part of the out-

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lying bank, where he was now proceeding to enjoy his catch at leisure. Far away to the northward, where Key West showed above the horizon, a long line of black specks were rapidly approaching through the air. They were the regular fishermen of the reef, and they were bound out to sea this morning for their daily meal. On they came in single file like a line of soldiers, their distance apart remaining regular and the motions of their leader followed with military precision. Every time he would strike the air several sharp strokes with his wings, the motion would be instantly taken up by the long line of followers flapping their own in unison.

The "old man" heeded them very little indeed as he quietly ate his fish, and they knew enough not to bother him. They sailed majestically past and swung in huge circles over the blue Gulf to locate the passing school.

The old man mused as he ate, and wondered at their stupidity. Even the light-keeper knew as

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much as they. There was the breaching school a mile away to windward, and the stupid birds were still watching him.

He saw his wives go past in line. There was old Top-knot, a wise and ugly companion of former days, her penciled feathers on her neck rubbed the wrong way. Behind her came a young son, an ingrate, who even now would try to steal the fish from him did he but leave it for a moment to dive for another. He glanced at him and ate steadily on. He would finish his fish first and look out for his ungrateful son afterwards.

Further behind came his youngest companion, one who had hatched forth twelve stout birds during the past few years and who was still supple and vigorous, her smooth feathers still showing a gloss very pretty to look at. But she gave him no notice, and he ate in silence until they all passed far beyond and sighted at last the breaching mackerel.

When he had finished he sat stately and digni-

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fied upon the sand of the reef, all alone. Far away to the southward, where the high mountains of the Cuban shore rose above the line of water when he soared aloft, a thin smoke rose from some passing steamer. To the northward the spars of the shipping at Key West stuck above the calm sea. All about was peaceful, bright, and beautiful daylight, and the ugly spider-like tower of the Sand Key Light stood like a huge sentinel as though to guard the scene.

The day was so quiet that the sullen splashes of the fisher birds sounded over the smooth surface of the sea, and the breeze scarcely rippled the blue water. The deep Gulf rolled and heaved in the sunshine, and the drone of the small breakers that fell upon the reef sounded low and had a sleepy effect upon the old fellow who had finished his fish.

He sat with his pouch drawn in and his long, heavy beak resting upon his neck, which he bent well into the shape of a letter S. Now and then

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he would close an eye as the glare from the white coral in the sunshine became too bright. The man in the boat was trolling back and forth through the school of fish with hardly enough way on his craft to make them strike, but every now and then he saw him haul aboard a shimmering object that struggled and fought for freedom. Above, and at a little distance, soared the pelicans. Every now and then one would suddenly fold its wings and make a straight dive from the height of a hundred feet or more, striking the sea with a splash that sent up a little jet of foam.

The sun rose higher and the scorching reef glared in the fierce light. The old man shifted his feet on the burning sand and looked about him for a spot where he might bring another fish and lie quiet for the afternoon. He turned his head toward the westward, where Mangrove Key rose like a dark green bush a few feet above the water of the reef. Two small specks were in the blue void above it, and his eyes instantly detected

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them and remained staring at them with unwinking gaze.

The specks grew larger rapidly, but they were a long way off yet, and he might be mistaken as to what they were. He had seen them rise above the blue line before, and if they were what he took them to be there would be trouble on the reef before long. Yes, he was not mistaken. They rose steadily, coming on a straight line for him, and now they were only a mile distant. Then he noticed one of the objects swerve slightly to the eastward and he saw they were, indeed, a pair of the great bald eagles from the Everglades of Florida.

He was an old man, and he gazed steadily at them without much concern, although he knew they meant death to all who opposed their path. They were pirates. They were the cruelest of killers and as implacable and certain in their purpose as the Grim Destroyer himself. The pelicans fishing for their living over the reef were good and easy prey. A sudden dash among

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them, with beak and talons cutting and slashing right and left, and there would be some full pouches of fish to empty. It was much better to let the stupid birds fill up first and then sweep among them. Then, after despoiling them of their hard-gotten catch, they would carry as much of the plunder as they cared for to some sheltering key to devour at leisure.

The white head of the leading pirate shone in the sunshine and his fierce eyes were fixed upon the fishermen. The old man was apparently unnoticed, although there was little within the sweep of that savage gaze that was left unmarked. Those eyes could see the slightest object on land or sea far beyond the reach of ordinary vision. They had even this morning, probably, been watching the fishermen from from some distant key miles away to the northward.

The old man was a huge, tough old fellow, and he dreaded nothing. He gazed at the fishermen and a feeling of disdain for their weakness

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came upon him. He thought of his old scolding mate, Top-knot. What a scared old bird she would be in a moment with that great eagle sailing straight as a bullet for her, his beak agape, and his hoarse scream sounding in her wake. How she would make for the open sea, only to be caught in a few moments and torn until she disgorged her fish. His eldest son would make a show of fight, perhaps, and in a very few minutes would be a badly used up pelican. As for the rest, how they would wildly and silently strike for the open ocean, going in single file as was their custom, only to be overtaken one by one, until they were all ripped and torn by the fierce fighters, who would follow leisurely along behind, striking and clutching, screaming and calling to increase their fright and dismay.

He was almost amused at the prospect, for the pirate birds seemed to know him instinctively for a barren prize and swept with the speed of the wind past him and over the reef to the blue waters of the Gulf beyond, where the fishermen

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were still unaware of their approach. He would watch and see the skirmish, for no harm could come to him even though all the rest were killed and wounded. He swung himself around and gazed seaward again, and suddenly the thought of his uselessness came upon him.

Why should he sit there and see this thing done—he, an old man? He had led the flock for many years. Should he, the father of many and the companion of all in former days, see them cut up by two enemies? What if they no longer cared for him? What if the younger birds were ungrateful and would steal his fish? Was he not the old leader, the one they all had looked to in the years gone by? Did not even the men in the tower treat his knowledge with respect? And here a couple of fierce marauders from the forests of the land had passed him to wreak their will upon the timid birds whose leader had grown old. Memories of former days came to him, and something made him raise his head very straight and draw his pouch close in.

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He sat gazing for a few moments longer. The eagles now had closed up half the distance, for they were going with a rush. A pelican saw them and headed straight out to sea, striking the air wildly with outstretched pinions. Then in they dashed with hoarse cries that caused the keeper in the boat to luff into the wind to witness the struggle.

The old man launched his weight into the air, and with a few sudden strokes rose to the height of a couple of fathoms above the sea, bearing down toward the screaming birds with the rapidity of an express train.

Above Sandy Shackford a very mixed affair was taking place. The two eagles had dashed into the pelicans without warning and were within striking distance before many of them could even turn to flee. Old Top-knot had just caught a fine fish and was in the act of rising with it when the leading eagle swooped down upon her with a shrill scream. She was an old and nervous bird and a touch from any other creature she

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dreaded at all times. Now, right behind her came a giant shape, with glaring eyes and gaping beak, a very death's-head, white and grisly, while beneath were a pair of powerful feet, armed with sharp talons, ready to seize her in a deadly grip. She gave a desperate leap to clear the sea and stretch her wings, but the sight was too much for her, and she sank back upon the surface. The great eagle was too terrifying for her old nerves, and she sat helpless.

In an instant the eagle was upon her. He seized her fiercely in his talons and struck her savagely in the back, and the poor old bird instantly disgorged her newly caught fish. Her savage assailant hesitated a moment before striking her down for good and all, while he watched the fish swim away into the depths below. Then he turned to finish her.

At that instant there was a tremendous rush through the air, and a huge body struck him full in the breast, knocking him floundering upon the sea. The old man had come at him

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as straight as a bullet from a gun, and, with the full force of his fifteen pounds sailing through the air, had struck him with his tough old body, that had been hardened by many a high dive from above.

The eagle was taken completely aback, and struggled quickly into the air to get out of that vicinity, while the old man, carried along by the impetus of his rush, soared around in a great circle and came slowly back to renew the attack. In a moment the eagle had recovered, and, with true game spirit, swung about to meet this new defender of the fishermen. They met in mid-air, about two fathoms above the sea, and Sandy Shackford cheered wildly for his old acquaintance as he landed a heavy blow with his long, hooked bill.

“Go it, old man!” he cried. “Give it to him. Oh, if I had my gun, wouldn’t I soak him for ye!”

The other birds had fled seaward, and were now almost out of sight, being pursued by the

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second eagle. One limp form floated on the sea to mark the course of the marauder. Old Topknot had recovered from the shock, and was now making a line for Cuba. The old man was the only one left, and he was detaining the great bald eagle for his last fight, the fight of his life.

Around and around they soared. The eagle was wary and did not wish to rush matters with the determined old man, who, with beak drawn back, sailed about ready for a stroke. Then, disdaining the clumsy old fellow, the bald eagle made a sudden rush as though he would end the matter right there. The old man met him, and there was a short scrimmage in the air which resulted in both dropping to the sea. Here the old man had the advantage. The eagle could not swim, his powerful talons not being made for propelling him over the water. The old man managed to hold his own, although he received a savage cut from the other's strong beak. This round was a draw. During this time the second

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eagle had seen that his companion was not following the startled game, and he returned just in time to see him disengage from a whirlwind of wings and beaks and wait a moment to decide just how he would finish off the old fellow who had the hardihood to dispute his way. Then he joined the fight, and together they swooped down upon the old man for the finish.

He met them with his head well up and wings outstretched, and gave them so much to do that they were entirely taken up with the affair and failed to notice Sandy Shackford, who was creeping up, paddling with all his strength with an oar-blade.

The encounter could not last long. The old fellow was rapidly succumbing to the attacks of his powerful antagonists, and although he still kept the mix-up in a whirl of foam with his desperate struggles, he could not hope to last against two such pirates as were now pitted against him. One of them struck him fiercely and tore his throat open, ripping his pouch from

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end to end. He was weakening fast and knew the struggle must end in another rush. Both eagles came at him at once, uttering hoarse cries, and drawing back his head he made one last, desperate stroke with his hooked beak. Then something seemed to crash down upon his foes from above. An oar-blade whirled in the sunshine and struck the leading eagle upon the head, knocking him lifeless upon the sea. Then the other rose quickly and started off to the northward as the form of the keeper towered above in the bow of the approaching boat.

Sandy Shackford picked the great white-headed bird from the water and dropped him into the boat and the old man looked on wondering. He had known the keeper for a long time, but had never been at close quarters.

“Poor old man,” said Sandy. “Ye look mighty badly used up.” And then he made a motion toward him.

But the old pelican wanted no sympathy. His was the soul of the leader, and he scorned help.

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Stretching forth his wings with a mighty effort, he arose from the sea. The reef lay but a short distance away, and he would get ashore to rest. The pain in his throat was choking him, but he would sit quiet a while and get well. He would not go far, but he would be alone. The whole sea shimmered dizzily in the sunshine, but a little rest and the old bones would be right again. He would be quiet and alone.

“Poor old man,” said Sandy, as he watched him sail away. “He’s a dead pelican, but he made a game fight.”

Then he hauled in his lines, and, squaring away before the wind, ran down to the light with the eagle and a dozen fine fish in the bottom of his dory.

The next day the old man was not fishing on the reef. The other birds came back—all except one. But the old man failed to show up during the whole day.

The next day and the next came and went, and Sandy, who looked carefully every morning

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for the old fellow, began to give up all hope of seeing him again. Then, in the late afternoon when the other birds were away, the old man came sailing slowly over the water and landed stiffly upon the coral of a point just awash at the end of the key.

As the sun was setting, the old man swung himself slowly around to face it. He drew his head well back and held himself dignified and stately as he walked to the edge of the surf. There he stopped, and as the flaming orb sank beneath the western sea, the old man still stood watching it as it disappeared.

Sandy Shackford lit the lantern, and the sudden tropic night fell upon the quiet ocean.

In the morning the keeper looked out, and the old man was sitting silent and stationary as before. When the day wore on and he did not start out fishing Sandy took the dory and rowed to the jutting reef. He walked slowly toward the old man, not wishing to disturb him, but to help him if he could. He drew near, and the old

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bird made no motion. He reached slowly down, and the head he touched was cold.

Sitting there, with the setting sun shining over the southern sea, the old man had died. He was now cold and stiff, but even in death he sat straight and dignified. He had died as a leader should.

“Poor old man,” said Sandy. “His pouch was cut open an’ he jest naterally starved to death—couldn’t hold no fish, an’ as fast as he’d catch ’em they’d get away. It was a mean way to kill a fine old bird. Ye have my sympathy, old man. I came nigh goin’ the same way once myself.”

And then, as if not to disturb him, the keeper walked on his toes to his boat and shoved off.



The Outcast



THE OUTCAST

THE day was bright and the sunshine glistened upon the smooth water of Cumberland Sound. The sand beach glared in the fierce rays and the heat was stifling. What little breeze there was merely ruffled the surface of the water, streaking it out into fantastic shapes upon the oily swell which heaved slowly in from the sea. Far away the lighthouse stood out white and glinting, the trees about the tall tower looking inviting with their shade. The swell snored low and sullenly upon the bar, where it broke into a line of whiteness, and the buoys rode the tide silently, making hardly a ripple as it rushed past.

Riley, the keeper of the light, was fishing. His canoe was anchored close to the shore in three fathoms of water, and he was pulling up whiting

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in spite of the ebb, which now went so fast that it was with difficulty he kept his line upon the bottom. When he landed his fiftieth fish they suddenly stopped biting. He changed his bait, but to no purpose. Then he pulled up his line and spat upon his hook for luck.

Even this remedy for wooing the goddess of fortune failed him, and he mopped his face and wondered. Then he looked over the side.

For some minutes he could see nothing but the glint of the current hurrying past. The sunshine dazzled him. Then he shaded his eyes and tried to pierce the depths beneath the boat.

The water was as crystal, and gradually the outlines of the soft bottom began to take form. He could follow the anchor rope clear down until a cross showed where the hook took the ground.

Suddenly he gave a start. In spite of the heat he had a chill run up his spine. Then he gazed fixedly down, straight down beneath the small boat's bottom.

THE OUTCAST

A huge pair of eyes were looking up at him with a fixed stare. At first they seemed to be in the mud of the bottom, two unwinking glassy eyes about a foot apart, with slightly raised sockets. They were almost perfectly round, and although he knew they must belong to a creature lying either to or against the current, he could not tell which side the body must lie. Gradually a movement forward of the orbs attracted his attention, and he made out an irregular outline surrounding a section of undulating mud. This showed the expanse of the creature's body, lying flat as it was, and covering an area of several yards. It showed the proportions of the sea-devil, the huge ray whose shark-like propensities made it the most dreaded of the inhabitants of the Sound. There he lay looking serenely up at the bottom of the boat with his glassy eyes fixed in that grisly stare, and it was little wonder he was called the devil-fish.

Riley spat overboard in disgust, and drew in his line. There was no use trying to fish with that

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horrible thing lying beneath. He got out the oars and then took hold of the anchor line and began to haul it in, determined to seek a fishing drop elsewhere or go home. As he hauled the line, the great creature below noticed the boat move ahead. He watched it for some seconds, and then slid along the bottom, where the hook was buried in the mud.

It was easy to move his huge bulk. The side flukes had but to be ruffled a little, and the great form would move along like a shadow. He could see the man in the boat when he bent over the side, and he wondered several times whether he should take the risk of a jump aboard. He was a scavenger, and not hard to please in the matter of diet. Anything that was alive was game to his maw. He had watched for more than an hour before the light-keeper had noticed it, and now the boat was drawing away. His brain was very small, and he could not overcome a peculiar feeling that danger was always near the little creature above. He kept his eyes fixed on the

THE OUTCAST

boat's bottom, and slid along under her until his head brought up against the anchor line, now taut as Riley hove it short to break out the hook. This was provoking, and he opened a wicked mouth armed with rows of shark-like teeth. Then the anchor broke clear and was started upward, and the boat began to drift away in the current.

The spirit of badness took possession of him. He was annoyed. The boat would soon go away if the anchor was withdrawn, so he made a grab for it and seized the hook, or fluke, in his mouth, and started out to sea. Riley felt the sudden tug from below. He almost guessed what it was, and quick as lightning took a turn with the line about the forward seat. Then, as the boat's headway increased rapidly, he took the bight of the line aft and seated himself so as to keep her head up and not bury in the rush. His knife was at hand ready for a sudden slash at the line in case of emergency.

“ If he'll let go abreast o' the p'int, all right,”

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said Riley. "I seen lots harder ways o' getting about than this."

The tide was rushing out with great rapidity, and going along with it the boat fairly flew. Riley watched the shore slip past, and looked anxiously toward the lighthouse for the head keeper to see him. It would give the old man a turn, he thought, to see a boat flying through the water with the occupant sitting calmly aft taking it easy. It made him laugh outright to imagine the head keeper's look of astonishment. Then he saw the figure of the old man standing upon the platform of the tower gazing out to sea. He roared out at the top of his voice, hoping to attract attention, but the distance was too great.

Meanwhile the sea-devil was sliding along the bottom, heading for the line of white where the surf fell over the bank of the outer bar. The hook, or fluke, of the anchor was held securely in his powerful jaws, and the force necessary to tow the following craft was felt very little. The

THE OUTCAST

great side fins, or flukes, merely moved with a motion which caused no exertion to such a frame, and the long tail, armed with its deadly spear of poisoned barbs, slewed slightly from right to left, steering the creature with accuracy. And while he went his mind was working, trying to think how he could get the man from the boat after he had taken him out to sea beyond any help from the shore. A sea-devil he was, and rightly named. This he very well knew, and the thought made him fearless. He had rushed many schools of mullet and other small fish, who fled in frantic terror at his approach. He had slid into a school of large porpoises, the fishermen who seldom gave way for anything, and he sent them plunging in fear for the deep water. Once he had, in sheer devilry, leaped upon a huge logger-head turtle weighing half a ton, just to see if he could take a nip of his neck before the frightened fellow could draw in his head behind the safe shelter of his shell. He could stand to the heaviest shark that had

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ever entered the Sound, and had once driven his spear through the jaws of a monster who had sneaked up behind him unawares and tried to get a grip upon his flukes. All had shown a wholesale respect for his powers, and he had grown more and more malignant as he grew in size and strength. Even his own family had at last sought other waters on account of his peculiarly ferocious temper.

Now he would try the new game in the craft above, and he felt little doubt as to the outcome. A sudden dash and twist might demoralize the floating tow, and as he neared the black can buoy which marked the channel, he gave a tremendous rush ahead, then a sudden sheer to the right, and with a quick slew he was heading back again in the opposite direction.

Riley felt the sudden jerk ahead. He was as far as he wished to go down the shore, but had hesitated to cut the line in the hope that the devil would let go. Lines were not plentiful, and to lose this one meant an end to fishing for sev-



THE GREAT SHAPE SAILED FOR THE TOP OF THE BUOY.

THE OUTCAST

eral days. The canoe shot ahead with prodigious speed. Riley seized the knife and was about to cut loose, when there was a sudden sheer to starboard, and before he could do anything the canoe was jerked quickly over upon its side. He leaped to the rail and tried to right it, but almost instantly it was whirled about and capsized. The sea-devil now dropped the anchor and turned his attention to the boat. The fluke, taking the ground in the channel, anchored the craft a few feet distant from the can buoy, and Riley was climbing upon the upturned boat's bottom as the creature came up. Lying flat upon the keel, Riley balanced himself so as to keep clear of the sea, watching the big black can swinging to and fro in the current. If he could but seize the ring in the top he might pull himself to a place of safety.

The devil came back slowly, looking about for the occupant of the small boat. He was not in sight, and the craft was perfectly empty. This puzzled him, and he began circling around

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to see if he had overlooked him in the tideway. Then he saw a movement upon the boat, and made out the keeper lying upon the keel. He came slowly up to the side of the craft, and Riley saw a huge shadow rising alongside of him, spreading out a full two fathoms across the wings, or flukes. The ugly eyes were fixed upon him, and he yelled in terror. It was like some horrid nightmare, only he knew the deadly nature of the creature, and realized what a fate was in store for him once the devil had him fast.

The devil was in no hurry to rush matters, however, for now that the boat was again stationary he would investigate the subject before making an attack. He was not hungry.

Riley edged away from the huge shadow as far as he could, and called frantically for help. The can buoy swung close to him, and he looked up to see if it were possible to make the spring for the top. To miss it meant certain death. Then it swung away again, and he closed his eyes

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to shut out the horrid shape rising beside the boat.

The mouth of the devil was under a breadth of shovel-shaped nose, and it could not be brought to bear at once. It would necessitate a leap to grab Riley, and as the devil was in no hurry he swam slowly along the sunken gunwale waiting for a better opportunity to seize the victim. He was apparently certain of his game, and he would take his time.

Riley shrieked again and again in terror, clinging with a frantic clutch to the capsized boat.

About this time, Samuels, the keeper, who was in the tower, happened to turn around far enough to notice the black speck of the upturned boat. He was expecting Riley to show up about this time of day, and the speck upon the surface of the Sound attracted his attention. In a few moments he made it out to be the boat bottom up.

Instantly he sprang for his glasses. He saw Riley lying upon the bottom. He rushed to the

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beach as fast as he could and pushed out in a dory. His companion was in danger from drowning, and he would rescue him if possible. He knew nothing of the danger that lurked below the surface of the sea. The sea-devil was out of sight, and his small dorsal fin would not show any great distance.

Riley howled and clung to the bottom of the boat, while Samuels strove to reach him, and all the time the devil swam slowly fore and aft along the side trying to decide whether to make the leap or push the boat bodily over again. The last method appeared to be the least irksome, and he gave the boat a good shove with his nose.

Riley felt the heeling of the craft, and clutched frantically at the now slanting keel. She was turning over again, and in an instant he would be in the water. The thought of the ending gave him a madman's energy. He saw the buoy swinging closer and closer to him as the craft was pushed along sideways. Then a

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sudden eddy of the tide swung it within a few feet of the boat.

The devil, seeing the boat turning slowly over, pushed harder. In an instant the man upon the bottom would be in the water and easy to seize. He gave a sudden shove, throwing the capsized craft almost upon its side. As he did so Riley made a last desperate effort. He arose quick as lightning and balanced for an instant on the settling canoe. Then he sprang with all his strength for the ring-bolt in the top of the buoy.

Whether it was luck or the desperate strength of despair, he just managed to get the fingers of his right hand into the ring. The can toppled over as though it would capsize and land him in the sea, but with his legs in the water almost up to his waist, it brought up on its bearings, balanced by the heavy weight below. Then he hauled himself up and tried to get his legs around the iron.

At each effort the can would twist slowly in the sea, and down he would come again into

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the water, holding on by the ring above his head.

The sea-devil gave the craft a tremendous push which sent it clear over, and then he slipped under it to find the game on the side beyond. The man was gone, but he saw him hanging to the buoy close by, and he gave a sudden dash to seize him. At that instant Riley clambered like a cat upon the swinging iron, and by almost superhuman balancing he sat up on the top, some four feet clear of the water, his legs swinging on either side, making frantic efforts to keep his unstable craft from turning around in the current and spilling him into the death-trap which now lurked below in plain view. He prayed for a whale iron, and screamed for help. Then he swore furiously and madly at the shape with the stony eyes which, as implacable as death itself, lay watching him as though certain of the ultimate outcome of the affair. Without even his knife he would not be able to make the least resistance. A harpoon iron would have fixed things differ-

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ently. Oh, for one to throw at the hideous thing waiting for him! How he would like to see the barbs sink into that hard hide and pierce its vitals. He raved at it, and cursed it frantically, but the sea-devil lay there silently watching, knowing well that it was but a question of a few minutes before he would be at his mercy.

The hot afternoon sun beat pitilessly upon the clinging wretch upon the can buoy, and the heat upon his bare head made the water dance about him. But to lose his balance was fatal, and he clung and cried, prayed and screamed, cursed and raved, alternately, adjusting his trembling body to each movement of his float.

As the minutes flew by, Samuels, who was rowing to him with rapid strokes, heard his outcries, and turned to look. He could not understand the man's wild terror. It was evident that there was no time to lose, and he bent to the oars again. Suddenly he heard a piercing scream. He turned, and in time to see a great shape rise from the water like a gigantic bat, and sail right

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for the top of the can buoy. It struck it fair, and the thud of the huge body resounded over the sea. Then it fell slanting off into the water with a great splash, and when he looked at the top of the can there was nothing but a piece of blue cloth hanging to the ring-bolt. Riley was gone.

In an instant Samuels sprang to his feet and stood looking at the eddying current, paralyzed with horror at the sight. The hot sunshine and smooth sea were still all around him, but the monstrous shape had disappeared and his companion along with it. Now he knew why Riley had screamed and cursed so frantically. It was not the fear of drowning that had called forth such madness. But even while he stood there in the sunlight a horrible nightmare seemed to be taking possession of him, and he was trembling and helpless. He gave a hoarse cry and set his teeth to control his shaking nerves. Then his brain began its normal working again, and he seized his oars and gave several tremendous strokes in the direction of the buoy, looking

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over his shoulder and feeling his scalp tightening upon his head. There was a cold chill in his blood, as though the weather were winter instead of torrid July.

Suddenly something showed on the surface just under the boat's bow. He shivered in spite of himself, but the thought of his comrade nerved him for the ordeal. He sprang forward, knife in hand, to seize it if it were Riley's form, or face the monster if he appeared. A white hand came slowly upward. With a desperate effort Samuels reached over and jerked the form of his assistant into the boat, and as he did so a huge shadow darkened the water beneath him.

The sea-devil, carried along by the momentum of his rush, had knocked his victim into the water from the buoy top, but had swept past him before he could swing about far enough to seize him in his jaws. This was all that saved Riley.

Instantly Samuels, who had a stout craft, seized his oars and pulled for the lighthouse, gaz-

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ing fixedly upon the smooth water astern of him, and shivering with a nervous shake at each ripple in the wake of his boat, lest it were made by the denizen below the surface. But nothing followed. The Sound was as smooth as glass, and the sunshine and silence were undisturbed. The great ray had missed his victim, and was swimming slowly around the can buoy looking for him. He had failed to notice Samuels pick him up, although he had seen his boat pass.

While Samuels watched astern he saw the cap-sized craft near the buoy move suddenly, as though some power were exerted upon it from below. The sight caused him to bend with renewed vigor to his oars, and, with his heart sending his blood jerking through his temples with a pulse he seemed almost to hear, he drove his boat for the beach and landed safely. As he did so Riley sat up and looked about him with eyes that were like those of a man in a dream. His lips were swollen to a livid blue and he puffed through them, making a ghastly sound as they

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quivered with his breath. Samuels spoke to him, but he would only gaze about him and make the blowing noise with his mouth. Then the elder keeper took him gently by the arm and led him painfully up the sand to the lighthouse dwelling. The next day the victim was raving. It would take a long time for the poor fellow to regain his equilibrium, and absolute rest and quiet were the only thing that would steady the terribly shaken nerves. Samuels took the man to the nearest town, and then went back to tend the light alone.

The following week Samuels spent brooding over the horrible affair. The log of the keeper refers to it several times, and it was like a wild nightmare to him during his watch on the tower during darkness. During the daytime he thought of it continually, and began to devise different methods for the capture of the sea-devil, which he believed to be still in the entrance of the Sound. He had sent word of the unfortunate Riley's condition to the inspector, and was tend-

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ing the light alone when the new assistant came to relieve him. When he arrived he found Samuels hard at work upon a set of harpoons and lines which he had been preparing for his hunt, while a couple of large shark-hooks lay in the small boat ready baited. Two small boats were made ready, and the shark-hooks and lines were placed in one. The other contained five lilly-irons of the grummet-and-toggle pattern and two hundred fathoms of small line capable of holding the small boat while being towed at any speed. With this outfit they began to spend the days upon the waters of the Sound, rowing in company to the various fishing drops, and trying for a bite upon the great hooks.

Not a sign of the sea-devil had there been since the day the keeper had met him. The weather was clear and fine, and the sea smooth. Nothing rose to break the even surface. But Samuels hunted quietly on, never losing faith that some day the monster would break water again and give him a chance for either a harpoon

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or hook. In his boat he carried a long whale lance with its heart-shaped head as sharp as a razor, covered in a wooden scabbard to keep off the dampness. It would penetrate any living body a full fathom, and nothing of flesh and blood could withstand its stroke.

The sixth day out the new keeper began to give up hope of seeing anything like the game they sought. He carried ordinary hand lines, and busied himself fishing during their stays at the different drops. Sea bass, drum, and sheeps-head were biting lively, and he managed to make good use of the time they were away from the light. Toward the late afternoon the fish suddenly stopped biting. It was the beginning of the flood tide, and therefore not in keeping with the usual state of affairs. Something was the matter, and Samuels began to pay attention to his shark lines.

In a short time one of them began to go in little jerks. It was loose, with a turn around a cleat so that it might run with any sudden pull.

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Then it began to go steadily, going faster and faster, as fathom after fathom of it flaked overboard. As a shark is never jerked for some moments after he has taken bait, on account of his habit of holding a morsel in his mouth sometimes for minutes before swallowing it, the line was let run. After a shark gets it well in hand he suddenly bolts the food and makes off. Then is the time to set back with a full force upon the line in order to drive the barb of the hook into his tough throat. The chain leader of the hook will then be the only thing he can set his teeth upon, and he will be fast if the barb once gets under the tough hide.

Samuels let the line go for nearly a minute before a quickening in the movement told him that the fellow at the other end had swallowed the bait and was making away. Then rising slowly to his feet he let the line run through his fingers until he took a good brace upon the seat of his boat with his foot. Then he grasped the line suddenly with both hands, and setting back

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upon it with all his strength he stopped it for an instant. The next moment there was a whir of whistling line. He had dropped it and it was flying overboard. Before ten fathoms of line had gone, Samuels had it on the cleat again and was snubbing it in jerks which sent his boat as deep as her after gunwale. Soon, however, the line began to give a little. Foot by foot he hauled it in, until a long dark form showed beneath the surface of the water. It was only a shark after all, and he was given a taste of the whale lance to quiet him.

While he was engaged in this he heard a sudden roar behind him, and he turned in time to see a gigantic form disappear in a tremendous smother of foam. It sounded like a small cannon, and he well knew there was only one creature in the Sound that could break water with such a rush and smash.

The shark was forgotten, and as soon as possible the hook was rebaited and cast. The other line was now watched, and the painter of the

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other boat was passed over to make them tow together if the line should be taken.

Suddenly the new keeper, who had been looking steadily over the side into the clear water, gave a shout and pointed below.

Just a fathom beneath the boat's keel a gigantic shadow drew slowly up. It was a giant ray, the dreaded sea-devil they had been waiting for.

Samuels gazed down at it and could see the stony eyes fixed upon him. Grasping a harpoon he sent it with all his force down into the depths. It was a wild throw. But he had waited so long that he could not miss any chance.

The long shank of the iron disappeared in the foam of the splash. Then there was a moment's pause. Almost instantly afterwards the line was flying furiously over the side. The toggle had penetrated, and they were fast.

The assistant keeper tossed over the anchor buoys to mark the slipped moorings, and then Samuels snubbed the line.

Instantly the boats were jerked half under

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water. Settling back as far as they could, they both tried to keep the bows of the towing craft from being towed under, and the line had to be slacked again and again to save them. Away they went, one behind the other, the ray leading, Samuels' boat next, with him in the stern-sheets, holding a turn of the line which led over the runner in the stem, and the new keeper, standing with steering oar in hand, slewing his flying craft first one side and then the other to keep dead in the wake.

The breeze making from the sea sent the spray over the boats in sheets, but they held on. The devil was heading for the bar under full speed, for the iron had pricked him sorely in the side, and he was a little taken aback at this sudden reception. He could not yet grasp the situation, and would circle about before coming close to the small craft again. But there was something dragging upon him that began to cause alarm. There was a line to the thing that pricked so sore. The feeling at first caused a desire to

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escape from the unknown enemy, but gradually as the pain increased anger began to take the place of fright, and he tried to find out just who his enemies were. He swerved near the can buoy and broached clear of the sea to get a better view. The crash he made as he struck the sea again sent the spray high in the air, and the line was whirled out with renewed force.

But the men behind him had no thought of letting go. With lance in hand Samuels waited patiently for a chance to haul line. As long as the toggle would hold there was little chance for the iron drawing, for the skin of the ray was as tough as leather, and the flesh beneath it was firm.

On and on they went, the flood tide setting strong against them. The swell from beyond the bar was now felt, and the ocean sparkled in the sunshine where it was ruffled by the outside breeze. Two, three miles were traversed, but there was no slacking of the tremendous pace. The ray evidently intended to get to sea before

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attempting to make any change in his actions. He was going at a ten-knot gait, keeping now close to the bottom, and heading right through the north breaker, which rolled in curved lines of white foam upon the bar. The channel he cared not the least for, and Samuels watched the roaring line of white with concern. The small boats would make bad weather of the surf, even though the sea was smooth, for the swell rose high and fell heavily, making a deep rumbling snore which grew louder and louder as they approached. Far away the lighthouse shone in the sunshine, and the buoys stood out like black specks to mark the way through the channel.

Samuels got out his hatchet ready for a sudden cut at the line if the surf proved too dangerous. They were nearing the inner line of breakers, and it would be only a matter of minutes before they were either through or swamped. There must be some hasty judgment, but it must be as accurate as it would be hasty, for there would be no chance to change his mind when the water

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rose ahead. It was breaking in a good fathom and more.

The sea-devil seemed to know what was in store for the boats towing behind. He broached again and took a good look astern where they flew along behind him. Then with redoubled speed he tore through the inner line of breaking water, and before Samuels could grab the hatchet to cut loose, his boat rose upon a crested breaker and plunged headlong over into the trough beyond, pulling the assistant through, and almost swamping him. It was now too late to let go. Ahead was another wall of rising water which would break in an instant, and the only thing to do was to go on and trust to the boat's riding over it all right. To turn the slightest, one side or the other, meant to be rolled over in the rush of foam.

Samuels held on grimly. Once outside he hoped to haul line and come to close quarters with the devil. Then he would deal with him in a more satisfactory manner. That long lance

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would be brought into play, and the fight would be with the odds upon his side. But he had reckoned somewhat hastily with this outcast of the ocean. All the fearless cunning of the sea-scavenger was being brought into play. The pain in his side where the iron held was making him more and more savage. He saw it was useless to run away, for the iron held his pursuers to him. He had only intended to make a short run at the beginning, and then turn to meet whatever there was in the shape of a foe. There was little fear in his make-up. The sudden alarm at the stroke of the iron was merely the natural instinct of the wild creature to keep out of harm's way. He had intended to come back and try his hand with the small craft, only he would not run into unknown trouble. It would be wiser to take things easy and approach the matter slowly, watching a good chance to make a rush in when a fitting opportunity occurred. But because he would go slow he would be none the less implacable. He had never withdrawn from a fight yet,

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and his peculiar tenacity had more than once brought him off victor when the odds were against him. He was wary—an old wary fighter who began the struggle slowly only to learn the forces opposed to him. When the issue was well begun he would break forth in a fury unequalled in any other denizen of the ocean. The continual pain of the pulling-iron was now goading him into a condition of frenzied fury. In a moment he would turn, just as soon as he had the small craft well into the foaming water, where he knew it would be difficult to navigate.

Samuels had thought of the ray's probable run for shoal water, and dreaded coming up with him in the surf. He could not turn his small boat broadside to the breakers without getting rolled over and swamped, and his oars would be useless to pull clear with the iron fast. He hoped the ray would make for the bottom in the deep water beyond and pull him through. Just as the outer breaker rose ahead the line suddenly slacked.

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This was what Samuels dreaded most, and he began to haul in hand over hand. Instead, however, of the line leading ahead, it suddenly let off to starboard, and he was forced to let it go and take to his oars to keep the boat's head to the sea that was now upon her. He called to the new keeper, who let go the line between the boats, to take out his oars also. Both now headed straight for the crest, which instantly broke over them, half filling Samuels' craft and settling her almost to the gunwales. At that moment the line came taut with a jerk. It swung the boat's head off broadside to the sea, and the next minute the breaker rolled her over and over. As it did so a giant form rose like a huge bat from the foam with mouth agape and flukes extended, its tail stretching out behind, and the line from the harpoon trailing. Down it came with a crash which resounded above the roar of the surf, and the boat disappeared from view.

Samuels had by good luck been thrown clear of the craft when the sea struck, and his

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head appeared a fathom distant just as the devil crashed down. It was a close call. Then, as the half-sinking boat returned slowly, bottom up, to the surface, he made for it with all speed.

Beside it floated the long wooden handle of the lance, the blade resting upon the bottom a fathom below. He seized it as he grasped the keel, and calling for the keeper in the other boat to look out, he made ready for the devil's return, for the line was not pulling the boat away, showing that the slack had not been taken up, and that the creature was still close by.

He was not wrong in this. The huge devil swerved almost as soon as he disappeared below the surface and headed back again slowly to where the boat lay in the foam of the breaker. He kept close to the bottom and came like a shadow over the sand.

The sun was shining brightly and objects could be seen easily. Samuels soon made out a

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dark object creeping up from the side where the ray had gone down. The water was hardly over his head when the seas broke, and between them it was not more than four and a half feet deep. He could keep his head out and his feet upon the sand until the rising crest would lift him clear, when, by holding to the upturned boat's keel, he could keep his head out until the breaker had passed, the tide setting him rapidly towards the deeper water inside the bar.

The keeper in the other boat saw the shadow and called out, at the same time getting a harpoon ready and resting upon his oars. The smooth between breakers gave both a good chance to note the position of the approaching monster.

The sea-devil came slowly up, his eyes showing through the clear water and the line from the iron trailing behind him. When within a couple of fathoms he made a sudden rush at the cap-sized boat.

The new keeper threw his iron well. It landed

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fairly in the top of the broad back and sank deep, but it did not in the least stop the savage rush. The huge bulk rose to the surface at the instant the iron struck and came straight for Samuels, who held the lance ready in one hand and clung to the keel of his boat with the other. He drove the long, sharp weapon a full two feet into the monster's vitals and then ducked behind the sunken gunwale to avoid the teeth.

There was a terrific commotion in the sea. The devil bit savagely at Samuels' arm, but missed it, his teeth coming upon the gunwale of the boat and shearing out a piece. Then he gave a tremendous rush upon the craft and drove it before him until it disappeared under the surface. The great ray smote the sea with his flukes and strove after his prey, but the lance was firmly planted in him, and, try as he might, he could get no nearer than the length of the handle to the keeper, for with this grasped firmly in both hands Samuels went below the surface only to get his foothold again and re-

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appear to be driven along before the furious creature.

Meanwhile the new keeper came hauling line from the rear. There was a smooth between the seas, and he pulled the boat close to the floundering devil before he knew what was taking place. Then, with three irons ready, he drove one after the other in quick succession into the monster. Taken from the rear in this manner the devil whirled about. His barbed spear in his tail he drove with accuracy at the form in the boat, striking the keeper in the thick of the thigh and piercing it through and through. He fell with a yell, clutching the boat to keep from being drawn overboard, and the spear broke off short, the poisonous barbs remaining in the flesh.

The sudden diversion saved Samuels. He managed to withdraw his lance, and by an almost superhuman effort he drove it again into the devil just as a sea broke over him. When he came to the surface again he was exhausted and

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expected to fall a victim, but the great creature made no attack and only swam around in a circle, apparently dazed.

Samuels lost no time in getting aboard the still floating craft, taking the towline with him. She was full of water from the breaker which had rolled in, but it had struck her fairly in the bow and she would float a little longer. He reached for the oars and held her head to the sea, while the other raised himself in spite of the agony of his poisoned wound and bailed for his life.

The sea-devil was mortally hurt and was failing fast. He came to the surface and made one blind rush at the boat, but he missed and received the last iron fairly between the eyes. Then he began to go slowly away, following the flood tide, and towing both boats in through the breakers to the smooth water beyond. In a short time the motion ceased, and Samuels hauled in the lines until he was just over the body in two fathoms of water and clear

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of the surf on the bar. Then he turned his attention to his wounded comrade, and by great force pulled the long, barbed spine through the flesh of his thigh and sucked the wound. As the tide was flooding, they left the capsized boat fast to the devil on the bottom below, knowing it would not get far adrift, and made their way to the light, where the keeper's wound was carefully cauterized and bound up.

The great ray lay quiet for some time, his flukes acting as suckers to hold him down. Then, the feeling that his end was at hand coming gradually upon him, he fought against the deadly weakness of his wounds. Summing up all the remaining energy within his giant frame, he rose to the surface to make one last, desperate rally and annihilate the towing craft. He breached clear of the sea and fell with a resounding crash upon the fabric, smashing it completely. Then he tore it with his teeth and flung the splinters broadcast, reaching wildly for anything which looked like a human form.

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Then he suddenly stopped and a quiver passed through him. He gave a mighty smash with his flukes upon the remains of the boat, and then his life went out. He sank slowly down upon the clean sand below, and the ground-sharks of the reef came silently in to their feast.



G.W.H.
5

THE SEADOG

THE SEA DOG

HE was a yellow brute, mangy, lean, and treacherous-looking. He had been in two ships where dogs were not particularly liked by the officers, and the last one had gone ashore in the darkness during a northeast gale off the Frying Pan. How he had come ashore from the wreck was a detail beyond his reasoning. Here he was on the beach of North Carolina, and not one of his shipmates was left to take care of him.

He had at first foraged among the bushes of beach myrtle and through the pine woods, stealing into the light-keeper's yard at Bald Head during the hours of darkness, and rummaging through his garbage for a bit of food to keep the life within his mangy hide. He had now been ashore for nearly five months, and during

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all that time he had shown an aversion to the light-keeper's society. There was no other human habitation on the island, and the light-keeper had fired a charge of bird-shot at him on two occasions. This had not given him greater confidence in strangers, and that which he had had was of a suspicious kind, born and nurtured aboard ship, where a kick was the usual salutation. He was as sly as a wolf and as wild as a razor-back hog, for he had gradually fallen upon the resources of the wild animal, and his one thought was for himself.

He had broken away into the night howling after the last reception by the light-keeper at the Bald Head tower, and sore and stiff he had crawled into the bushes to pick at the tiny pellets that stung so fiercely. In the future he would be more careful. He must watch. Eternal vigilance was the price for his worthless life. All the evil desires and instincts begotten through a line of rascally curs now began to grow within him. He would not repress them,

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for was it not manifest that he must exercise every selfish desire to its utmost if he would live? His eyes took on that wild, hunted look of the beast with whom all are at war, and his teeth showed fiercely at each and every sound. A sullen savageness of mind came upon him more and more every day, until after these months of wildness he had dropped back again into the natural state of his forefathers. He was a wild dog in every sense. As wild as the hogs who rooted through the pine woods or tore through the swamp, lean as deer and alert to every danger, the degenerates of the well-bred pigs of the early settlers.

Sometimes he would run along the edge of the beach in the sunlight and watch the surf, but even this was dangerous, for once the light-keeper happened to be out hunting and sent a rifle bullet singing past his ears. He broke for cover again, and seldom ventured forth except after the sun went down. In the daytime he would go slinking through the gloom of the

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dense thickets with ears cocked and senses alert, watching like a wolf for the slightest sign of danger. A wolf is seldom seen unless he means to be, and the yellow dog soon became as retiring.

Small game furnished food during this season, for the creeks swarmed with fish and crabs, which were often caught in shallows at low water, and gophers were plentiful, but sometimes when the wind was howling and souging through the forest, and the rain rattling and whistling through the clearings, he would try the light-keeper's back yard again, and grab a defenseless duck or goose that happened to be within reach. Their squawking was music to his ears, for he remembered the flash and stinging pain following his earlier attempts to procure food, and he would dash furiously through the timber with his prize, nor stop until many miles were between him and the bright eye that flamed high in the air above and could be seen fifteen miles or more up the beach. The lighthouse was an

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excellent guide for him in all kinds of weather, but it was especially useful on very dark and stormy nights. To him it meant a guide out of danger, even as it did to his earlier masters, and he soon learned to navigate by it.

He grew more and more savage as his life in the wilderness went on, and as his savageness increased so likewise did his cunning.

William Ripley, the light-keeper, and his assistant, were both good hunters. They had plenty of time during daylight to make long excursions along the beach, and through the pine woods, and they often brought home a hog or two. They were worried at the visits from the strange animal who left footprints like those of a dog, and who kept always well out of sight after his first visits, when a glimpse of yellow had flashed through the darkness, giving something tangible to fire at. They had seen the vessel come ashore on the outer shoals, some twelve miles away, and had seen her gradually break up without being able to lend a hand at saving her

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crew. Nothing had washed on the beach that had signs of life, and it had never occurred to them that a yellow dog had been a survivor of that tragedy. The wreck had been visited afterwards, and the vessel's name discovered, but nothing was ever heard of the men who had manned her, and who had evidently gone to the port of missing ships. Their interest in the matter ended after getting a few fathoms of line and a bit of iron-work, and the shifting sands of the treacherous Frying Pan soon swallowed up all trace of the disaster.

But ducks and geese were scarce and valuable. There was a thief abroad, and something must be done. The cold weather was approaching, and already frost had turned the leaves of some of the trees. Soon a slight fall of snow announced that winter was upon the coast in earnest.

The cold was hard upon the outcast. His thin hair was but poor protection against the wind, and the food of the creeks was disappear-

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ing. He was getting more and more savage and desperate, and the great eye that shone above him through the blackness was attractive, for it showed where there lay plenty. Often, when the gale blew from the northward, and the weather was thick, the wild ducks and geese came rushing down the wind and headed for the eye that shone so brightly in the night. It had a peculiar dazzling fascination for them, and they would go driving at it with a rush of a hundred miles an hour, only to find too late that it was surrounded by a heavy wire net. Then, before they could swerve off, they were upon it with a terrific smash. Headlong into the iron meshes they would drive until, flattened and distorted lumps of flesh and feathers, they would go tumbling down to the ground beneath. In the morning the keeper would see traces of their feathers and sometimes a duck or two, but more often he saw the footprints of the strange animal that so resembled either a dog or wolf.

“ I reckon it’s about time we caught up with

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that un,” said Ripley, one morning; “there aint been no wolves around this here island sence I kin remember, an’ I’m bound to find out jest what kind o’ critter this one is. Why, what d’ye s’pose he done last night, hey?”

“Don’t ask me no riddles when I’m sleepy,” said the assistant.

“Oh, well, it’s no matter, then,” said Ripley, and he turned into the house.

“Well, what?” asked the assistant.

“The first thing he done was to eat the seat out’n your pants you left hangin’ on the line, but that’s no matter——”

“What next?” asked the assistant, awakening a little.

“Well, he chewed the uppers off’n your rubber boots, them ones you said cost five dollars——”

“Name o’ sin, no! Did he? Where’s the gun, quick——”

“Hold on a bit. Wait a minute,” interrupted Ripley. “There aint no hurry about the case. I was jest a-sayin’——”

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“Go on,” said the assistant earnestly.

“Well, then, don’t interrupt me no more. That blamed critter got old red-head by th’ neck an’ walked off with him, an’ there aint no better rooster ever been hatched. That’s erbout all.”

“You kin hand me down the rifle,” said the assistant; “that critter or me leaves this here island, an’ that’s a fact.”

The track led down the beach, and there was no trouble following it. The assistant started off at a swinging pace, determined to cover the distance between himself and the thief before midday.

But the track soon led into the scrub and was lost. When it was taken up again it was a good half-mile farther down the shore. Here it swung along easily for a short distance until a heavy belt of timber was reached, and where the ground was hard and covered with pine-needles. There all trace of it was swallowed up as soon as it struck the pines. The assistant came home that evening a tired but no wiser man. That night

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the outcast saw the man-tracks, and knew he had been followed, and the spirit of deviltry entered deeper into his pariah soul. He would make them sorry for his nightly visits. All were enemies to him, and the more harm he could do to everything alive the better it would be. Savagely he snarled at the footprints. As the moon rose he saw the beautiful light silvering the cold ocean, and it stirred something in his hard heart. He raised his nose high in the air and let forth a long howl of fierce defiance and wrath.

Slinking through the darkening shadows of the forest, the outcast made his way to the clearing wherein the great eye rose above the ground to the height of a hundred feet or more. Here he halted upon the outer edge, where the thicket hid him in its black shadow. Then he raised his voice in such a prolonged howl that the fowls secured within the coops of the yard set up a vast cackling. He changed his position in time to avoid a charge of buckshot which tore through the thicket and rattled about the leaves beneath

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the trees. Then he slunk away for a little while, only to return again and give vent to his feelings in a succession of yelping barks, such as had never disturbed the quiet of the island before. Another charge of shot rattled about him, but he was now far too wary to get hit, and his hatred was greater than his fear. It gave him a savage joy to listen to the crack of the gun or the sharper snap of the rifle, for he knew it worried the keeper to hear him and know he was near. Night after night he now came, and many were the shots fired at him, but all to no avail. He would do any mischief he could, and woe to any duck or chicken that came within his reach. His high, yelping howl resounded through the clearing and sounded above the dull roar of the surf, making night hideous to the keeper on watch in the light above.

Once he caught a loose fowl, and its feathers were strewn about the yard. Again he found a string of fine fish the keeper had hung up for the night. They went the way of the ill-fated.

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His keen sense of smell told him many things the keepers did not wish him to know, and he managed to keep out of harm's way.

But this could not last. Ripley was an old hunter, and was not to be disturbed beyond reason. He brought out an old mink-trap, with steel jaws of great power, and he buried it in the sand on the edge of the clearing, smoothing the rumpled surface of the ground so that nothing showed, and strewing the place with dead leaves. Then he killed a sea-gull and dropped it almost directly over the steel jaws. The outcast would doubtless smell it and stop a moment to investigate. He had only to step upon the ground in the near vicinity and his leg would be instantly clasped in a steel embrace.

The first night the keeper watched for him. It was very dark, and the cold north wind soughed through the pines, and the surf thundered. The cold made the keeper's teeth chatter a little as he watched in silence from his place upon the outer rail of the tower. He had his rifle

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with him for a finish, should the trap take hold.

The outcast came slinking along late that night. He was hungry and wet, and the light attracted him as it did always on particularly bad nights, for it stood for the mark of plenty, the only thing on the barren island that kept a glimmering of the past in his sullen mind. He noticed a peculiar smell as he skirted the fringe of the cover, and soon spied the dead gull. How came it there, was the question. Gulls did not die ashore. At least, he had never seen one. But he knew them in the air. There was something suspicious in the matter. Why should a gull be dead so close to the lighthouse? He began to investigate, and drew near the danger zone.

But months of wildness had made him cunning. All the sly instincts of the races of animals from which he had sprung had been developing. He approached the bait slowly, barely moving, and touching the ground ever so lightly with his paws. Then he halted. No, it would

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not do. There was something wrong with that bird, showing like a bit of white in the darkness. He could smell it plainly. It was the scent of a man. He drew slowly off, and began nosing about for the trail, and soon found it. He followed along, and it led straight to the dwelling where the keeper lived. Then he went back a little way into the scrub and sat upon his haunches, and, in spite of his cold and hunger, he lifted up his voice in a long, dismal howl, that to the keeper's ears had an unmistakable ring of derision.

Night after night the trap was set, but the pariah kept clear. Then, one day, it grew thick, and a cold wind began setting in from the sea. Before night it was howling and snoring away with hurricane force, driving the seas roaring up the sands, and tearing their tops into smothers of snowy spume drift.

The pariah came to the beach and tried to look seaward to see what was coming with that fearful rushing blast, but the wind was so strong

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and the snow so blinding that he soon took to the cover, and headed for the light, in the hope he might pick up something to eat in the vicinity of the keeper's dwelling. Before going to the yard he looked again seaward and saw a light flash out. He did not know what it meant, but he knew it was off on the Frying Pan, far out on the treacherous shoals where a thundering smother of rolling whiteness flashed and gleamed now and again. Then he skirted the clearing, and brought up back of the fowl-house, where now all the ducks and chickens were secured at night.

He went forward, trying to smell his way, but the snow was too much for him. Then he stopped a moment. He located the house and started again, when suddenly, "Snap!"

Something had leaped from the ground and seized his foreleg in a viselike grip. He sprang forward and fought to get away, but it was of no use. The thing had him fast with an awful grasp that cut into his flesh and squeezed his

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leg so tight that it soon became numb. With snarling growls, he fought desperately on, twisting and turning, struggling and biting, but all to no purpose. He was fast. Then the state of affairs began to dawn upon him, and he desisted, for the agony was supreme. Sitting there in the flying snow of the winter's night, with the roar of the storm sounding over him, he raised his voice in a long, yelping bark of challenge and disdain.

But in spite of his howling no one came near him. The snow grew deeper and the wind roared with terrific force, blinding him so that the great eye above was scarcely visible. He remained quiet now, and waited patiently for the daylight, which would mean his end. His sufferings were terrible, but he could not help it, and soon a sullen stupor came upon him.

In the dim gray of the early morning forms were seen walking about the lighthouse. They were men, and among them was the keeper. The others wore clothes that reminded the pariah of

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former days, and one stranger seemed to be familiar to him. This was a man, short, broad, and bearded, with bow legs set wide apart, and long arms with huge hands and crooked fingers. He was ugly, and reminded him of the crabs he had seen and captured in the streams during the summer. There was something of the crab about the queer little fellow, and his very ugliness attracted the dog's attention. It brought back some memory of past days, a memory that was not all unpleasant, yet indistinct and unreal.

As the day dawned and the snow grew deeper the outcast waited no longer. He held up his nose and let forth a howl that was heard above the snore of the gale, and which brought the light-keeper to attention. He came running with a club, and behind him followed the stranger with the crablike body.

“Sink me if I aint got ye at last, ye varmint!” yelled the keeper as he drew near. Then he halted. “A dog—what—jest a common everyday dog? But I'll make a good dog out

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o' ye in a minute. All dead dogs is good dogs, an' you'll do."

He advanced with raised club, and the pariah crouched for a spring. He would try for one last good bite. All the savageness of his mixed blood surged through his fierce mind. He gave a low growl and showed his teeth, and his eyes were like bits of yellow flame.

"Hold on thar, stranger; don't kill that 'ar dog. Wait a bit," said the ugly man, waddling up behind. "What, caught 'im in a trap?"

"Sure I got him in a trap. D'ye want me to loose him?" asked the keeper testily.

"That's erbout the size o' my games," said the ugly man. "Yew may think it a go, but that 'ar dog looks uncommon like the one I lost aboard the *Seagull* when she went ashore hereabouts last year. He ware a good dog, part wolf, part hound, and the rest a mixture I don't exactly remember. Lemme try 'im?"

"Gwan, man; that critter is been stealin' chickens since last summer," said the keeper, but

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at the same time he allowed the ugly fellow to have his way.

“Hey, Sammy, Sammy, Sammy!” said the ugly sailor. “Don’t yew know me, Sammy?” And he bent forward toward him.

The pariah gazed at him. What did he mean? What was that voice? It sounded like that of the man who had brought him aboard the vessel he had gone ashore in. The only human who had never struck him or offered him harm. He hardly remembered the ugly fellow, for he had only been in the ship a short time before she was lost.

“Strange, that looks like the critter sure enough. I went ashore here in the *Seagull* a year ago, an’ here I goes ashore agin in this howlin’ wind an’ sees the dog I lost. Strange, keeper, it’s strange, hey?”

“He do appear to know ye, an’ that’s a fact,” said the keeper. “Would ye like me to loose him off? Better do it afore the assistant comes down, fer he’s got it in fer this dog.”

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“Wait a bit,” said the ugly fellow, and he advanced closer to the outcast. He put out his hand, and the dog wavered. Should he seize it? He could crush it and tear it badly in his teeth before he could withdraw it, and they would probably kill him anyway in the end. But there was something in the ugly man’s eye that restrained him—something that spoke of former times when all was not strife. No, he would not bite him.

“Turn the critter loose; he’s my dog fer sure,” said the ugly man. “All he wants is some grub. I reckon yew’d be savage, too, if yew had been out in the snow all night. I knows I ware when I come in half drowned this mornin’.”

The keeper pried the trap open and the cur went free.

“Come, Sammy, Sammy, Sammy!” said the ugly fellow, and he led the way to the house.

The pariah hesitated. His foot was useless, but he could go on three legs. There was the

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timber a short distance away. He looked at it for an instant. Then he saw the ugly man beckoning with his great crooked finger. He lowered his head and gave a short whine. Then he limped slowly after him to the house.

A little later the ugly man fed him and bound up the wounded paw, while the assistant mumbled something about rubber boots and breeches worth about seven dollars a pair.

“Messmates,” said the ugly sailor, shifting his crablike body and sticking out his great bushy face with its red beard, “that ’ar dog ware a good dog, part wolf, part hound, an’ the rest I don’t exactly recollect, but he ware a good dog. Treat a dog good an’ he’ll be a good dog. Treat ’im bad an’ he’ll be a bad dog. When ye go erbout more among men, as I does, yew’ll see that what I says is so. An’ men is mostly like dogs.”

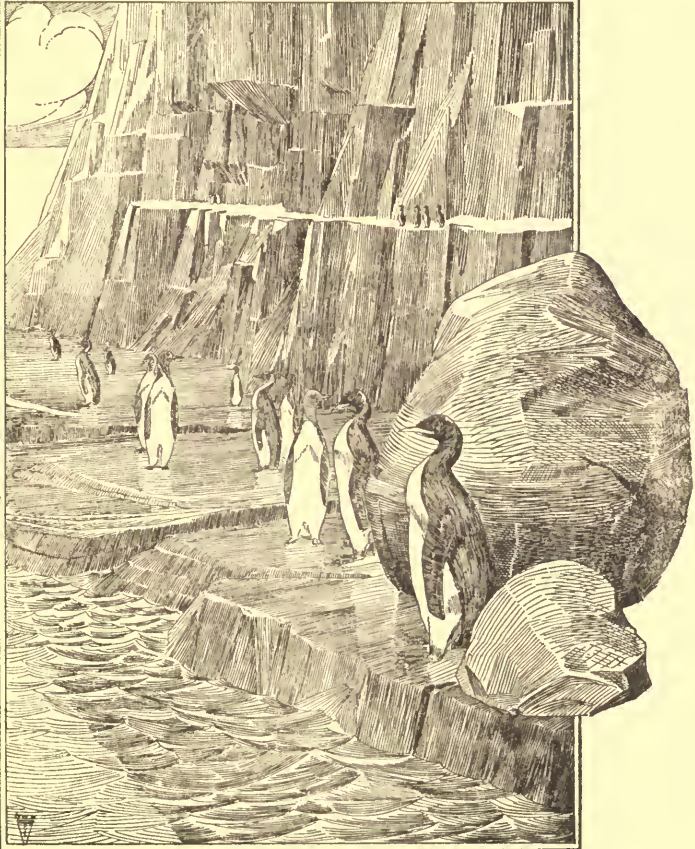
The assistant kept quiet, for there was something peculiarly aggressive in that misshapen man. The animal was led away with a string,

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and went in the boat to Wilmington with the wrecked crew.

Two years later another ship was added to the list of those whose bones rest in the sands of the Frying Pan Shoals. She ran on the outer breaker during the night, and in the morning the keeper saw a floating object on the shore. He went to it and found the body of a man whose peculiar figure he recognized. A life-buoy was strapped about his waist, and in his great crooked fingers was a line. The keeper hauled it in, and on the end of it he found the dead body of the yellow beast that had stolen his fowls. They had gone to their end together.

The Cape Horners



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TO the southward of where the backbone of the western hemisphere dips beneath the sea rises a group of ragged, storm-swept crags and peaks,—the wild rocks of the Diego Ramirez. Past them flows the current of the great Antarctic Drift, sweeping from the father of all oceans—the vast South Pacific,—away to the eastward, past the bleak pinnacles of Cape Horn, to disperse itself through the Lemaire Strait and Falkland Channel northward into the Atlantic Ocean.

With the wild snore of the great west wind sounding over them, and the chaotic thunder of the Pacific Ocean falling upon their sides, they are lonely and inhospitable, and are seldom, if ever, visited by man. Only now and then he sees them, when the wind-jammer fighting to go past

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the last corner gets driven close in to the land of fire. Then, on some bleak and dreary morning, when the west wind is roaring through downhaul and clewline and under the storm topsails, the heavy drift may break away for a few minutes and show the wary navigator a glimpse of the death-trap under his lee that will add a few gray hairs to his head, and bring the watch below tumbling on deck to man the braces.

Bare of vegetation and desolate as they are, the rocks are inhabited. To the leeward of the great Cape Horn sea that crashes upon them, the ledges and shelves are full of life. In the shelter, the strange forms sit and gaze seaward, peering this way and that, squawking and scolding in hoarse voices that might be heard above the surf-thunder. They appear like great geese sitting on their tails, for they sit upright, their feet being placed well down on their long bodies, giving them a grotesque look that is sometimes absurdly human.

They have no wings,—only little rudiments

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covered with fine hairlike feathers that serve as side fins when swimming. They never flap them, as do their cousins, the Cape pigeons and albatrosses. In fact, their bodies are covered with short, close, hairlike feathers, very minute, seldom wider than a pencil's point, and lying tight to the skin, like scales on a fish. These figures have birdlike heads, not unlike those of diver-ducks, and they have beautiful black eyes, with red rings around them. They are the creatures that hold sway over the barren crags, waddling and walking about in their absurd way until a great man-seal shows his bristling whiskers close to the ledge. Then they gave forth the loud, long-drawn, wild cry that is so well known to the Cape Horner, waddle to the brink, plunge headlong into the sea, and disappear.

They are the penguins of the southern zone, half bird, half fish, and, one might say, half human, to judge by their upright waddle on their webbed feet.

The one whose story is now to be told was

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hatched on the Ramirez, high above the lift of the Cape sea, and beyond the reach of straying seals.

He belonged to a brood of three, and first saw the light a little after New Year's Day, or midsummer there. There was no sheltering nest to guard him against the bleak wind, which is nearly as cold in summer as in winter. He came into the world on a bare rock and announced himself by a strange, chirping sound that caused his mother to waddle off a few feet and gaze at him in astonishment. He was followed by his two brothers, and, within a very short time, showed an inclination to follow his parent down the ledge and into the dark water where the kelp weed floated in sheltered spots between the rocks. He was but a fluffy ball, of the size of a baby's fist, but he stood with dignity upon his short legs and labored over the rough places, sometimes falling and rolling over a step in the rock until, with a splash, he landed in the sea.

At last! That was the place he was meant for.

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How fine it was to scull one's self furiously along the surface and then suddenly dive and go shooting through the depths, coming up again to see if his parent were at hand; for, in spite of the delightful novelty of life, there was within him a strange feeling of fear, something that made him seek his mother's side continually. The heavy snore of the great Cape Horn sea, breaking to windward of the rocks, sounded a deep note of menace, a warning of the fierce, wild world in which only the hardiest could hope to survive, and yet it seemed to tell of a power that ruled his destiny.

His brothers swam near, and he was joined by countless myriads of other birds. With penguins, strength ashore exists solely in numbers, and the bare cliffs must be covered with sturdy birds ready to snap and strike fiercely with their strong, sharp beaks at each and every intruder, if they would have security. Woe to the albatross or mollemoke that attempts a landing on the sacred shore! He will be met by an army of

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powerful birds walking erect as soldiers and stabbing and biting with incredible power.

Soon this young one's downy feathers hardened. They did not grow like those of an ordinary bird. They were hardened almost to bone, and pressed so stiff against his skin that it would be difficult to distinguish them from the scales of a rockfish or a cod. His wings were no more than flippers, exactly like those of a turtle, and were without a bending joint at the pinion. They were devoid of feathers also, but, as he would never use them in the air, this made it all the better. They could scull him along faster under the sea. Already he could go fast enough to catch any fish in the vicinity, and, as for the great seals, they simply amused him with their clumsy attempts to catch him. On land he could hop about on his short legs, but he preferred the water for safety, and seldom took to the rocks.

During this period of his life he kept well with the crowd of companions about him. Even the albatrosses, the huge destroyers, kept their dis-

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tance, for, as they would swoop down in great circles near the young birds, they would meet an almost solid phalanx of screaming and snapping beaks, and would sweep about in giant curves until, seeing no chance to rush in, they would stand out to sea again and disappear.

Gradually, as the months passed, the older penguins began to scatter. Some went farther and farther off shore, until, at length, when the cold July sun swept but a small arc of a circle above the horizon, they left the rocks and faced the wild ocean that sweeps past the Horn. Our young one now felt a desire to roam with the rest, and, one day, when the snore of the gale droned over the barren lumps, bringing thick squalls of sleet and snow, he put out into the open sea and headed away for the Strait of Magellan.

Away through the dark water he went, his feeling of loneliness increasing as the land disappeared. The very majesty of that great waste of rolling sea impressed him, and an instinctive longing to realize what it meant came over him.

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He raised his head into the air and gave forth a long, deep, sonorous cry: but the dark ocean made no answer, the only sound being the distant noise of some combing crest that broke and rolled away to the southward. There was not a living thing in sight.

Through the gloom he made his way with the feeling of adventure growing. He kept a look-out for small fish, and repeatedly dived to a great depth, but, even down there, where the light failed entirely, there was nothing. Only once during the day did he see anything alive, and this was after hours of swimming. A dark object showed upon the slope of a swell. It looked like a triangular knife-blade, and cut the water easily, while the dark shadow beneath the surface appeared almost as inert as a log or a piece of wreckage. The penguin drew nearer to it to investigate, for one of his strongest feelings was a desire to find out about things. Then the object drew toward him and appeared to be drifting to meet him. Suddenly there was a rush

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through the water. The protruding fin ripped the surface of the rolling swell, and, as it came on the forward slope, the penguin saw a pair of enormous jaws opening in front of him, while a row of teeth showed white in the dark water. He made a sudden swerve aside and missed the opening by a hair's breadth. Before the shark could turn to pursue him, he dived and set off at a great rate of speed below the surface, and was soon out of the way. He had learned to look for danger wherever he might meet another such peculiar-shaped object, and the lesson would be of use, for there is no sea where sharks are not found.

Between Terra del Fuego and Staten Land lies the narrow water of Lemaire Strait. Through this channel the current rushes with incredible speed, swirling around the reefs and foaming over the sunken ledges that line the shore. The tussock-covered hills of barren shingle form a background so bleak and uninhabited that many of the large sea fowl find it safe

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to trust themselves upon the cliffs where nothing may approach from shoreward to take them unawares. The rocks are covered with weed, and plenty of whale-food drifts upon them, so that there is always a supply for winter. There the penguin landed after days of cruising, and waddled on shore for the first time since leaving the place of his birth.

To the westward, across the strait, the fires from the hills where the savages dwelt shone in the gloom of the twilight. They were attractive, and often he would sit and watch them in the growing gloom of the long winter evenings after he had come ashore from a day's fishing, wondering at the creatures who made them. The light was part of his mental enjoyment, and sometimes, after looking for an hour or more, he would raise his head, which had a long, sharp beak, and, with lungs full of air, let forth a wild, lonely cry. For days and days he would come and go, seeing no companions save the raucous whale-birds who would come in on the rock and

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who had no sympathy with his fishing. They were mere parasites, and depended upon the great animals to show them their food.

As the months passed and the sun began to stay longer above the horizon, he became more and more lonesome. A longing for companionship came upon him, and he would sit and gaze at the fires across the strait until he gave vent to his feelings with his voice.

One day, when the sun shone brightly, he came upon the ledge and rested. He was not very tired, but the sun was warm and the bright rays were trying to his eyes after the long gloom of the winter. The ragged mountains stood up clearly from across the strait, but the fires would not shine in the sunlight. He stood looking for a time, and then broke forth into a long-drawn call. To his astonishment an answering note came sounding over the water. He repeated his cry and listened. From far away in the sunshine a weird cry was wafted across the sea. It thrilled him. He was not afraid, for the cry was

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one of yearning, and he wanted companionship. He sat and waited until he saw a small object on the rise of a swell. It came nearer, and then he saw it was one of his own race, and dived into the sea and went to meet the stranger.

How smooth was the newcomer's coat and how white the breast! He looked the female over critically, and a strange feeling of companionship pervaded his being. Then he went toward her and greeted her, sidling up and rubbing his head against her soft neck and swimming around her in circles. The sun shone brightly and the air was warm. The very joy of life was in him, and he stretched forth his head and called and called to the ledges and reefs, sea and sky, to bear witness that he would no longer live alone, but would thenceforth take the beautiful stranger with him and protect her. He climbed upon the ledge, she following, and, proud as a peacock, strutted back and forth in his enjoyment of her good will and comradeship.

They strayed about the rocks and swam in the

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sheltered places among the reefs for a few days, but a desire to go into the great world to the southward and make a snug home for the coming summer began to make him restless. The warm sunshine made life a joy in spite of the thick coating of fat and feathers, and the high cliffs of Tierra del Fuego seemed to offer a tempting abode for the warmer months. His pretty companion shared his joy, and also his desire to go out into the great sea to the southward and find a suitable place on some rock or ledge where they could make a home.

They started off shore one morning and swam side by side for many leagues, skirting the sheer and dangerous Horn and meeting many more couples who, like themselves, were looking for a suitable place for a summer sojourn while the bright sun should last. They met a vast crowd of their kind making an inner ledge of the Ramirez their stopping-place, and there they halted. It was pleasant to be sociable when united to a proud companion, and they went among the

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throng until they found a place on the rocks where they could climb ashore easily. Our friend led the way up the slope and found a level spot among the stones where his mate could sit and be near the tide. She would lay her eggs there, and he would take care that she fared well.

Weeks passed and two white shells shone in marked contrast to the surrounding stones and gravel. His mate had laid two beautiful eggs, and her care for them kept him busy fishing for two. Yet he was very happy. He would make short trips to the outlying reef and seize a fish. Then he would hurry home with it, and together they would eat it while his mate sat calmly upon the eggs, keeping them warm and waiting for the first "peep" to show the entrance into this world of her firstborn. All about, the other couples had their nests, consisting only of the bare stones, for there was no drift or weed out there to use, and they sat in great numbers close enough to call to each other in case a marauding

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albatross or mollemoke should come in from the sea and try to steal eggs.

Day after day he fished and brought his mate the spoils, often sitting on the eggs himself while she took a plunge into the cold water for exercise and change. He was satisfied and the world was bright with the joy of life.

One day his mate waddled quickly from the nest. Where before there had been two shining white eggs, two little yellow puff-balls lay on the stones, and they made a noise that showed him his offspring were strong and healthy young ones. He strutted up and down the ledge, proud and straight, while his mate gave forth cries of satisfaction and nestled down again to give the delicate little ones shelter. He almost forgot to go fishing, and only a call from his patient mate recalled him to the fact that she must be fed. He stepped down the rocks, and, as he dived into the sea, cried aloud for joy.

Out near the Ramirez the fish were playing in the sunshine. He made his way thither, his

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breast high with the happiness of his existence. Other fowl were there fishing. He joined them, but gave no heed to a long object that came slowly over the water from the land of fire. It headed toward the cliffs where the sea fowl dwelt, and two half-naked savages propelled it with paddles. They were hunting for eggs, and the rocks offered a tempting place to land, for the great crowd of birds told plainly of the summer breeding-place. They ran the canoe into a sheltered spot among the rocks where the heave of the sea was slight, and then sprang ashore. Up they climbed and stood upon the level where the penguin females sat and called wildly for their mates.

A savage stooped and began gathering eggs, pushing away the birds or knocking them on the head with a stick, when, with their sharp beaks, they protested against the robbery. He was a horribly filthy fellow, and his ugly body was partly covered with skins of birds and sealskin. He noticed a female sitting close, calling to our

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penguin for help, and the bird seemed to be very fine and large, with a good skin. He made a pass with his club and smote her on the head. She struggled desperately to get away, but could not. The blow partly stunned her. The little ones scurried off as she rose, and the savage saw there were no eggs to be had from her. But he would have her skin anyway, so, with a furious stroke of his weapon, he knocked her lifeless at his feet. Then he picked her up and went on.

Later in the afternoon the male came back from fishing. He climbed the cliffs and looked about him. His mate and young were missing, and he sent forth his deep, sonorous cry. But it was not answered. Other birds took it up, but there was no answering call from the mate, and the little dark speck that rose and fell upon the heave of the swell away in toward the shore of Tierra del Fuego gave no token of her fate.

All night he wandered over the rocks, his wild note of calling sounding far out to sea. In the morning he stood once more upon the spot where,

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a few days before, the mate of his bosom sat proudly upon the white eggs. The empty shells were all that were left. He stood gazing out to sea, and then his instinct told him he would see his family no more. He gave one long-drawn cry, plunged into the sea, and was gone. The great west wind came roaring over the sea before the sun set, and before it he held his way. He would go far away from the scene of his summer's life. The vast ocean would be his home, and the memories of the ledge be a thing of the past.

For many days the penguin roamed over the huge rolling hills of water. The vastness of the ocean and its grandeur soothed him, though he still called out at intervals when the sadness of his life was strong upon him. Then came a day when sea and sky seemed to blend in one wild whirl, and a hurricane from the high, ragged hills of Patagonia swept the Antarctic Drift. Away he went before it, and the wildness of it was joy, the deepening roar of the wind and

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crash of Cape combers making music for his spirit. He headed for the middle of the current between the land where the Pacific flows through and meets the western ocean, the stretch of sea that reaches away past the South Shetlands to the south pole.

How wild and lonely was the storm-swept sea! Great hills of rolling water, fifty feet in height, with stately and majestic rush, passed to the eastward, their tops crowned with huge white combing crests and their sides streaked and flecked with long stripes of white foam. Above, the dull banks of hurtling vapor flew wildly away to somewhere in the distance, far beyond the reach of vision. It was more comfortable beneath the surface than above it, and our penguin drove headlong before the sea two fathoms below the foam, only coming up once in a while to breathe. On and on he drove for hours, until hunger warned him to keep a lookout for fish, as he occasionally came up for air, and to see if there were signs of the oily surface denizens showing in the

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sweep of that great, lonely sea. Suddenly an object attracted his attention. It was a mere speck on the storm-torn horizon, but he knew it must be of considerable size. It was different from anything he had ever before seen, for above it three long, tapering sticks stood upward, and upon the middle one a strip of white, like the wing of an albatross, caught the weight of the wild west wind. He was interested, and drove along toward it until the object loomed high above him, and the deep snore of the gale sounded like a heavy roaring comber tearing through the many lines of the rigging and under the strip of white canvas. The great thing would rise upon the crest of a giant wave and fling its long, pointed end high into the gale, the rushing sea striking it and smashing over in a white smother like the surge on the rocks. Then down it would swing slowly until it would reach the hollow between the moving hills, and the penguin could see upon its body, its tall sticks rolling to windward and the roar of the gale

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deepening into a thunderous, rushing sound, until the advancing sea would lift it again and roll it toward the lee. The sight of the huge monster wallowing about, hardly making the slightest way through the water, interested the penguin. It seemed like a floating rock without life, and he felt a curiosity to know if it were alive. He rose partly from the sea and uttered a long-drawn, hoarse call that floated down the gale and swept over the great hulk. Nothing happened, and he repeated the call,—a far-reaching, wild, deep, resonant cry.

But the great ship swung along slowly, as before, and he dived under her to see what was below.

In the fore-castle the dim light of the summer day made a dismal and cheerless scene. The watch below had turned in, all standing, their wet clothes wrapped about them in their “pews,” or bunks, making a vapor in the cold air through which the light of the swinging lamp shone dimly. The gray light from outside fil-

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tered in at the side ports and spoke of the cold, hard day on deck. Once in a while some shivering wretch would turn in his poultice of soaking flannel and get a fresh piece of icy-cold cloth against his skin that would call forth maledictions on the Horn, the weather, and the hove-to ship. In a corner of the forecastle a pile of soaking clothes moved, and a moan sounded above the noise without.

“Stow it, Sammy; you’ll be all right soon, my boy,” said a voice in a bunk above him.

“Oh, but it’s so cold, Tom,” whispered the pile of clothes. “I can’t last much longer, and they might let me die warm, at least.”

“What’s the little man sayin’?” asked a deep voice opposite. “Wants to die warm, does he? Say, Sammy, me son, you’ll be warm mighty soon after you’re dead; why in thunder don’t you put up with a bit o’ cold till then, boy?”

“You’re a blamed brute, bos’n,” said the first speaker, “an’ if I wa’n’t mighty well used up I’d soak you a good whanging for that. Yer

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know the poor boy's sick wid scurvy, an' aint likely to pull through."

"I'll ware ye out when th' watch is called, yer preacher," said the bos'n confidently. "Talk away, for you'll only get it all the worse when I shucks my dunnage." Then, as if the matter were settled, he snuggled up in his soaking bunk and hove down to warm a piece of his steaming covering until it should cease to send a chill through his big frame and he could wander into dreamland.

The shivering form of the boy in the corner moved again, and he groaned in agony. It was useless for him to try to sleep with his limbs swollen and his flesh almost bursting with the loathsome disease. The pile of wet clothes upon him could not keep him warm, and each shiver sent agony through him. He would die unless he could get relief soon, and there the ship was off the Horn in June, the beginning of winter, without one chance in fifty of making port in less than two months.

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In his half-delirious state he lived many of his early schooldays again, and then followed thoughts of those who were nearest to him. He must die. His grave must be in that great, dark void beneath. Oh, the loneliness of that great ocean! What would it be like far below in the blackness of the vast deep, beyond the heave of the great sea, in the very bosom of the great world of silence? The horror of it caused him to groan. Would anyone punish the cruel ship-owners and captain who had so foully murdered him with the cheap and filthy food? What would anyone care after he had gone? What would he care, away down in that everlasting blackness, where no one would ever see him again? He lay upon his back and stared with red and swollen eyes at the bunk above him where Tom, the quartermaster, snored loud enough to be heard above the dull, thunderous roar overhead. In another hour the watch must turn out, but they would let him lie by; him, a dying ship's-boy. But would he die outright? Would his soul live down

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there in that awful blackness, where they must soon heave his body? He had heard of sailors' spirits haunting ships. Could his do so? Was there a hideous devil below waiting for him? He had heard there was. Far down in the bottomless abyss some monster might await him. He gazed with staring eyes at the dim lamp, and longed for a little light and sunshine to relieve the terrible gloom of the Antarctic winter day.

Then there broke upon his ears a wild, sonorous, deep-drawn cry sounding over the storm-swept sea. It was not human. What was it? Was it for him? The thought made him sick with terror. He groaned aloud, and Tom turned over in his wet clothes until the sudden chill of moving from the one steaming place made him grumble audibly.

“What was it, Tom?” he whispered.

“What?” growled the sailor surlily.

“There——” and the cry was repeated.

Tom growled a little and then rolled snug again. Suddenly he started up. “A man

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might as well freeze to death on deck as in this unholy frozen hole," he said. Then he climbed stiffly down from his bunk, clapped his sou'wester on his head, and, tying the flaps snug under his chin, he slid back the forecastle door with a bang, and landed on the main deck.

There he stood a minute watching the great fabric straining under her lower maintopsail, hove to in that sea that the Cape Horner knows so well and dreads so much. In the waist, the foam on deck told of a flood of icy water that poured again and again over the topgallant rail and crashed like a Niagara upon the deck planks, rushing to leeward through the ports in the bulwarks and carrying everything movable along with it.

He watched his chance, and dodged around the corner of the deck house, where the port watch huddled to keep clear of the wind and the sea.

"Merry Fourth o' July to ye," bawled a man of the watch, as he came among them.

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“What’s the matter? Can’t ye find enough work to do whin yer turn comes?” asked another.

“Where’s the whale-iron?” asked Tom, of Chips, who had come out of his room to get a look around.

The carpenter looked at him queerly. “What d’ye want wid it?” he asked.

“Listen!” said Tom.

Then the cry of the sea fowl sounded again.

“Penguin?” said Chips.

“Turkey,” said Tom, with a smile. “If we can get the steward to give us a bit o’ salt pork fat we can git him, or I’m a soger.”

He was an old whaleman, and the carpenter hesitated no longer. He led the way into his room in the forward house where he kept his tools, and the iron was brought forth. A word to the mate on watch, and the sailor was fast in the lee forerigging, standing upon the shear-pole, with the iron ready to heave. The fat was tossed over the side, and he waited.

In the dark, cold hole of the fore-castle the

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drawn lips of the sick boy were parted, showing his blue and swollen gums. He was grinning horribly. "Take him away. Oh, take him away!" he was moaning. "Hear him a-callin' me? Don't let him get me, Tom; take him away, take him away! It's the devil callin' me!"

All the fear and anguish that can burn through a disordered brain was upon the little fellow, and the dismal cry lent a reality to his delirious thoughts. Suddenly he half rose in his bunk, and then the latent spark of manhood, which was developing even in spite of his sufferings, came to his aid. He thought of the Great Power which ruled his fate, and shook himself into full consciousness, glancing up at the aperture through which the dim light filtered as if he half expected to see a vision that would give him strength. Then he felt that he would face the end calmly, and meet whatever was in store as a man should. Perhaps the captain and owners could not help matters, after all. He

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could hear the song of the gale more distinctly, and once the tramp of the men as they tailed onto the maintopsail brace. They were jamming the yard hard on the backstay, and there was no show of a slant yet. He must lie quiet and wait, listening to the weird cry that caused him to shiver and see fantastic figures upon the carlines above his head.

Out on the great, high-rolling sea, the penguin had scented a peculiar substance. He drew nearer the great fabric that rolled and swung so loggily on the sea. He sent forth a wild cry, and drove headlong after a piece of white matter that floated in the foam of the side wash. He seized it and swallowed it. Then he came closer.

A form stood in the rigging above him, motionless, as if made of wood, and a long, pointed thing was balanced in the air. A piece of fat showed right beneath, and he went for it, in spite of the feeling of dread that came upon him. He was hungry, and would snatch it and then get away. He reached it, and at that instant some-

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thing struck him in the back, carrying him beneath the surface. Then his life went out.

“A fine turkey, an’ that’s a fact,” said Chips, a moment later. “Get something to put him in, quick; the lad will have a stew, fer sure. ’Twill well-nigh cure him, and, anyways, it ’ll keep him a-goin’ until we speak a wessel fer fresh grub.”

The second mate came forward.

“Eight bells, ye starbowlines,” he bawled into the forecastle; “turn out, or I’ll be right in there wid ye! One o’ ye bring Sammy’s mess things. He’s got turkey fer dinner. Come, wake up, sonny! There aint no devil or nothin’ a-chasin’ ye. Ye’ll be all right in a week o’ Sundays. Bring that beef juice right in here, Chips. Hold his head, Tom,—there,—make him drink it while it’s hot.”

In a little while the hot broth made from the bird’s flesh warmed the boy’s body, and his mind was clear again. The forecastle was empty, and the wild cry he had heard no longer sounded

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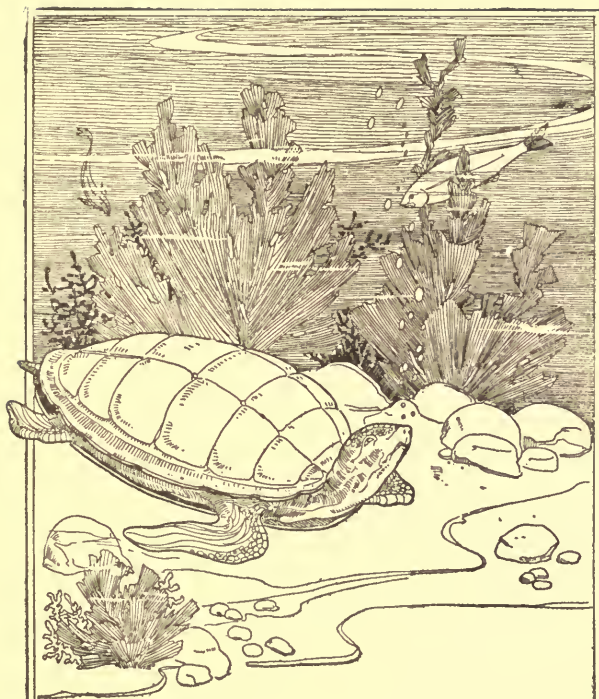
above the gale. He felt stronger, and his terror had vanished. A feeling of ease grew within his poisoned body. A gleam of faint sunlight came through the open door, and as he looked he knew that the God he felt had given him strength had been kind. He knew no prayer, or word of thanks, but his spirit was warm with gratitude. He smiled his thanks at his shipmates, and closed his eyes. Then he slept.

A crowd of swearing and jostling men awakened him as they came tumbling below some hours afterwards.

“Grub ahoy!” bawled one. Then the mess-kid came in steaming from the galley, and upon it was a large fowl.

“Hi, yi, turkey, ahoy! Turkey, ’e was a good old man!” cried a Swede.

“An’ divil a bit will anyone but th’ bye git,” said the big bos’n. “It’s sorry I am, Thomas, me dear, that I have tew whang ye afther yer noble raid on ther poulthry.”



The LOGGER-HEAD

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HE was probably named by sailors because of his fancied resemblance to a certain piece of ship's gear, but the Conchs of the Bahama Bank believed he deserved his name in its true meaning, for he was certainly the most stupid fellow on the reef. Those who knew him and watched him crawl up the glistening white coral sand that glared in the heat of the torrid sunshine never took the trouble to harm him, although the law of the reef is very much like it is elsewhere. The strongest or quickest-witted only might endure.

But the conch who first turned him, or rather attempted to turn him, found that his dead weight of six hundred pounds of shell and leather-like beef was not worth the trouble. Turtles of more manageable size were plentiful,

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and there was no use of straining one's self trying to upset such a monster. He drew his knife to kill, but the stupid one had sense enough to withdraw his head within the wall of bony shell, and the black man called maledictions upon him for turning the edge of his weapon. Then he smote him over the back with his turning stave and called him a worthless one because he refused to contribute himself to the Conch's larder, and passed on.

The loggerhead paid small heed to the man's behavior. The bright sunshine was warming the white sands, and the blue water of the Gulf Stream was rippling past the cay, while above him the beautiful little lumpy clouds, bunches of pure white vapor, were floating away to the southward. It was enough to live without bothering with those who fished upon the waters of the reef or the great swarm of creatures who inhabited the clear depths. Everywhere the sea denizens seemed to be in continual tumult, some trying to build homes among the sponges and

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growths of the coral banks, and others hurrying to and fro through the clear blue liquid with no especial purpose he could fathom. Then there were the destroyers who came and went with a rush, chasing the smaller to shelter and splashing a great deal of water in their efforts to capture those weaker than themselves.

The loggerhead poked forth his nose and gazed about him, wondering at the beauty of the world, and gave the struggling swarms but a passing glance. Then he laboriously hauled himself up the warming sands until he reached high-water mark.

The Conch had walked far away down the cay where his boat was hauled up. His companion sat in the stern-sheets and lazily bailed the water from her. When he had finished, the two men shoved her off and hoisted a small sail. Then swinging her bow around before the breeze, they headed away toward the distant line of white which showed to the eastward where a larger cay of the Bank rose from the sea.

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After they had gone the loggerhead watched the rippling water along the shore. Soon the head of a huge turtle appeared, and in a few minutes the great form of another like himself hauled slowly and lazily up the beach.

Before dark several followers had hauled up to high-water mark. On the cay was soft fine sand of a nature not unlike that of more northern beaches, and this had banked above the coral to a depth of three or more feet.

With flippers of horny hardness and gigantic power the females began to cut their way down. They scooped and scooped until they had holes at least two feet deep nicely rounded and firmly packed on the sides as though they were cemented. Then they dropped slowly egg after egg into the little pits until a hundred or more had packed themselves into the receptacles. The shells of the eggs were soft like leather, and each egg had a small dent which showed it was fresh. Then as the night wore on they softly covered the pits with sand and carefully

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smoothed them over until not the slightest trace of any disturbance of the surface showed. It was nice work, for the sand was soft, and the signs of digging were easily made, but hard to conceal, and it was nearly dawn before the females were satisfied with their efforts. Then they slipped slowly down the sand into the sea and disappeared to return no more. Their task was done.

The huge loggerhead who had led the way up the beach watched the departing turtles as they went to sea. The sound of the murmuring ocean was in the morning air, the song of the south sea awakening the day as the soft wind sighed over heaving swell and rippled the beautiful wavelets until they rolled into little combers and flashed white in the sunshine. All about him was the light of the tropic dawn. The sweet breath of the trade wind fanned his iron-hard head and he opened his eyes lazily to watch the sunrise. It was well. The beauty of the world attracted him.

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Far away on the horizon the spurts of foam showed the beginning of the strenuous life of the destroyers. He watched them lazily and wondered at their fierceness, their uselessness of purpose. Then he saw a form coming down the beach and looked eastward where the boat of the Conchs had made the shore again.

The black man went slowly along the beach prodding the sand at high-water mark wherever he saw the tracks of turtles. He had a long, thin piece of iron with a sharp end which he drove into the sand and withdrew again, looking at the end to see if there was any sign of egg-yolk adhering to it. Once he struck a place where a turtle had scooped out a nest, and the dripping iron caused him to give a cry to his companion in the boat. Then he threw down a sack and dug until he had unearthed the eggs, which he transferred quickly to the bag, and picking up his iron staff he went along, bending down to watch the tracks more closely.

The loggerhead watched him out of the cor-

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ner of his eye and thought of the turtle who had lost her eggs, but the whole thing interested him but little and he made his way slowly down the sand to avoid being hit over the head with the iron rod because the Conch did not like him.

The Conch saw him as he gained the surf, but he knew him, and shaking his staff at him he went along searching for more prizes.

The great loggerhead swam easily just below the surface where the sunlight filtered down and made the liquid a bright blue. He had no object, and held his course across the Gulf Stream, letting himself drift with the current. It was well to live and the uselessness of effort was more apparent to him since he had seen the Conch's work on the cay of the Bahama Bank.

The warm stream was rushing silently northward and the gentle wind caused but little roll to the sea. The loggerhead could lie upon the surface and poke his head out, getting a glimpse of the eternal rim of the circle which had no break. But he cared nothing for land, and the

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sea was sparkling and blue. The sun overhead sent down hot rays which he felt through his thick armor of shell, but when it grew too warm he cooled himself by sinking a few feet below the surface for several minutes.

Several big barnacles which had attached themselves to his underbody made navigation tiresome, for he had to drag them through the water along with him, but it was too much trouble to scrape them off. He had seen some of his fellows do this on the rocks of the Florida Reef, but it was laborious work and he preferred to take things easy.

He was not an old turtle. Some of his fellows had lived for several centuries and were old before he was born. But he had grown very large since the day he first saw the sun shining over the reef at Roncador. He was but a tiny little fellow then, and his shell was so soft that he felt the sun burn through it. His leather-like skin on his neck was tender and even his bony beak could hardly cut the soft Gulf weed. His

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flippers were dark and soft and very unlike the huge scaly paddles he now used to scull himself along. He was quite rapid in his movements then, but life upon the tropical sea had gradually had the effect of making him sluggish and philosophical. The sunshine was all he cared for.

He had no trouble getting enough to eat without fighting for it. It seemed a great waste of energy to be eternally chasing other and weaker creatures, and now he had drifted instinctively back to the habits of his forefathers. He took things very coolly. When a savage shark or albacore made a strike at him he did not retaliate by snapping at them with his huge beak which would now slice out a couple of pounds of wood from a floating log and shear through anything living. He simply hauled in his paddles and stump of a tail to the sheltering safety of his armor and the vigorous fish might chop all day at him for all he cared. Their teeth might scratch his shell a little, but the powerful arch

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of his back made it impossible to crush him and a few scratches upon his plates would not injure him in any way whatever. His head he might draw in until his ugly beak and steady eyes looked out of a sort of cavern. It was trifling with sudden death to come within the radius of a foot of that nose, and the vigorous fish after tormenting him a few minutes generally gave him a shove and left him in disgust.

After they had gone away he would slowly and lazily shove out his paddles again and proceed to scull himself leisurely on his way, his small, dull mind undisturbed at the affront. Such creatures were a nuisance to him, but they were in existence and it was not for him to worry because they were. He would go along in the sunshine and soft air in his easy way, and when these no longer attracted him he would draw in his head, upset himself, then, thrusting it forward again, go sculling for the cool depths where he would spend many hours among the beautiful marine growths fathoms below the surface upon

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the coral reef, and where the faint light of the sun filtering down made objects dim and uncertain. All was quiet here, and it was the ideal place for repose.

It had taken many years of wandering to get the loggerhead as far north as the Bahama Bank. He had let himself drift along, and here he was at last in the core of the great Florida Stream, going to the northward at a rate which would have astonished him very much had he known its velocity. It is doubtful even if he had known it that he would have made any effort to either stem it or get clear, for he now had the reposeful habit strong in his nature, and he took things as they came. Nothing had as yet caused him the slightest harm, and there was no reason to get excited at anything. Life was pleasant. Effort was useless.

He would float along upon the bright blue surface of the warm stream and poke his head up into the clear sweet air and sunshine. It was enough. The life of albacore or dolphin was

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not for him. Theirs was all effort, savage strife, and a sudden death. He might lie and ponder at their lot with his head slightly raised and his paddles at rest, but while he might notice them in their desperate play he had a supreme contempt for them all. He had already lived as long as three generations of them, and they had done nothing save fight and slay.

As he floated away he soon found many of his old acquaintances were disappearing. The savage amber-jack and fat sunfish would pass him now and then, but they were always heading south. Only his companions, the flying fish, seemed to care as little as he for their whereabouts. The flying fish were not afraid of him, and they were his friends. He held them in high disdain for their cowardice, for they were always timorous and ready for flight at the first sign of an approaching fish, and it was more contempt than pity he had for those who were caught. The more fortunate he would watch with languid interest.

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The lives of all were so full of strife they were eminently unsuccessful from his point of view, and it was only because the little flyers were so pretty when they whirled upward from the blue water and with whirring wings sailed away, that he liked them better than the rest. They always knew where the best Gulf weed was to be had and never disputed his claim to the largest share of any that he found. It was manifest to him that he was a superior being, quite above the rest of his fellows, and with the instinctive feeling common to all animals, he felt that this superiority was a special gift from the great power which he felt ruled his destiny. His dull brain worked slowly. There was no quickening of his sluggish circulation to brighten his wits.

It was quite a fortnight after leaving the Bahama Bank that he began to notice that the water about him was not quite so blue as before and that there was a chill in it which he did not like. It stirred him to action and he began

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paddling westward after the setting sun. The next day a low shore appeared on the horizon with a bright sand beach shining like a white band between the dark line of hammock and the sparkling sea. He headed for it, thinking to haul out a little while and sun himself upon the hot beach, for the air was much cooler than what he had been accustomed to and the Gulf weed was scarce.

In spite of his unwieldy size the loggerhead was not slow when he once started to use his great paddles. He kept up a steady stroke with all four, his large front ones sculling him along like two oar-blades, bending at each return, and his smaller hind ones shoving him ahead with quick, jerky strokes. His head was thrust forward, and he went along a few feet below the surface like a great oval shadowy shape.

In a little while he drew near the beach. It was a long sand-spit stretching out to sea, upon which the long roll of the Atlantic swell fell with a deep, sullen roar. Beyond the spit was a quiet

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lagoon, and there was an opening through the line of breakers.

He paddled slowly in, keeping clear of the surf, poking his head up now and then to get his bearings correctly. Upon the inner end of the bar he saw three strange forms. They were absurd-looking creatures with long legs and bills, their heads having light gray penciled feathers giving them the appearance of being bald, as their wings and breasts were dark. Their large eyes were watching the incoming tide as it swirled through the inlet, and when they saw him they set up a vast noise of protest, scolding loudly and threatening him. He felt instinctively that these birds were timid creatures in spite of their fierce threats, and a sudden movement toward them sent them shrieking away in terror. This amused him, and he went in through the smooth water unmolested.

Inside the lagoon was a long stretch of shoal water. Sculling along close to the bottom so that but a few inches were between him and the

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hard sand, he went swiftly up the sound. A great sand shark lay in front of him, his long body barely moving, the sunlight playing upon his flanks and his dorsal fin just awash. The loggerhead gave him a brush with his paddle as he went past and the great fish shot ahead a full fathom with the touch. He was not used to being brushed against, and it startled him. Then he turned and chopped at the turtle, but his teeth met the armor of shell and several broke with the impact. The loggerhead went steadily on. The water was now getting warmer again and the sunshine made it very bright, for it was shoal and the white sand reflected the rays from the bottom, hurting his eyes with the glare.

He found a sloping beach and hauled lazily out into the heat of a cloudless day.

The quiet of the lagoon was attractive to the turtle. He spent many days drifting about its shallow depths feeding upon the drift-weed and small shell-fish the tide drove into the inlet. He

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was well content to lie upon the surface and watch the shear-waters go sailing past, their beaks skimming the smooth sea, the tips sometimes cutting like a knife through the yielding medium. ready to snatch up any unwary mullet or small fry that happened upon the surface in their path. Often a great pelican would come in from the sea and fish for a few hours over the schools of mullet or whiting until with heavy pouch and tired pinions he would withdraw to the sand-spit to gorge himself with the tender morsels.

The loggerhead was amused at the harried schools of fish as they scurried in terror for a shelter. He felt his superiority over all the other denizens of the lagoon, and the poor little creatures hurrying in terror from the destroyers filled him as before with disdain.

One day a fishing schooner hove to off the inlet. Boats were lowered and a long seine placed in them. The net was very strong and its headline so heavy it took eight men to haul it.

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They headed slowly in for the inlet and lay off the entrance for some time waiting for the tide to favor an attempt to make the opening through the breakers. They headed the long rollers, rowing easily, and one man stood in the bow of the leading boat watching the shoaling water, ready to warn the helmsman in time to prevent getting ashore.

Soon they saw the way clear ahead and the rowers put some strength into their stroke, sending the small craft rapidly in. They went through the entrance safely, although a breaker rolling close to the outer edge of the sand-spit half filled the leading boat. Then they rested on their oars and began to clear the net.

The loggerhead was far away up the lagoon when the fishermen entered. He saw them as they were stretching the seine across the entrance of the inlet and watched them haul it slowly up the slue, driving all the fish before them. The mullet were jumping in terror and the whiting were hurrying for the shoal water half a mile

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away. The great sand shark who lay off the entrance saw the closing trap in time to make a lunge past the end of the line, splashing the man in the bow with a vigorous slap of his tail as he swung across and clear. He made a chop at the trailing net, but missed it in his hurry. Then he went sullenly to sea.

The fishermen landed on either side of the narrow lagoon and started to walk the net slowly up, gradually closing the space above into smaller and smaller scope. In half an hour they had gone more than halfway, and the frightened schools of fish began to grow more and more restless as they saw the strangers approaching. Some of them tried the meshes of the seine, but they were too small for any save the tiniest mullet to go through, and they fled back again to the shallow water farther up.

The loggerhead was resting upon the surface watching the men. They had not yet noticed him, but he had gone so long without harm from

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anyone that he anticipated none. He was satisfied that his superiority to all other creatures put him beyond the pale of becoming a victim to anything.

Suddenly a fisherman noticed him and yelled to his companions across the slue, pointing at the bony beak that showed above the surface. His companions were too far away to hear what he said, but their sharp eyes followed his signals and they soon noticed the turtle.

The net was drawing in closer and closer, the water was getting shoaler, and the men were walking the lines ahead more rapidly. The fish imprisoned beyond its scope now saw their danger plainly and they tore the water into foam in their frantic efforts to escape. The logger-head saw them and watched them lazily, much amused at their struggles. His contempt for them grew so supreme that when they rushed past him in one of their frantic plunges he snapped viciously at a lagging mullet and very nearly cut him in two. Then he sank slowly

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down to the sandy bottom below, for the hurrying fish annoyed him.

The net was now nearly up to the end of the slue, and a giant leader of the mullet school made a mighty dash for liberty. He tore down the lagoon and rising with a sudden sweep upward, leaped high in the air and plunged over the line of corks which floated the top of the trap.

He went free. Another, encouraged by his example, made the dash also and went over. The rest, seeing the leaders leap to liberty, made a dash in unison and with a mighty rush plunged at the floating line of buoys. Hundreds went over in spite of the fishermen, who manned their boats and rowed along the net, holding it aloft wherever they saw the crowd coming. Some gave out at the jump and drove against the deadly meshes, and others, finding the crowd too close for them, swerved at the line and flowed past in a solid phalanx of shimmering silver to swim back and make a new trial.

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The cries of the men and the rush of the passing schools began to make the loggerhead restless. There was something very extraordinary taking place. He was angry at the miserable fish who were so useless and helpless. His contempt finally became so great that he concluded that he would go down to the other end of the slue where the sand shark usually lay waiting for the little fish to come out in deep water. He started to scull himself forward and had just made headway when he suddenly brought up against the net.

The water was less than ten feet deep where he was, and he followed the obstruction upward to the surface, thinking to find it end before he came into view of the men. But the line of buoys held it well up and his head popped out of the water before he realized that he could not pass. A man in a boat made a vicious lunge at him with a boat-hook, but he got out of the way and followed the net along trying to find a way to get through.

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The mullet and whiting were now leaping by scores over the corked line. Their active life had made them fleet and strong. They had fought for existence from the beginning, and the trap about them was but another of the many obstacles they must surmount if they would endure. They were terrified, but they acted quickly and sensibly, their fright not causing them to overlook any possible means of escape. They were getting clear in spite of the shouting men who were now hauling line as fast as they could. Several large skates and a couple of flounders who had lived up the slue were vainly trying to burrow under the heavy leadline that swept the bottom. The loggerhead noticed them as he passed, but they paid no heed to him. A troop of crabs were being hustled along the bottom by the weighted line. They were snapping at everything that came in their reach.

The loggerhead began to get anxious to go away. He made a savage lunge at the meshes

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closing about him and he drove his head through a great rent he made with his beak. His paddles, or flippers, however, caught in the snare and he struggled wildly and with gigantic power to get through. His tremendous struggles soon drew the corked line below the surface and brought the fishermen hurrying in their boats to find out what caused the trouble. They gazed down into the depths and soon made out the giant shape struggling frantically. Seizing the lines of the seine they quickly hauled the loggerhead to the surface, where one of them grasped his hind paddle and held it long enough to get a bowline around it. Then they rowed to the shore, towing him ignominiously behind the craft, while the few remaining mullet, who were too small and weak to make the leap for liberty, crowded swiftly through the gap and headed for the open sea.

Even the skates now made for the opening in the trap. They rose to the surface with difficulty, but managed to get clear. In less than

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five minutes every living thing in the shape of a fish had escaped.

The fishermen landed their prize and tried to haul him out of the water. The loggerhead objected to this, and he began to haul them bodily into the sea. The water was riled and he appeared monstrous in the foam. They could not tell what kind of creature he was, but it was for them to get him ashore, and six of them hauled on the line while two, wading in, began to pry at him with oars to turn him upon his back. In a little while they had him rolled over and helpless. Then they came close to examine their victim.

“I’d be willing to lose half a ton of fish fer a fine green turtle,” said the leader of the men. “He’s a corker, an’ that’s a fact.”

“Looks to me like he’s nothin’ but one o’ them loggerheads,” said an old fisherman; “if he is, he’s played it on us fine.”

They looked at the markings on his shell and pulled out his flippers. Then the leader mopped

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his streaming face with a handkerchief. The old fisherman looked up sheepishly and grinned.

“ He aint wuth his weight in mud. Turn him lose an’ let him slide,” he said.

A sailor rapped him over the head and spoke feelingly. Then they cut the line adrift and went to gather in their torn net.

The loggerhead lay upon his back and waited. He was annoyed at the disturbance. It was provoking to be turned over by a lot of fishermen.

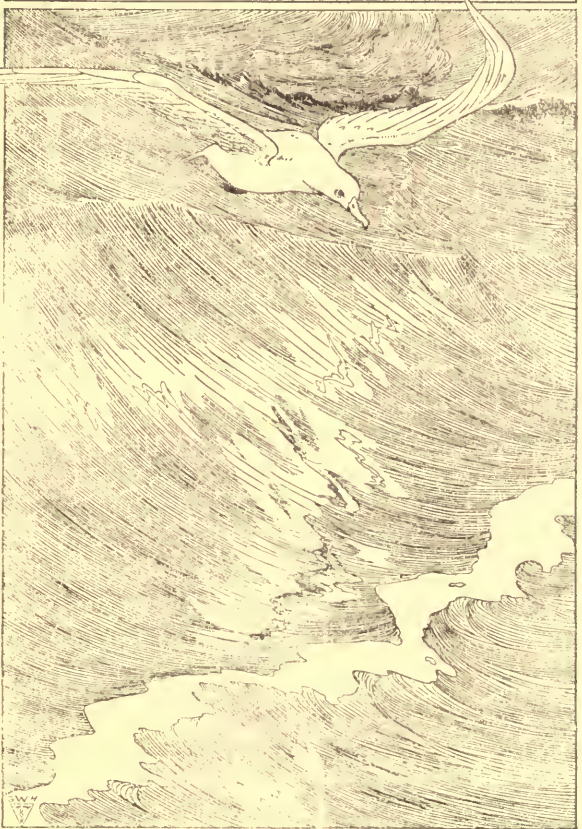
The mullet had seen him hauled out by the flipper, and he grew angry at the thought. He tried to twist round and get upon his belly, but could not.

All day he lay in the hot sunshine and snapped viciously at the sand-crabs who came to examine him. Then, as the tide raised and floated him, he managed to get again upon his paddles. He was disgusted. Far away down the lagoon a ripple on the water showed the returning mullet. He gazed at them for a moment, then hauled himself clear of the bottom. His ugly beak was

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stuck far out, and with steady strokes he pointed it for the open sea. He passed the returning fish, and they wondered at him. Then he went through the opening and disappeared into the great ocean to the eastward.

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FOLLOWER



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HE was a little more than fourteen feet across the tips of his outspread wings, more than two fathoms, and his white breast, full and rounded, was as broad as that of the man who stood at the wheel and watched him go soaring past. The very tips of his huge wings were black as jet, showing in marked contrast to the unbroken whiteness of the rest of his feathers, and the only other dark spot upon his snowy form was his eye. This was as black and shiny as the lanyards in the rigging. It was large and held a steady gaze, fearless yet curious, so that when the man at the wheel looked up the bird tilted his head to one side to get a better view of him. The giant beak, nearly a foot in length and of heavy bone, had a strangely hooked end, which swelled a little in size from the

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middle portion. It was a servicable pair of shears which could cut a five-pound fish in two at a bite. The two webbed feet, as large again as those of a swan, were held close in to the short tail feathers so as not to offer resistance to the air, through which the bird went at the speed of an express train. Silent and otherwise motionless, save for that turn of the head, the great creature swept past. Not a movement of leg or pinion, not a feather disturbed in that headlong rush. With the great wings stretched far out and slightly bowed, he held his way and tore past the fast-running ship as though she were at anchor, instead of plowing through the southern ocean at the rate of ten knots an hour with the wind behind her. Then, as she was left far astern, he tilted himself a little, and off into the curve of a tremendous circle he swerved, swinging with the speed of the wind over the rolling wave-tops until he had covered at least three miles upon the arc and was heading swiftly back again to repeat the maneuver.

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All the time that large black and shining pair of eyes watched the surface of the sea. Not a morsel of anything went overboard unobserved. From a distance of a mile or more the huge bird would note the smallest bits of food or grease which the cook would toss over the side when cleaning his coppers for a new mess of salt junk. Sailing over the bits of floating stuff he would hover a moment to see if they were really worth tasting. If so, he would soar in smaller and smaller circles until he would breast a sea. Then, dropping his legs and bracing his feet to retard the slowing flight, he would sink into the water and check himself with both feet and wings until his body finally rested gracefully upon surface. Folding his pinions slowly and a little stiffly, he would propel himself like a huge goose toward the floating prize and make a pass at it with his beak. Salt-pork rind, gristle, anything that had grease or taste to it, was chopped by the bony shears and quickly bolted. It mattered little just what it was as long as it had some

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grease or taste to it. His appetite was not squeamish.

When nothing remained he would slowly and stiffly again stretch out those wings and face to windward. Then he would propel himself along into the breeze until he rose upon a sea. A quick couple of strokes with the pinions and a sudden push with both feet generally lifted the great body clear of the water before it began to sink down the slope of the succeeding sea. After that it was but a detail to rise higher and higher into the clear air without perceptible motion save of rushing ahead and circling in spiral curves, which no mathematician might describe or define as a means of ascending.

The ship was something over six hundred miles off shore. She was heading for the last corner of the world, Cape Horn, to turn it and then go northward up the South Pacific. She would head up the middle of the great ocean and at times she would not be within a thousand miles of any land whatever.

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For more than two weeks the albatross had followed in the wake, his tireless pinions showing no signs of weakening by the continuous flight. Steadily night and day he had followed, and the men aboard had watched him with the awe all deep-water men feel for the giant birds, which seem to be able to soar through space for a lifetime without tiring. Sometimes when he came up astern he slackened his pace by some method and remained for a short moment poised a few fathoms above the man at the wheel. Then his steady look as he slanted his head sideways made the man have a queer feeling, as though he were almost in communication with a stranger from the realms of space. When the captain happened on deck he paid considerable attention to the follower, but he never thought to harm him. The Winchester, which he often used to take snap-shots at blackfish, was always laid aside at his approach.

The great bird noted this. He was not afraid of the rifle, for although he saw the effects of

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the shot, he knew nothing of its power. The man was a creature of the earth like himself, and he had no reason to suspect him of harmful purposes simply on that account. He was interested in him, and a not unfriendly feeling came within his breast.

In the latitude of the "roaring forties" the weather is uncertain. Sometimes it blows high and sometimes low, which latter means it is dead calm for a spell. Under these conditions a sailing ship naturally comes to a sudden stop, and, with clewed-up courses, rolls and switches away often for days without making more than a degree of southing.

It was during one of these calm spells that the captain began to formulate a plan which would bring him in closer contact with the great bird which still soared and circled about the ship. He rigged a trolling line with a bit of wood for a float near the hook. Then he baited it with a piece of salt beef and tossed it over the side.

The ship was barely moving, but still had

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headway enough to get away from the bait. When it was fifty fathoms astern the captain held the line and waited.

The albatross soon sighted the piece of beef and circled slowly toward it. Then as it floated in clear view he settled upon the surface of the sea and paddled up to it and gave it a chop. He cut away half the beef, but missed the hook, and the captain's jerk upon the line merely pulled it from him. He made another grab, and as he did so the line tautened and the barb of the hook caught under his beak.

Hand over hand the captain hauled him in. He spread forth his wings and backed water hard with his feet, but the seaman kept a steady strain upon the line and prevented the hook from slipping clear. Soon he was directly under the ship's counter, and as she squatted down into the hollow of a swell the captain quickly hauled the bird over the rail to the deck.

Inside the poop-rail it was impossible for the albatross to get headway enough to rise into the

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air, the wind was so unfavorable in the shelter. While he might waddle about upon the white planks it was as impossible for him to get away as though he had been chained by the leg. It was most provoking to be in such an absurd position. The man at the wheel grinned at him, and the mate came up to take a better look at close quarters. He stretched forth his wings and tried to rise by a series of powerful strokes, but it was in vain. He only managed to go plunging into the rail before he got his feet clear of the planks. This made him angry and he snapped at the mate, making a savage chop with his great beak, which came together with a loud clap. But the seaman jumped aside, and the captain admonished him to keep away.

Gradually the feeling of being upon a floating thing with other creatures seemed less strange. It was remarkable how different the ship was now that he was on board it from what it appeared while he was a few fathoms in the air. Yet he had followed it so long that he had become ac-

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customed to it, and the unpleasant sensation of becoming suddenly a prisoner aboard gave place to that of curiosity. The captain brought some choice fat and ordered the steward to keep the slush from the coppers as clean as possible and give the stranger as much as he wished. After eating several pounds he lost for the time all desire to get away and waddled about the quarter-deck perfectly satisfied with the sudden change in his condition.

The ship's dog rushed up and made a savage attack, and for a few minutes the great bird was frightened, for the noise was distracting and a sudden bite gave him pain. Then the captain dragged the animal away and gave the newcomer a choice piece of salt pork to make up for the lack of courtesy shown by the dog.

There was much of the dog's spirit aboard the ship, although it was not manifest to the albatross. Among the men forward were several who had much the same feeling for their fellows. Under the cover of bluff and honest exteriors

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they concealed dispositions like that of the dog. They were a type of what is known as "sea lawyer," and were always dwelling upon the grievances of sailors and the rascality of mates and masters. Close and intelligent observers would have noticed at once that the faults their leader saw in others were the ones rising to the surface in himself and which he was trying to conceal. He was saturnine, and his ugly little eyes held an unpleasant look every time he came in the vicinity of either the mate or captain. The second officer was in the other watch and therefore not often about to give him orders.

As the vessel gradually made her way southward and the hardships became more trying with the colder weather, the feeling aboard among the men who listened to the grumbler became more sinister. The captain was not such a man as to let things go unnoticed, but as long as there was no direct disobedience of orders he took no action and let the mate warm up the discontented men with extra work, for it is well known that hard

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work will do more for an ugly crew than any medicine.

The captain spent much time on deck and made a pet of the bird he had captured. He was a generous man and lonesome among the rough fellows who made up the crew, for his position forbade any intercourse whatever with anyone except his first officer. Even this seaman, able and intelligent as he was, could not be made more of than a slight acquaintance. Such is the rule aboard deep-water ships, for discipline must be enforced if safety is to be considered.

During many lonely hours the master tried to reconcile the dog to the newcomer. The old wolf spirit bred through thousands of generations of the land animal was not easy to pacify. It was the old spirit of suspicion for strangers based upon the experience of hundreds of ancestors, who had perhaps trusted not wisely but too well in the days when all living things were at war with each other and only the strongest and most cunning might survive. It was as evident

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in the dog as in the men of the fore-castle, and the master studied carefully and comprehensively to subdue it, or at least pacify it to an extent that strife might be averted. Kindness and unselfishness were the two antidotes he would employ.

The great bird was not slow to notice his friendship. After a day or two he was on the lookout for the master, who appeared regularly to take his morning observation for longitude, and he walked laboriously up to him in spite of the dog's yelping. There was something in the man's behavior that made him instinctively his friend. Finally even the dog's suspicions were allayed, and instead of seizing the bird's feathers in the rear to jerk them and then dodge the snap of the beak, he met the bird face to face and refrained from either a bite or bark. The two became reconciled.

During several days the albatross waddled about the quarter-deck and was fed, until the captain, fearing that he would grow so fat he

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would be unable to fly, finally took him in his arms one day and placed him upon the rail. Then he tied a bit of fancy red cord about his leg so that he might distinguish him from other birds that would follow in the ship's wake. The great bird had long ago learned to eat from the man's hand and took care not to chop too close to the fingers with his powerful beak. The master would stroke the beautiful white head and smooth the snowy feathers until the petting became a thing looked forward to. It was a smooth day in the latitude of the Falklands when he determined to set the captive free, and the dark water seemed less attractive than usual under the gloom of the overcast sky. The lonely cry of a stray penguin broke now and again upon the ears of the listening seaman and had a depressing effect.

With a last caress he gave the pet a gentle push to start him. The great black eyes looked hard at the sailor, and then, with the giant wings outstretched, he swung off in a graceful swoop,

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curving upward as the falling body nearly touched the sea. He was gone.

That night it came on to blow hard from the westward. The ship, nearing the latitude of the Horn, was shortened down to her lower topsails, and with the wind snoring away under them and past each taut downhaul, clewline, and hal-yard, she was hove to. It was necessary to try to keep her from sagging off to the eastward, for in this latitude every mile counts.

During the morning watch the mate had reason to call the captain, for with a falling glass and shifting wind, he was on the lookout for a definite change.

The captain came on deck and took in the situation. It was still dark, but the growing light on the horizon told of the approaching day. He stood near the man at the wheel a moment and the mate went forward where the green seas sometimes rose above the topgallant rail and fell upon the deck as the staggering ship plunged into the trough. Through the

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dim, misty light of the early morning he saw the watch turning out to clew down the foretopsail, and as the foremost man took the ratlines he turned and walked to the binnacle to watch the shifting course.

The increasing gale and gloomy prospects had caused the grumbling element among the crew to be more careless than usual, in spite of the master's efforts to pacify them. The leader of the malcontents came aft with two others to take a pull in the spanker sheet, for upon the boom had been bent the storm trysail to hold the vessel's head up to the gale while hove to. The men hauled surlily upon the line, but it came in so slowly that the mate came aft and spoke to them to stir them up. Then they flattened it in, but the stout landsman, or ordinary seaman, who was taking in the slack upon the cleat, failed to catch a turn. A tremendous sea hove the ship to leeward almost upon her beam-ends. The struggling men were hove against the lee rail, and the sheet, whirling loose from the fellow's hands,

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caught a turn about his body and in an instant he was flung over the side. The captain, who had just stepped out from the wheel-house, made a grab to seize him, and a turn of the now flying line caught him around the ankle and jerked him also over the rail into the sea. Then followed the dreaded cry of "man overboard" and the confusion of a crew of men without a leader.

The mate with ready knife cut away the lashings of the quarter-buoys and let them go overboard. Then he tried to fling a line, but the ship was moving too fast. She was forereaching heavily, but in that sea it was madness to think of trying to stop her by laying the yards aback, or losing control of her in any way. She must go on. They might shorten her down enough to stop her, but even if they could do so within half an hour she would be too far away to see a man in the water and the sea too heavy to think of lowering a small boat.

Daylight was breaking over the stormy ocean and the roar from aloft was sounding louder

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with the increasing gale. Many of the men forward had not seen the incident and the cries of those upon the foretopsail yard to those on deck could be heard. From a bunch at the weather clewline came a faint strain of a "chanty":

" 'Ole stormy, 'e was a good ole man—
Singing yo, ho, ho—with a hey—bar-rrr.' "

The absurd chorus struck forcibly upon the ears of the master, who with both hands gripped the life-buoy and kept his head clear of the breaking seas. The mate, leaning over the taffrail, bawled something to him he could not understand, and then the ship drifted to leeward with the faint sound of singing still in his ears:

" 'Ole stormy, 'e'll come walking home,
Singing yo, ho, ho—with a hey—bar-rrrrr.

" 'Ole stormy, 'e has gone to sea—
But 'e'll not come back, with a hey—bar-r-rr-rr.' "

The words of a "chanty" are generally grotesque and meaningless, but it was this very absurdity that struck the listening master as fraught with meaning. It was significant of his ending. He would not come back again.

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The water was quite cold, and to make certain that he would not lose his hold upon the cork float he passed his head through the circular opening and made his body fast with the hand-line to the buoy at both sides, so that he would balance evenly. He would do all he could to live, and if he floated long enough they might pick him up after all. The minutes dragged into hours, and cold and exhaustion caused his mind to wander. He fancied he saw green fields again and was back in the land of his birth.

The suffering of passing was almost over and it held no terrors for him. He had tried to do what he could aboard the ship to make things less hard for his men. Perhaps if he had been more savage he would have done better, for there are some men who cannot be touched save through great bodily fear.

The dawn of the southern day had broken over the heaving ocean, and at times he would try instinctively to look for the ship. She had dis-

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appeared. Nothing but the great rolling seas as far as the eye could reach, and these turned now and again into grass-grown hills before his failing vision.

It was late in the morning, after the daylight had become strong, that he fancied he heard a dull, thunderous noise. It had little effect upon him now, for he was too far gone to pay much attention. The noise grew louder and louder as the minutes passed and suddenly his dulled brain became alert again. He looked toward where the sound come from, and it was from the northward and behind him, and through the haze of the flying spume-drift he saw the dark gray shadows of rocks. He fancied his mind was at fault, and in spite of the heavy roar which now filled the air he paid little attention. Then he was hove nearer the ledge and felt the rush of the lifting sea.

It spurred him to recover. He dashed the salt water from his eyes and made a desperate effort to realize his position. Then a great, high

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rolling surge that had run for miles across the southern ocean picked him up on its crest and bore him shoreward with the speed of the wind. As it broke into a white smother of foam he saw clearly at last that he was being hurled upon the rocks. He struggled to keep his head out of the boiling rush and looked for a place where he would strike. To hit the ledge at the speed he was going meant instant death, and he tried to see if there was no slue or opening into which he might be hurled. The current of the Antarctic had caused an eddy within a few miles of the rocks of Hermite Isle, in which he had drifted, and it had carried him toward the land at a rapid rate.

Rising upon the roll of the crest, he just managed to keep from striking until the weight and speed of the breaker had been exhausted. Then by chance and the aid of the buoy he managed to float into a crevice between the rocks and cling there until the back-wash had left him almost high and dry. With the last remaining

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energy left he hauled his body clear of the tide and lost consciousness.

When he regained his senses the sun was well up on the northwestern horizon. The wind had gone down considerably, and heavy, oily-looking clouds were hurrying past overhead, with breaks between them. He felt the sting of sleet upon his face and the chill from his wet clothes almost paralyzed him. He staggered to his feet and gazed about him. Then he crawled higher up the rocks.

There was no doubt about it, he was upon the rocks of Cape Horn. He was clear in his mind now and remembered his struggles, and he had seen the ragged hump too often not to recognize it at once. How his ship had been driven in so close was hard to guess, but he knew the treacherous currents of the Drift and remembered that a careless helmsman might very easily nurse the vessel off her course with the help of an unknown set to the northward.

While he looked about him he became aware

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that he needed nourishment very badly. He was faint with the long swim and continued exposure to the cold water and he must have remained unconscious for many hours after coming ashore. There was nothing to eat upon the ledge. Tufts of the great tussac-grass shot up here and there upon the heights above him, but there was nothing that looked as if it might be used to prolong his life.

But a seaman is never beaten until he dies. The master would not despair. He sat a moment and studied the question. Then he arose again and clambered painfully up the crags, hoping that he might find some Cape pigeon eggs upon the higher terraces. There was not a sign of anything except a great rock-hopper, or penguin, who skipped nimbly down and plunged into the sea with a loud cry before the sailor could reach him. Some thirty feet above the ledge upon which he landed he discovered a pool of half-stagnant water, but it was not salty and came from the melted snow and sleet. He

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drank some and felt better, although it made him colder. He felt through his clothes for a match, but found the metal case in which he carried them had failed to keep out the sea water. His numb fingers could scarcely open the case, but he finally placed the little sticks in a lee, where he hoped they would dry enough to light. Then he sat down and waited, and before he knew it he had fallen asleep.

The sun had swung up again in the northeast when he opened his eyes and the weather was less ugly. He tried his matches. First one was scratched carefully upon a dry piece of stone. The head crumbled slowly away. A bit of smoke seemed to start from it and the seaman's heart beat rapidly. Then the head fell away, leaving the bare stick. It was worthless. He tried another of his scanty store. He grasped the little stick close to its head of composition and drew it very carefully upon the rock. A bunch of finely shredded grass, perfectly dry, was rolled into a ball to catch the first spurt of flame. The match

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cracked softly and at each noise the sailor's heart seemed to stop. His hand shook violently. Then the head of the match crumbled again, and his spirits sank within him. It was life or death, for he must have warmth soon or perish. He had only three more fuses and he stopped a little to think of some way he might make them burn. He gazed steadily at them for a long time and then took up one. It failed.

Hope died away as he took up the other two. He struck them carefully as before, but they were spoiled. Then he cast the grass from him and looked out to sea.

He had been gazing for a long time before he was aware of a form which appeared circling over the ocean beyond the lift of the breakers. It was that of a huge albatross, which had come in from the sea and was apparently looking for a sheltered place upon the Horn to rest. The master gazed at the great white form skimming along over the wave-tops and remembered his pet. The bird appeared larger than the one he

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had caught, but all of the great Cape albatrosses were so much alike that he could not distinguish between them. He watched the bird circle about him and finally noticed that he had been discovered, for the creature came nearer and nearer at each sweep until he caught the look of its eye as it bent its head a little in order to observe him better. The albatross was evidently hungry and it might take very little indeed to invite an attack. The bird was practically carnivorous, for it ate anything in the way of flesh it could capture. It was very powerful and could get the best of a man without much trouble, provided the man was incapable of vigorous defense. The thought made him alert and brought to his own hungry self the idea of capture. He might do worse than eat a thirty-pound bird during his stay ashore. He could not cook the creature, but that would be of but small consequence in his present state. The food was the main thing and it was necessary to get something at once.

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The bird came closer and closer until finally with outstretched wings and projecting feet it backed against its own headway and settled upon the ledge not twenty feet distant.

The captain's heart beat high with expectation. He lay perfectly still watching it, hoping that it would come near enough for him to grasp it. If it was strong enough to conquer, it was well; he would soon be dead anyway without food. If he could master it by gripping its throat, he might live for many days.

The bird came straight toward him. He was quiet as a cat waiting for a spring, his eyes glaring at it as it approached. Then something attracted his attention. Upon the foot of the bird was a bit of cord. Yes, there was no mistake, it was his pet, the bird he had captured. He started up with a cry, but the bird came steadily toward him without fear, and in an instant was poking his great beak into his hand for food.

The seaman's heart was beating wildly. Here

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was food enough for a week right in his grasp. He had but to seize the bird's neck quickly and with the little strength he had left he could strangle it. The thought called forth all the wild wolf spirit in his nature. He was trembling with the excitement. But, as he looked down upon the beautiful, smooth white neck of his former pet, he wavered. Something within him rose against a deed of violence. He stroked the soft feathers and looked at the creature, who was probably almost as hungry as himself. No, he would commit no horrid act. He would probably starve anyhow, and it would be better to die than to have such a conscience. Then all of the beast fell away from him and he felt better.

But while he sat and stroked the great bird his mind was active. The albatross would not remain there long. He would follow some vessel for the beef-fat from her coppers, and as the thought came to him he began a plan to attract attention.

He tore from his shirt a long piece of linen.

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This was a piece having his name written upon it in indelible ink which had stood the wash of the laundry. It would stand the wash of the sea. He made it fast to the bird's leg, and the bight of it he brought up over the back beneath the wings, tying it loosely and leading the other end down so that it could be fastened to the other leg. The thin cloth lying loose would prevent the bird from cutting it with its beak, for the edges of that appendage, while very sharp, were not laid as close together as those of a pair of shears, and the thin cloth would work between them. Upon the top of the piece he wrote with his own blood, "Cape Horn, Hermite Isle, Help." Underneath this he put the date, and let his laundry mark do for signature. Then he led the bird gently to the edge of the rock and pushed him over.

Afterward he settled down in his bed of tussac and waited for the end he now felt was at hand. He prayed to the God he had felt in the breath of the trade wind and roar of the storm, the

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power which was manifest in all nature. Then a feeling of peace came upon him and his sufferings were over; he had collapsed.

Two days later the Norwegian bark *Eric* was working to the westward past Cape St. John. Her captain had noticed a great albatross following his vessel all day, and saw the bird had something fast to its leg. Being of a very superstitious nature the master did everything he could to attract the bird's attention and draw him close enough to observe the hanging cloth more thoroughly. He was astonished to find the bird quite tame, and had no difficulty in hauling it on deck with a baited hook. He took off the rag and read the inscription, which had luckily kept clear and dry, for the weather had been cold and the sleet squalls had not caused the writing to run.

Being in the neighborhood of the Horn, he did what no one but a very superstitious master would have done without great trepidation. He stood under all sail for Hermite Isle and hove

THE STRIFE OF THE SEA

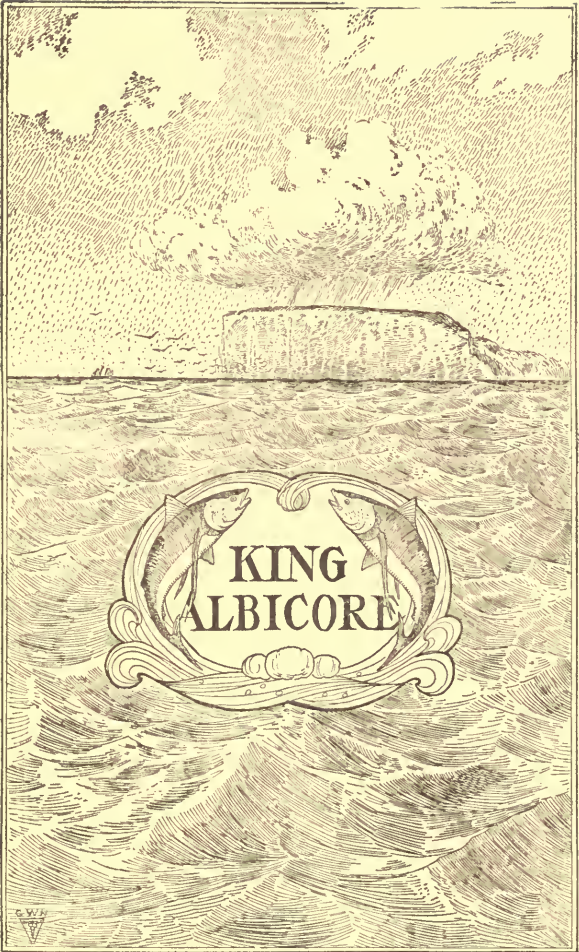
his ship to not three miles from the rocks. The weather was better than usual and he had no difficulty in lowering a small boat and making a landing.

As the craft drew near the land the white life-buoy attracted the helmsman's attention, lying high up on the rocks and showing out strongly against the background of black ledge. The boat was headed into a rift or slue, and two of the men managed to spring out of her, the rest keeping her clear of the rocks, which, although sheltered in the slue, felt the tremendous lift and back-wash of the heavy swell outside. The master was found unconscious in his bed of tussac-grass.

By care and skill they managed to get him into the small boat alive and started for the bark that was riding safely in the offing. They hurried back aboard and came alongside just as the Norwegian navigator set the great bird free again. The men rested upon their oars and watched the albatross as it stretched forth its

THE WHITE FOLLOWER

wings and bore away to the southward. A man standing in the lee rigging held a line to throw to the bow oarsmen, but he hesitated and watched the majestic flight. The officer in the boat looked instinctively upward, and, as the huge creature soared away, he took off his cap and bowed his head.



**KING
ALBICORE**

G. W. H.
▽

KING ALBICORE

HE came from a race of giants. His ancestors had held sway over the great breadth of the Pacific for many centuries, and were the lords of the South Sea. When he first saw the light it was where the towering peaks of Juan Fernandez rose above the eastern sea, like the backs of huge marine monsters, from the deep ocean, topped by a heavy pall of vapor which rose densely for miles into the blue above and spread out like an enormous umbrella. Between the darkening under surface of the higher layers of white, reaching down to the green hills beneath, rectangular sections of steel-blue showed the semi-tropic rainfall. They were sharply outlined against the clear sky beyond, for off the land the sky was devoid of a single trade-cloud.

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All around was peaceful calm. The great Pacific, father of waters, was resting. Only the high-rolling swell from far away to the westward came majestically onward toward the shore, rising higher and higher as it met, deep down, the resistance of the outlying reefs, until it threw its crest far into the air, and, with a thunderous roar of welcome, rushed white and churning against the iron-hard cliffs, which received it silently and hurled it backward as if coldly repellent of its embrace.

The sun had shone strongly for days upon the smooth, heaving swell, and out upon the sunken ledges where the albicore lingered; the rays filtered down to the solid rock. Here, sheltered by the reef beyond, the breakers did not disturb the ocean denizens. The deep-toned thunder of the fall on the outer barrier filled the air, but beneath the surface of the clear water all was quiet in the sunshine. The king was a young one of a large family. Scores of his brothers and sisters lay close to the bottom peering in and out

KING ALBICORE

among the forests of kelp, and enjoying the rays of the warm sun, for the albicore is essentially a surface fish. The heat and light were very pleasant to them, and they were growing strong and healthy.

The older fish had come inshore some weeks before our hero was born, but food was plentiful about the island and they still lingered. They had spawned and had seen their young brought forth. Now their duty was done and they swarmed about the ledges or plunged playfully about the slues in the reef, chasing the smaller fish to shelter in pure wantonness. They lingered on when it was time for them to take to the great stretch of ocean to the westward and make room for others of the deep ocean tribes. Now the young were about in great numbers, and they seemed almost to crowd the waters in the sheltered coves. It was high time to go to sea again, and on the morrow the leaders of the school would start for the open ocean to the west, where the sun sank out of sight. Those who

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could follow might be safe, for the older fish were very strong, and their numbers would prevent any of the hanger-on crowd of sullen sharks from coming too near the flanks of the moving throng.

A leader passed while our young one was watching the light. He was a great fish six feet in length, his sides shimmering like silver. His long, sinuous body apparently made no motion, save that it went ahead slowly and steadily, and his eyes sparkled like glistening crystals. His thin, tapering head seemed barely to disturb the medium about him as he went through it, and the only vibration of the light rays near him was caused by the huge mouth, which, although shut, showed heavy projecting lips and a half-concealed row of pointed teeth that rippled the water slightly as he slipped past. He was a long, powerful fellow, capable of great speed, and a stroke from those jaws of his meant death to anything in the sea of his size except the shark. Even the tough hide of this scavenger would not protect him from a frightful cut when the long,

KING ALBICORE

muscular body was launched at him with the speed of an arrow. A dark shadow which had come near the edge of the broken water gradually drew away with the albicore's approach, and the young one experienced a feeling of relief instinctively which he could not understand. He was a very sensitive young one, all nerves, and the uneasiness which possessed him when the large relative drew away caused him to make an effort to follow. But the great albicore took no notice of him, nor waited, but suddenly made a dart ahead, leaving only the vision of a silvery flash.

Other large fellows came and went while the younger ones strayed about the shoal water and chased the herring spawn or whale-food, eating much and gaining strength hourly.

High above the bare rocks a shaggy goat nibbled the grass of the hillside, and to the southward a chunky, dirty bark lay with her courses hauled up and her mainyards aback, while a dense smoke arose from her trying-out furnace. Alongside of her the carcass of a freshly killed

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whale rolled just awash in the swell, attracting countless thousands of whalebirds and loafing sharks.

The young albacore grew very nervous as the sun sank behind the sea in the far west, dyeing the waves a deep crimson. He was remarkably sensitive for an ocean fish. Instinct told him that he would fare better away from that reef after the last full-grown albacore had gone. They had been going to sea all day by twos and threes, but had paid not the slightest attention to him or any of his younger mates. The longing for the open ocean came upon him and with it a nameless dread. He had no mother to guide him, no father to protect him. They had gone to sea with the rest and left him to shift for himself. But there was something in the deepening roar of the surf and the moaning of the sea among the sunken ledges that spoke of an all-pervading Power that would guide him onward to whatever life held in store. And yet with it all was that nameless fear and dread which made

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him alert to every vibration of the water. Darkness came suddenly, and some of his smaller companions began to seek shelter of the more shallow water within the coves and between the rocks. Their shimmering bodies grew less and less distinct until only the phosphorescent flare of the disturbed water when they moved gave notice of their presence. The semi-tropical night fell upon the peaceful ocean.

All that night the great fish moved westward. In the morning, just before the sun rose, the last of the laggards had started off into deep water, leaving the high cliffs like a wall in the eastward, while the somber bank of vapor rose again from the land and cast a gloom over the outlying reef.

While the young fish were waiting for the growing light to guide them in the wake of their forbears, there was a sudden commotion on the edge of the surf. Numerous plunges and splashes told of a horde of rapidly moving bodies advancing through the shoal water of the reef. The feeling of terror that had come over our

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young one the day before now seemed to pervade the entire crowd that scurried here and there in the gloom. Everywhere there seemed to be a state of wild alarm. Bunches of the smaller fish tried to find shelter in deep, dark holes where the kelp weed formed mats and snaky tangles. Then, just as the first rays of the morning sun glistened upon the crest of a great roller, there was a sudden rush through the water all about, and dark forms came plunging onward with incredible speed.

Our young one caught a glimpse of a great fish high in the air heading for him, and the next instant there were several huge gaping mouths between pairs of shining eyes rushing upon him from all sides. He saw his young comrades seized and swallowed, their frantic efforts to escape availing them not the least. Then with a wild terror, which spurred him to frantic action, he rushed seaward. A giant mouth made a snap at him as he went past. A huge form rose in the air and dropped upon him with jaws

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gaping. He made a mad dodge and just missed the rows of teeth, while the stroke of the falling body almost stunned him. Then he recovered and tore for the outer breakers. The bonita had struck inshore, and lucky would be the small fish who could escape their rush.

Away into the deepening blue of the ocean he sped headlong with all his energy. He looked neither to the right nor left, but held his way straight ahead with the terror of those fierce monsters vibrating through his whole being. On and on, without a thought of rest or slacking his speed, he pushed until the bright sunshine showed him a desolate waste of fathomless blue void around and beneath him, and a bluer void above, with the little lumpy trade-clouds swinging past overhead. He was heading almost due west, and as the day wore on and his terror gave place to fatigue, he slacked his speed enough to take a careful look about him. There was not a living thing in sight.

Hunger soon came upon him and stirred him

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to further action. He began searching the sea for food. Soon one of his former companions came up almost as exhausted as himself with the run for life, and together they swam slowly along just beneath the surface in the roll of the swell.

As the day passed more of his youthful relatives hove in sight until by night six followers held their way in his wake. These were all who had gotten to sea. Few indeed had escaped. The day had marked the death of countless young fish, for the bonita spared nothing that came in their path.

The seven albacore cruised in company, capturing what small surface fish accident cast in their way, but all the time they held a general course to the westward and northward to where the coral reefs rose from the bed of the equatorial ocean. Day after day they swam steadily on, the young albacore leading. Their silvery bodies grew apace and their backs took on a shifting blue color, so that looking down from above, it would have been hard to tell them from the

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surrounding blue depths. Sometimes the ugly and noisy bos'n-birds would swoop down as though to strike them, but by sinking a few feet beneath the surface the albicore easily escaped. At night the seven swam beneath a tropic moon, and as they went their courage grew rapidly with their size. Unfortunately they approached an unknown peak lying below the surface of the great ocean. Here they were chased by a huge dolphin who haunted the vicinity. Three of their number fell prey to him before they could get away. A week or two later the remaining four fell in with a roaming pair of bonita. Two more went the way of the weak.

The remaining pair of albicore now cruised onward together, our hero leading as before, until they came to Tahiti, in the South Sea. Long accustomed to danger now, they approached the shore warily, their tapering bodies scarcely disturbing the sea. The albicore had grown very fast, developing during these weeks of travel into powerful fish. The teeth of the

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male leader began to show sharply beyond his lips. He was growing more and more muscular, and the long swim was hardening him. He was sturdy and shrewd, and the wild instinctive fear that had governed his younger actions now gave place to a feeling of confidence. His mate had also developed into a strong fish, and as they swam slowly in through the outer breakers of the barrier reef, their long, sinuous bodies armed with jaws and teeth which were not to be despised, smaller fish approached to welcome them. The albicore received them coldly, heading straight into the sheltered coves of coral, where they would rest from their long run. Here they stopped at last and set about making a new home.

During the months that followed the albicore grew several feet longer. Our leader was now nearly six feet in length, with his long jaws armed with razor-like teeth, his tapering flanks with silvery scales covering muscles of great hardness and power. And with that power came a consciousness of his worth. His wild life and

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flight made him careful of the denizens of the coral banks. He grew cold and thoughtful until, as he reached his final development physically, he was a dignified and quiet fellow. The smaller sociable fish of the reef did not understand him. Theirs was a life of ease and comparative safety, and their thoughts seldom went beyond the boundaries of the outer barrier. They fussed among themselves and voted the great stranger and his companion surly company. The inquisitive little sunfish would sometimes take a peep in at the cove where the albacore usually lay in the sunshine on bright afternoons, but there was something in the great fish's manner that the little reefer could not understand, and he set him down for a villain, keeping at a distance and looking askance always at those ragged teeth that peeped out from the long, sharp jaws. Even the mullet were warned, and gave the albacore a wide berth, while all the time he lay there with his thoughts far away where the peaks of Juan Fernandez rose from

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the sea. He was indeed a stranger in a strange place. Finally he was left alone with his mate.

The little sociable fish were heeded not at all by the albicore. He went to the reef daily and caught what small game he wished. His dignified movements were even watched by the great ground shark who lay daily under the shelter of the outer barrier, waiting to snap up any unwary traveler who might be unfortunate enough to be caught in the rolling surf and lose control of himself. Once only did the shark come in contact with the stranger. It was when the albicore had been rolled shoreward in the roaring surge. The lurking monster thought it a good chance to strike. He received a savage cut over the eye that left him somewhat bewildered and much more respectful of the powerful stranger's rights in the vicinity.

As the season changed and the trade-wind shifted to the eastward, bringing with it little watery clouds, the two albicore became more and more restless. The future king's sensitive

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nature became more and more imbued with the feeling that he must return to the waters of his birth to take his place among those of his kind. He would be needed. The bonita would come again, and there might be no albicore leader to protect those who had escaped their last assault, and who would return to the beautiful peaks that rose from the sea of his birth. There was a feeling within him that he must be there for a purpose. He was something more than a mere cruising pirate of the reefs of the South Pacific. The petty life of little sociable fish was not for such as he. There was something for him to do before he died, and this feeling became stronger and stronger until one rainy morning he started out accompanied by his faithful mate.

He was now at the fullness of his powers, a full-grown albicore of the southern ocean. All the inheritance of the race of giants from whom he had sprung was in his strong frame and lightning-like actions. He could dart so swiftly the eye could hardly follow his form, and by a slight

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swerve upwards he could spring high into the air above, leaving the sea ten feet or more below him, and then with head pointed gracefully downward, he would plunge into the blue depths, slipping his long, sinuous body so easily into the unresisting medium that there would be hardly a splash to mark his entrance. There were strength and grace in all his movements, and he was as bold as he was beautiful.

The speed of the fastest ship was slow as compared with his tremendous pace, so although he took his time and spent several days hunting upon the surface of the sea, it was but a short run for him to Mas-a-fuera. It was a very different passage from the one made when as a little fellow he voyaged out.

The high, grim cliffs of Mas-a-fuera rise a sheer thousand feet on the north side of the island, and the wind is usually southerly. This makes a ponderous lee, the only sea being the heave of the offshore swell. Many denizens of the deep ocean come in here to rest and search



FULL INTO THE CENTRE KING ALBICORE TORE HIS WAY.

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for food, and even the great cachalot, or sperm-whale, often takes a quiet cruise through the clear depths to enjoy the stillness, and incidentally look up a stray octopus or cuttle fish who might be ensconced within some ocean cavern in the cliffs.

It was toward this sheltered lee-shore our albicore held his way. Above the heights the huge pall of vapor rose as in his younger days, standing out clearly against the void of blue, as sharply outlined as a heavy cumulus cloud. There was no mistaking the place. He felt like a sailor who had made a long voyage and had sighted the home port at last.

As he went shoreward, followed by his mate, he noticed many silvery flashes in the water between him and the land. Drawing nearer he saw that these were caused by countless albicore. Soon he was amid a throng of his fellows numbering thousands, all making their way toward the sheltered sea in the lee of the island. With the spirit and instinct born in him and developed

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by his roaming life, he at once took the lead of this vast school and led them slowly in to the submerged rocks which would shelter them during their stay. Great numbers of females, heavy with spawn, straggled from the flanks of the column, but he swam around them, forcing them all into an almost solid phalanx of moving fish. The memory of the bonita was still fresh within him. He would take no chances with these helpless kindred. They seemed to recognize his leadership without question, and followed quietly wherever he led the way. Now and then some frisky younger member of the horde would make a sudden start to sheer away, but with a rush our leader was upon him, and he was forced back again. As they drew near the island a school of porpoises made a dash among them. These fellows drove the more timid in frantic throngs until our leader came plunging to the rescue followed by a few of the largest and boldest of the school. In a few minutes the warm-blooded animals had received some severe strokes

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from the razor-like teeth and they went plunging seaward. Then the mass of albacore went in and took possession of the rocks, the smaller fish fleeing before them.

Here at last our hero was in the waters he loved. Game was plentiful and the schools of the albacore led by him along the sunken rocks found it easy to keep supplied. His great size, greater than even the largest of that vast host, made his leadership unquestioned. Everything stood clear of his rush except the sullen sharks, and even they took care not to precipitate trouble by hanging too closely about the rear of his foraging parties as they went their way along the shore.

During the whole season the albacore hung about the reefs of Mas-a-fuera and Juan Fernandez Island. The young had come forth and the sheltered places inside the outer breakers were teeming with them. Our leader had driven to sea all other fish who were at all antagonistic to them, and peaceful tranquillity reigned. Once

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or twice a growing fellow, who had reached six feet or more in length, wanted to try conclusions with the leader, but he soon had enough after encountering the sharp teeth, and took his place among the followers. He was their king. A king by election and superiority, he led them steadily until the season waned, and the time for the bonita to strike inshore came at hand.

As this time drew near the feeling of unrest began to show itself among the school. Stragglers began to leave the reef and seek the open ocean with the instinctive longing for that safety which exists there. Our king watched them go by pairs and sometimes dozens, but he made no attempt to stop them. There would be enough to look out for without them, and they could well be spared.

Finally the time came for the general movement. He had marshaled the great host of albicore from the adjacent reefs, and together in one vast throng they left for open ocean, going to the northward to avoid the enemy who would

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attack from the south and west. The bonita were not as large or as heavy as themselves individually, but they were the strongest creatures of their size in the ocean, and their countless numbers made them absolutely fearless. They would attack anything that stood in their path, and their great vitality and quickness made them the most dreaded of all the foraging bands of sea-wolves which roamed the South Sea.

The solid phalanx of albacore started offshore at sunrise, the king in the van and the younger and more helpless bringing up in the rear of the column; but as before many of the young had been overlooked as they loitered among the sheltered places in the rocks.

The head of the moving mass was a full mile from shore before the end of the crowd had begun to leave, and as the sun shone upon the calm ocean, its rays struck glancing along the flanks of thousands of moving bodies, making the water seem like shimmering silver as the light flashed from the bright scales. There was no wind at

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all, and far away to the westward our leader thought he saw a peculiar disturbance of the sea surface. He took a leap into the air to get a better view and was followed by many of his companions, who usually imitated his example in all his movements. As he rose in the sunshine his glistening armor reflected the light and made him visible for miles. What he had seen upon the western skyline was enough. As far as the eye could reach the ocean had spurted white at his plunge, for the bonita had seen him, and with a front of several miles in extent they were plunging toward the band of albicore, tearing the calm surface to foam with their rush. It was as though some mighty explosion had taken place and spurted the sea upward in little jets along the front of a sunken reef, for the bonita acted almost in unison in spite of their vast numbers. They were now in full charge.

When two rapidly moving bodies, of almost equal weight, meet, the one having the swifter movement will prevail. King Albicore under-

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stood this principle instinctively, and instantly darted forward. His followers joined him, and away they rushed straight for the line of breaking water which drew nearer and nearer as the moments flew by. The rear of the column, finding the head leaving at speed, closed up the gap and came onward until soon the entire mass of albacore were driving headlong to the westward as fast as they could go.

It was a magnificent sight to watch those charging columns. A million bonita charging a hundred thousand albacore. Nowhere on land could such vast hosts of large living creatures marshal. The sea was ruffled and foamed for miles with the disturbance of the fleeting bodies, and from above the bos'n-birds could watch the long line of pointed heads making the ocean darken with a huge shadow as the hordes rushed onward.

A mile, then a half—a quarter, and still the ruffling lines of ocean surface seemed to draw nearer with undiminished speed. There was a

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seeming instant of quiet. A space of apparently unruffled water. And then they met.

Like an eruption from some subterranean crater the sea sprung upward. The long lines of pointed heads struck together. Bodies flung high in the air. Tails, heads, quivering sides streaming from ugly gashes, were thrown into the sunlight, and then upon the quiet of the morning there broke a deep, dull, moaning roar of immense volume.

Full into the center of the great army the king albicore tore his way. Bonita snapped and flashed upon all sides, their vigorous bodies fairly quivering with the rapidity of their movements, but with his jaws cutting like a pair of flying shears, he held his way while his sturdy followers entered behind him and forced the gap. Into this, like a wedge, pressed the body of the column, cutting and fighting with incredible fury. Comrades fell out by the hundred, chopped and torn by the bonita who surged in upon the flanks, but the great mass of albicore

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tore its way through, killing everything in its path.

Away they went straight ahead. The bonita fell away sullenly from the solid ranks, and in half an hour the last albicore had gone through the gap in close column, leaving the sea and its scavengers to wipe out the marks of their passage. There was no changing front to that horde. The course was straight ahead. It was certain death to be left behind.

The bonita held their way toward the reefs of Mas-a-fuera and were soon out of sight in the East.

But King Albicore, what of him?

With flanks cut and ripped almost to ribbons he stuck at the head of the column. No sheering this way or that. The feeling had come upon him that he had done his duty. He had fulfilled his mission. He, the king, had led his comrades to victory, and he must pay the great debt which falls to all sons of nature. Silently and steadily he went along, his instinct telling him

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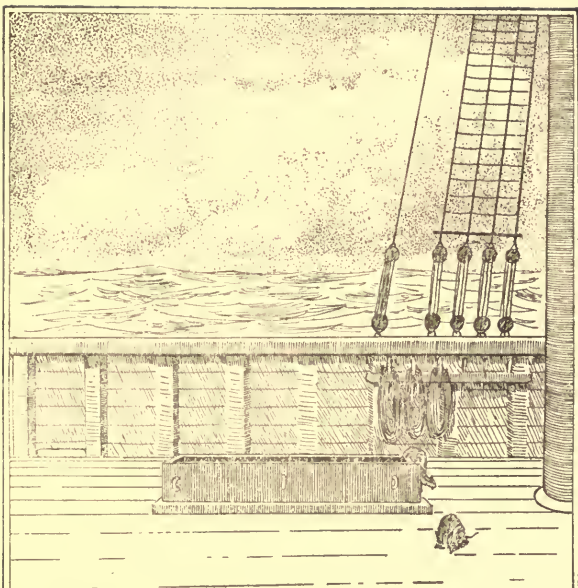
his time had come. But with it there were no regrets.

He had done all he could for his kind, and like a king he would die.

The bright sunshine would fade and the blue water would disappear forever. They would forget him, and another leader would take his place. But he knew he had done his duty and knew he had done it well, and the great throng would live to be thankful for his prowess.

The sunlight seemed to be fading and darkness appeared to be coming upon the ocean, yet he knew it was not quite midday. He turned to take one look at the mighty host he had brought to sea. They were still following him faithfully.

Then the light went out. He turned upon his side and sank downward through the blue depths, while the albicore held their way to the coral reefs of the South Sea.



The
NIBBLERS

THE NIBBLERS

THE "Nibblers" received their name from Mr. Keon, second officer of the steamship *Spitfire* of the Great American Fruit Company's line running to the tropics for bananas. The family, commonly speaking, were simply ship's rats, but Mr. Keon was of a romantic and discerning turn of mind, and after making their acquaintance he christened them comprehensively.

To Mr. Keon they were much more than ordinary rats. He knew the whole family intimately from old Mrs. Nibbler, the mother, down to little Tiny, the smallest and most timid youngster of the lot, and to be known by the second officer was a privilege not granted to all who came aboard the fruit ship. He was a man who possessed an enormous fund of material from which

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he could draw without effort for sea stories, and, according to many authorities, consequently possessed a large amount of "gray matter" in his head. Whether this came outside in the form of hair, or remained inside in the form of brains, it is not necessary to inquire. He told the story of "The Nibblers," sitting one night on the edge of the forward hatch with the full tropic moon behind him and the soft wind of the Florida Stream blowing the smoke from his pipe away to leeward, and enough of it was remembered to get his name down as that of a very remarkable man.

"Ye see," said he, after we had been watching the antics of a huge rat who was scampering around the edge of the hatchway, "that feller has got as much sense as you have. It's ole Toby, one o' the old fellers what's been aboard this vessel since she carried her first cargo. He's a most uncommon old rat, an' that's a fact. He's as happy an ole raskil as ever haunted a ship's bilge, an' he aint afeared o' much. I seen him

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chase a cat clean into the galley door onct, and he would ha' got her but fer the fool 'doctor' heavin' a pan at him. See how quick he kin jump. Just look at them whiskers, hey?

“ I remember when I first seen him, away back in the eighties, when Captain Jackson took command. He ware a young feller then an' the captain's wife used to come o' evenings an' sit on the bridge jest over this forrad hatch. She ware a fine-lookin' gal, an' that's a fact, a heap finer-lookin' than the ole man. He warn't nothin' much fer looks anyway, a little chap with a squint an' grizzled whiskers fer all the world like ole Toby's there, but he ware a terrier fer handlin' canvas in the ole days. I seen him onct—but no matter, that aint got nothin' to do with what I'm goin' to tell ye.

“ Ye see, the gal was mighty pretty. I don't know as I ever seen a woman as good-lookin'. She had golden hair, an' eyes as soft an' blue——”

“ Go on with the yarn,” interrupted the bos'n; “ we'll let the girl go.”

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Keon smoked on in silence after this as though he had taken offense, but we soon saw by the look of his eyes that he was far away from that fore hatch.

“The second mate used to sit right here,” he went on at last, “an’ she would look over the bridge rail on fine evenings an’ watch the Nibblers goin’ an’ comin’ around this hole. Rats is like all other animals, includin’ humans, in respects to selections, an’ the way these fellows would fight an’ scrap fer each other was some-thin’ funny to see. The biggest an’ strongest rat would knock the other out an’ take up with one o’ the young an’ frivolous females, jest like it occurs in story books. He was the hero, big an’ strong an’ fine-lookin’, an’ o’ course the gal rat would care fer him like females care fer all heroes. He was supposed to have all the fine qualities o’ rat in his make-up, jest like a hero has, an’ the way he would go a-scamperin’ around after some little feller who wasn’t strong enough to stand to him was funny to see. The captain’s

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wife used to come to the rail an' look down an' watch them fer hours, an' laugh an' laugh when some fellow like big Toby there would put the rest out the way, an' the second mate he would sit there close by durin' the dog-watch, an' watch, too, but he warn't always lookin' at the rats. Then when he had to go on the bridge he had to meet that queer little captain who waren't no bigger'n a good-sized mouse. He didn't reach much more'n up to the second mate's shoulder. Sometimes the young woman looked hard at the two when they were together, an' the skipper would get nervous, fer he thought a lot o' her—an' so did the second mate. The men forrads used to notice a thing or two, an' they called the skipper 'Squeak Jackson,' he was so little an' small in his voice. But he kept his temper an' never let on as to what he thought o' his size, fer he had been a good one.

“Ye see, rats don't have no consciences. That's where they differs with humans. Fools don't have none to speak on, but sometimes there

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comes a time to most men when they wonders what about the little feller what gets licked. It's all right in stories o' love, and no one bothers at the time about the weaklin' who can't hold his own, but really when it comes down to hard fact without all the romance o' women in it, there's somethin' sorrowful about the poor feller who can't hold his way agin the stronger one. He aint done nothin' wrong in bein' weak, an' he was born that way, so why blame him fer it? Sometimes it seems as if the world was wrong, always goin' sides with the fine, handsome hero o' the affair who can drive off the weaklin' an' rescue the female. What about the feller who was born weak an' small, aint he got no feelin's? But nobody cares a rap fer him. It's nature. It shows humans are mostly animals, an' as fer me I sometimes feel I lost somethin' by not bein' born a rat.

“Ye see, the *Spitfire* was in the banana trade then. Bananas are the devil to carry if they get ripe on you, and get switchin' around below. I

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seen the banana slush four feet deep in the lower hold, an' ye know banana juice is about as acid as anythin' goin', an' it cuts iron into holes an' pits quicker'n you can tell o' it. Ye got to be mighty careful cleanin' a banana ship's bilge if you don't want her to get pitted, an' her bottom like a piece o' blottin' paper soft enough to poke yer foot through with a kick. It takes a man who knows how to take care o' a banana ship to keep her up!

“ I don't know how rats come to be in ships, but they come by the hundreds. Mebbe they come in the fruit, or stores. Anyways, there they be, an' there's no way to git rid o' them.

“ Ye see, there has to be a ceiling of wood in an iron ship to keep the fruit off'n the plates, an' it's in atween this that the little critters git. They aint no more like a shore rat than you are. They are all sailors, every one o' them, an' they stan' their watches same as you an' me. You see these fellers running around here now, but

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there's a lot more below that won't come on deck until I go below. Toby there is in my watch, an' I feed him. Them that aint in my watch won't come out till the bell strikes, an' then they peep up, an' if they see the mate out they come on deck an' look fer the grub some fellers in his watch fetches up now an' then.

“But what I was tellin' was this. We took aboard a lot o' fresh ones down to Montego Bay, an' among 'em was that old fat female rat ye see there sittin' on the edge o' the coamin'. She's the mother o' half a hundred now, but when she first come aboard she was a young an' frisky rat as ever you see. She'd been aboard a week or two afore I noticed her, but on the way south again, one night when we struck into the warm water, I noticed her come on deck with a lot more. It was just such a night as this an' the little skipper an' his wife were on the bridge a-lookin' down at the black hole o' the fore hatch. Soon the gal made out the rats a-runnin' an' jumpin' around the opening an' the second mate

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sat there waitin' fer the bells to strike afore he went on watch.

“ That ole rat was skippin' away from a whole crowd o' young rats what was a-followin' her around, an' that big Toby there he was gettin' sort o' interested. He was a young rat then, ye see, an' he looked on sort o' solemn like fer a while an' let 'em skip around, but I seen that he wasn't goin' to stand still long. Suddenly he gave a squeak. Then the frolickin' stopped sudden like an' Toby come forrads.

“ Well, sir, you may not believe it, but he went straight up to that handsome young female an' said ‘ How d'ye do ’ as plain as ye please. I don't mean to say he spoke, but that was his action, an' no mistakin', fer the pair stood nose to nose fer the space o' half a minute. Then they went off together to another part o' the deck, an' ye ought to seen how them other young rats took it. It was comical an' that's a fact. He had done the polite to that female rat an' was gettin' along handsome' an' the gal above was laughin' at it,

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while the skipper walked athwartships an' took no notice.

“Toby hadn't been more'n two minutes with his fair one when up comes a sassy-lookin' rat, about as big as a kitten. He was lookin' fer trouble, that rat, fer he jest walked right up an' lit into Toby without waitin' fer further orders. Sink me, if that weren't a scrap. Ye never would think them little critters would take on so. A pair o' bulldogs warn't in it with them rats, an' the rest all crowded around, comin' up slowly, an' lookin' to see which one would do fer the other.

“Well, sir, the second mate sat still lookin' on, an' the gal was lookin' down from above over the bridge rail. The night was bright enough fer to see things pretty well on deck, an' the gal's eyes showed interest. It was the same old story, the choosin' o' the hero, only they was rats, an' there wasn't no doubt that we wanted the best one to win: him that was the biggest an' strongest an' best-lookin'.

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“ It’s been a long time ago now, but ye would think that ole rat would still have the marks o’ that fight on him, an’ mebbe he has. They grabbed at each other with them long teeth, an’ I tell you they made the fur fly fer a few minutes. The sassy big rat made a pass an’ grabbed Toby by the leg, an’ sech a squealin’ ye never heard. But that female rat sat quiet, an’ jest kept lookin’ on, waitin’ fer the finish. Toby saw he was in a bad fix. He was gettin’ the worst o’ the fight, fer that rat had him fast enough by the hind leg. It was up an’ down an’ all over the deck forrads, the old fellow squealin’ an’ bitin’, an’ that sassy-lookin’ rat jest holdin’ on fer further orders. It looked blue fer Toby an’ he seen somethin’ must be done sudden if he wanted that fine female rat fer a side pardner down in the bilge. He stopped his squealin’ an’ was quiet fer a minute, thinkin’ an’ tryin’ to plan out some kind o’ game fer to git away an’ get his grip on that sassy rat that was slowly sawin’ his leg off. All to onct he give a jerk. Then he bent his

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body double an' rolled on his back like a ball. That brought his enemy up alongside him an' the next minute he was fast to him amidships, gettin' a good grip o' the feller's belly.

"I tell you he must have pinched right hard. That sassy-lookin' rat couldn't stand the bite, an' let go the leg grip he had, squealin' an' twistin' to get away. But no sirree. Old Toby had him fer sure this time, an' he jest settled right down to business, shakin' an' pullin', fer there aint nothin' a rat kin stand less than a good shakin'. Pretty soon the feller began to give up an' try to get away, squealin' a different sort o' squeal from the sassy squeal he began with.

"Then Toby goes fer him harder than ever, but jest as he was tryin' to get a new hold, the fellow up an' bolts fer the open hatchway, an' the fight was over. Then all hands scrambled below, an' Toby walks right up to the fine female rat what was waitin' fer him an' they goes off together. Then the gal on the bridge laughs right

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out an' says 'Bully boy,' an' the second mate looks up an' sees the look in her eyes, an'—well, I dunno, after that they used to come together somehow until the skipper speaks up one day an' asks the second mate his business.

“ ‘Ye seem to have too much to do,’ says he one evenin' to the second mate, ‘an' if I was you I'd keep more by meself, or mebbe I'll take ye in hand a bit.’

“ That second mate was thinkin' o' them rats, an' speaks up: ‘You kin try yer hand when we gets in port. I'm an officer here an' can't get no show, but on the beach I'll take yer skin or I'm a soger,’ says he.

“ An' so the captain was too proud to take advantage o' his position, an' waits until the vessel was in at Port Antonio. Then he steps ashore an' tells the second mate to follow him an' take a lickin'.

“ Well, sir, there aint no use tellin' how that fight come off. It took three hours to put that dinky little skipper temporarily to sleep, an' the

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fellers what seen the scrap tells a thing or two about it,—but they was only niggers an' didn't count. Anyways, the second mate was as well pounded as a beefsteak, but he was a hero, an' that's a fact. He was a pretty good sort o' man, an' some says he was fairly good-lookin'. Anyways, he was way ahead in looks o' that dinky little skipper, an' the gal, I believe, thought so too. Yessir, it ware the same ole story o' choosin' the hero over again, jest like it takes place in story books—only a bit different, fer the gal was already married in this case, an' sech doin's never is printed except in papers. But that second mate, he ware the hero jest the same.

“When the *Spitfire* went to sea again there was a mighty quiet sort o' skipper aboard, an' a second mate who was a-lookin' out fer squalls. There was evidently goin' to be a change aboard at the end of the passage. But all the time that gal she jest kept to herself, an' by the look o' her eyes she ware tellin' the second mate plainer

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'n mud that he ware the man fer her. The dinky little skipper could see it too.

“ The night she went to sea the second mate was sittin' on the edge o' the hatchway here as usual when it come on eight bells, an' he seen all that new load o' rats a-gettin' ashore fast. It aint no good sign to see rats gettin' out o' a ship. They generally leave afore she goes down, an' when the second mate seen them a-goin' ashore he was fer followin' them. Then he thinks o' that gal again an' stays, fer you may not believe it, but ole Toby, there, an' his mate wouldn't go ashore. They stays on deck at the last minute when the second officer was gettin' ready to clear an' when he seen it he says he'd stay too. It sort o' put him in mind o' hisself.

“ It began to come on to blow the day after we passed Cape Maysi. Ye know how it is in the windward passage, so it didn't bother us much. But along about dark the glass began to drop sudden like, until it got down about three marks below where it ought to stayed. The air

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was warm an' sultry comin' hot from the s'uthard. The haze what comes with the hurricane was raisin' plain in sight, an' the dinky little skipper puts her head to the east'ard to clear the center, fer it ware jest in our wake.

“ I seen it blow before, but sink me if ever it blew anywhere's like that. The sea ware jest a roarin' hill leapin' up with a cross heave in it, an' the air was like a solid wall when it struck. No, sir, ye couldn't stand on the bridge. It would have picked ye up bodily an' hove ye overboard. The roar ware deafenin', an' we hove her to on the starboard tack to work clear, an' jest then, by some luck or other, she waded right into the center o' that whirl where the seas ware jest standin' right up on end.

“ Ye can't do nothin' with a ship caught in the center of one o' them circular storms. It blows in sech squalls that there aint no way a tellin' which way it's comin', only it comes with sech a mighty weight that no ship kin stan' to it. An' the sea falls down on ye from any-

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where at all till the decks are under tons o' water, an' everythin' gone to the devil stove up.

“ ‘The *Spitfire* ware knocked over in one o' the rushes o' hot wind that ripped the funnel out o' her. Then an almighty sea broke right amidships an' tore the side o' the house away an' flooded the engine room. It ware lookin' kind o' bad fer us, an' when the engineer come on deck half drowned, an' said the engine ware done fer an' the water a-comin' in about two feet at a jump, we made up our minds the ole ship ware done fer, an' the best thing ware to get clear as soon as we could.

“ But no small boat could have lived in that sea a minute. 'There wasn't anything to do but wait until the gale wore down, which it did after about three hours of the heaviest blowin' I ever seen. Then she eased up an' the ole ship was jest decks out in a sea what would make yer hair white to look at.

“ We made a lee o' the side an' lowered down the boats before daybreak, that dinky little skip-

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per jest a-standin' an' lookin' on an' never a-sayin' a word.

“ The first officer he takes the first boat what swings clear, an' then the gal she looks down at the second mate. He puts her in the next boat an' they lower it down an' they scramble to get in, fer the ship is wallowin' in that nasty sea an' feels dead. Some fool fumbles the tackle an' nearly capsized the craft, but the second mate he grabs the line in time to save it an' she goes clear. The men rush to find places, an' then the second mate stan's there alone with that dinky little skipper, who hasn't spoken or moved from the chart-house door.

“ It's all mighty plain. The fellers from below, white with scare an' tremblin' as they grab the ship's sides. Some pushes the others an' then they curse and swear to kill each other when there aint enough breath in them to speak out loud.

“ ‘ Be ye a-goin' in that boat, sir? ’ says the second mate to his captain.

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“ ‘Go an’ be d——d,’ says the dinky little skipper.

“ An’ the second officer jumps in an’ the painter is cast off. Then the little skipper stan’s out an’ watches them slowly go away—watches them drawin’ off further an’ further, an’ his eyes is on the gal in the boat, an’ his hands is folded on his breast. That’s the last they sees o’ him as he stands there with the risin’ sun a-shinin’ on him an’ the blue sea washin’ nigh up to the ole hooker’s deck.

“ Fer seven days an’ nights the fellers in that boat has a time with it. Then there comes a ship bound in an’ takes ’em aboard, an’ in a few days they finds themselves in New York, the second mate an’ the gal hardly speakin’.

“ When they comes ashore the first man the gal sees is that dinky little skipper a-waitin’ there on the dock, jest as natural an’ chipper as if he wasn’t the ugliest skipper ever in a decent ship. An’ funniest of all she jest naturally goes an’ flings herself at him like a dolphin at a bait,

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landin' right in his arms. Fer, ye see, that old hooker *Spitfire* warn't so badly used up as the engineer thought, an' when the sea went down she didn't make no more water to speak of. The next mornin' a vessel comes along an' lends a hand to the dinky little feller aboard, an' pretty soon the engine is a-goin' an' the ole ship is headin' away on her course with one o' the company's ships alongside to see her through. There aint no salvage to pay, an' all is taut as a gantline."

Here Mr. Keon stopped and knocked the ashes from his pipe. The great rat he called Toby scampered down the hatchway as the bells struck off, warning us that the first watch was at hand.

"What became of the little captain?" asked the bos'n.

"Oh, that little feller got the finest ship in the company's fleet. He's commodore now, ye see," said the second mate, "an' we got 'Peepin' Shaw' in his place."

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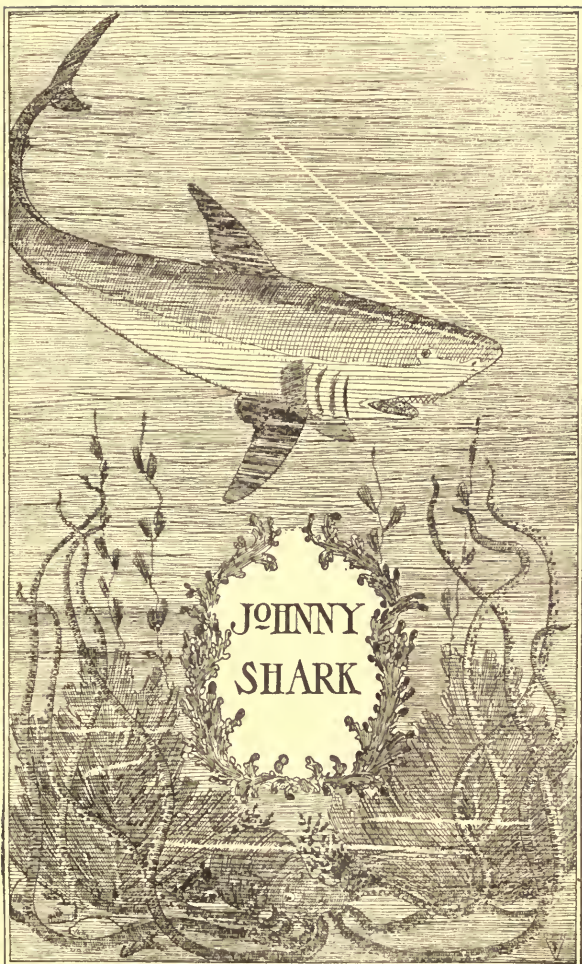
“ Did they discharge the officers that deserted? ” asked a sailor.

Mr. Keon looked sorrowfully at him and rose from the hatchway. Then he stopped a moment and fumbled his pipe.

“ D’ye think second officers sech as me are plentiful abouts, hey? ” he asked.

He was a powerfully built man and showed to some advantage in his working clothes of light duck.

“ Second mates sech as me aint to be picked up everywhere, ye might know, an’ this ship has never had but one since she was launched,” and he went on the bridge for his watch on deck. .



JOHNNY
SHARK

JOHNNY SHARK

IN the middle of the South Atlantic Ocean, about six hundred miles to the eastward of Cape St. Roque, rises the peculiar peak called the St. Paul's Rock. It is some sixty feet above the sea level, and is a ragged granite point. Within a cable's length of it the bottom apparently falls out of the ocean, for it takes nearly three miles of piano wire with an enormous deep-sea lead attached to find the half-liquid ooze below. If the blue water were suddenly to subside the tiny point of the St. Paul's would present a different appearance. It would then be the highest pinnacle of a most colossal mountain.

It is on the edge of the calm belt, close to the equator, and the blue depths surrounding its huge flanks are seldom, if ever, disturbed by a storm. Only the steady trade swell rolling

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gently in upon its sides forms a white ring about it, and the dull roar of the southern ocean is but a low monotonous thunder that would hardly frighten the timid flying fish.

Besides this there is nothing save the occasional snore of a sea breaking over a submerged peak to disturb the silence; for here desolation and loneliness reign supreme. It is as though a bit of the Great Silence of the ocean bed were raised up to be burned in the glare of the torrid sunshine, and fanned by the breath of the unending trade wind.

But, if the peak is devoid of life, a look into the beautiful blue abyss alongside shows a different state. All kinds of shell-fish inhabit the hospitable caverns beneath, and fish can be seen darting here and there through the bunches of seaweed. The busy coral works steadfastly at his never-ending toil. The sea-crabs, star-fish, and their myriad brethren are all visible.

Sometimes a couple of albacore will dart past below the surface, or a flash of white reveal the

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quick strike of a dolphin, followed instantly by a shower of glittering gems that break from the surface and scatter,—the flying fish that have escaped those rapid jaws.

Then a huge dark shadow will rise slowly out of the blue invisibility below, and all the smaller fish will disappear. The shadow will take form, and will be that of an old shark lazily policing the rocks for pieces of the game that are deserted. He is a large brute, but in spite of his enormous fins and tail he is quite willing that others shall do his work of the chase for him.

If there happens to be an injured fish near, the great tail will give one or two powerful strokes, and chop! Those jaws, armed with half a dozen rows of sawlike teeth, with the points of those above fitting into the spaces between those below, seldom have to strike twice.

The first motion upon the part of the monster is a signal which produces a strange effect. No sooner has he bolted the game than from all around rise dark-brown and gray shadows.

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These congregate about him, and he lazily swims away, leaving probably half a hundred of his relations to search the clear depths for what might be left.

And such relatives! One has a head half a fathom wide, his eyes peering wickedly from the curving sides of his shovel-like nose. Another has stripes like those of the tiger on land, and is hardly less ugly in disposition. Let the old fellow who first tackled the game get a slit in his hide and the striped fellow see it. He will find his affectionate relative's knowledge of the fact announced by a sudden chop. Then there will be a general mix-up, and if he is still active and strong enough he may live to dine upon the unsympathetic cousin. But more than likely the cousin will be re-enforced by a host of hungry comrades, whose ideas of fair play are somewhat biased by an uncontrollable appetite for anything nutritious. If this is the case he will apparently melt into that beautiful blue void about him, leaving but a slight stain which will soon

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disappear. It was here in these abodes of the genus *carcharodon* that our hero was born.

He was one of a school of six when he first saw the light, and his five brothers and sisters were so like him that the great mother shark could hardly tell them apart. When she opened her enormous mouth one day to receive them and give them shelter while a desperate sword-fish swung his weapon in her face, she made a miscount when shutting her jaws, and one belated little fellow was quickly swallowed by the insolent enemy. The mother made a dash and chopped off a piece of the sword-fish's tail as he fled before her wrath, but he escaped in spite of this.

During his babyhood Johnny Shark had many trials. There were the hideous little pilot fish to deal with. They were always following him around trying to rob him of his rights. Then his brothers also lacked in unselfishness, and he fought them, one and all, from the beginning, until his disposition became somewhat combative.

During this period of his life his skin was of a

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most beautiful velvety gray, shading to white on his belly. His hard bony lips formed a sheath for his cutters, and they fitted in behind them as snug as a sword in a scabbard. They were very small, but the same shape as his mother's triangles, and he could work them on their bases as though hinged in his jaws. He was but little more than a foot in length, and he kept close to his mother's side, ready to shelter should a fierce albicore or any of the giant mackerel tribe take a notion that he would make a good meal.

And yet he could venture deep in the shadow of the mountain defiles, where in some of the huge caverns gigantic, many-armed monsters, with huge beaks and eyes a foot in diameter, lay waiting, seizing whatever unfortunate fish happened within the sweep of their snaky tentacles. In fact all around him was an eternal war. Everything seemed to be fighting with everything else and only the luckiest and most powerful beings seemed to last many changes of the moon.

As for his brothers and sisters they were like

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himself, keeping close to his mother, and ready for a refuge within her huge jaws at the first sign of an approaching enemy.

As he grew slowly he began to develop a wandering spirit. He would leave the protecting shadow of his mother when she would float lazily upon the surface, and explore the ragged fringe of foam to see what might be had in the way of diversion. Once a great bonita made a dash at him, but he saw him coming in time, and turning he chopped him savagely. The taste of blood seemed to invigorate him, for he hung fiercely upon his now fleeing enemy until he tore away, leaving a mouthful of himself in the tightly locked jaws. He was too lazy to follow up his victory. A fat porpoise chased his wounded assailant until he conquered him and made him his meal.

In fact, he seldom cared for violent exercise, and could hardly understand the foolish savagery of some of the warmer-blooded denizens about him. When he fought he generally made

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a sure thing of it. He would take no chances where a wound or exhaustion meant certain death. There were plenty of small rockfish that were too stupid to run when he approached, and he could always get enough of them without playing the game of death for the pleasure of it.

Once a school of giants came to the Rocks, and he lay in the shadow of a crag wondering at their size. They were sperm whales, and their leader was an enormous old fellow whose fat sides were studded with barnacles. These seemed to trouble him, and he would roll slowly up to a peak near the surface where the sunlight filtered down through the blue, and rub his belly for hours at a time, scraping off thousands of the parasites. Then the stupid little fishes would dart out from their hiding places to catch them, and he would dash among them before they could get back again. While the monsters lay near the Rocks a very long and thin relative of Johnny's mother paid them a visit. His tail was enormous, and it was evident he was fast. He seemed to

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have some business with his parent, for soon afterwards she followed him off to sea where one of the whales lay sleeping with the water breaking gently over her back.

When they were close to her they made a sudden dash, the lean shark leaping high in air and falling with a tremendous whack upon the sleeping victim, while his mother chopped her savagely in the sides. It was all so sudden he hardly had time to get away, for in an instant the sleeping whale awoke and tore the sea into foam with her flukes.

His mother, however, heeded the outfly but little and held gamely on. The whale tried to turn and seize her in the long thin jaw that was studded with enormous teeth, but nothing could dislodge the grip of her triangles. And all the time the thin fellow in company would throw himself in the air and smash the whale terrific blows with his lean tail.

The noise must have been an uproar, for in a very few minutes the great leader who had been

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rubbing his belly came plunging through the water towards them, leaving a great path of white foam to mark his course.

Then the whale sounded, carrying his mother out of sight below. Instead of following, the thresher shark dodged the great bull leader and made off, leaving the mother shark to get away as best she could.

She came up with the whale half a mile away, and then finding herself deserted she let go and started to make off. As she did so she encountered the big bull coming after her. She ducked from his bite, but he smote her such a blow with his flukes as she dodged past that she was hardly able to escape.

The next day she grew weaker, and a sword-fish, seeing her, gave her a final taste of his weapon, and began to chop her up. Instead of driving him away, several other sharks, that now appeared, openly joined him in accomplishing her destruction, and soon she disappeared entirely.

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With no protection save his own teeth, the little shark now went his way among the peaks. Deep down in the blue abyss he would sink until the terrible pressure would force him up again to the world of sunlight. Sometimes he would stay for hours a mile or more down in caverns and caves of the mountain side, guided alone by the sense of smell and that delicate sense of feeling peculiar to his kind. Each and every motion of the sea caused a vibration that instinct explained. Once a huge arm reached out from a hiding place and circled him within its embrace, but before it could draw him in he had chopped it in two, and leisurely ate what remained as he swam on.

He was growing strong now, and his triangular teeth developed saw edges, making the most perfect cutting machines possible to devise. His skin was tough and coarse, a bony substance forming upon it that made it almost tooth-proof to ordinary fish.

He developed a roving disposition, and the

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vicinity of the great mountain became too well known. He started off to the westward where the sun seemed to sink in a deep golden-red ocean, and he cruised along near the surface, his dorsal fin and tip of tail just awash.

Out upon the lonely ocean he quickened his movement. There was nothing, nothing but the never-ending sea ahead, with the soft murmur of the trade wind turning the glistening surface a darker blue, while from miles and miles away to windward came the low song of the South Sea.

On and on he went until hunger made him look about for a victim. He was not particular as to who or what this creature might be, for his own powers produced an apathy of fear for all dangerous denizens of the deep. He was changing now, and no longer shunned a conflict with anything that formerly might have wounded his soft sides.

One day a whale passed in his wake. The huge bulk of the creature might have appalled any fish, but he was hungry, and the fat blubber was

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tempting. His own three fathoms of lean, hard flank seemed meager enough.

With a quick movement he turned and made straight for the cachalot. The monster opened his mouth by dropping his long, thin under jaw, and made a chop at him, but he swerved and sank his triangles deep in the blubber of the animal's neck, covering a good hundred pounds of him.

The whale plunged wildly, lashing right and left with his powerful tail, finally throwing himself clear of the sea and falling again with a stupendous crash. But the shark held grimly on. Rolling over and over the animal tried to throw himself clear of that grip. The blubber was tearing out in a huge ribbon where the triangles had cut it clear, and the blood was showing upon the white fat. The sea was a surf upon a submerged reef. And all the time the shark jerked and wrenched, dodged and pulled until the huge mouthful came clear.

Quickly the whale turned to chop with that long jaw studded with huge points of ivory.

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Quicker still slewed the shark. The whale missed, and the shark again sank those terrible cutters deep in the hole already made in the animal's neck. This time it was flesh that felt the bite, and the pain maddened the leviathan. With a bellow like a bull he started off, dragging the shark along with him as though he had been but a tiny pilot fish.

On and on the great whale tore, while the shark hung helpless by his side. The whale was doing all the work, and all he had to do was to hold on. Gradually the pace eased a little, and finally stopped. Then down, straight down into the abyss below, plunged the leviathan.

But even here the shark still held his grip. The pressure became enormous in that cold blackness, but he could stand it as well as the monster.

Then, after an hour of twisting and rolling, they came quickly to the surface again, the whale somewhat tired. Now was the shark's chance. Letting go his hold he made a sudden fresh chop

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to tear the bite out, and he backed away with a huge piece of flesh. The whale turned as quickly as possible, but he was tired now, and the shark chopped him again and again, savagely tearing out great pieces of blubber and beef.

The sea was dyed red, and the surging of flukes and thrashing about brought several wandering sharks from the depth to see what it all meant. One of these, a huge killer, joined the fight against the whale, and soon he also chopped and tore the wound into a great hole. The fight now became general, as the strangers took a hand. The worried whale rolled and smote right and left, but our shark tore him deeper and deeper.

One of the newcomers ventured across the whale's head, and was promptly seized in the long thin jaw that swung up and cut him in halves. All except the first assailant left the whale to eat the unfortunate shark, and the two fighters were alone again for some minutes.

The whale now became weaker, and except for

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an occasional lunge lay quietly beating the sea with his flukes.

The shark now began to bolt large pieces of him at his leisure, and the rest seeing him at work came sneaking back again. They formed a circle around the dying monster, and rushed in and chopped him whenever they dared. In a little while he began swimming slowly in a circle, and then finally stopped. He gave one final side-long blow with his flukes that broke every bone in a shark's body that happened in its way. Then he lay still and rolled upon his sides. He was dead. And now from the lonely depths where all was apparently a void, the scavengers came sneaking forth.

Big sharks and little sharks, hammerhead and shovel-nose, all began to circle about the huge carcass, and watch for a place to chop a piece of blubber out. They crowded and jostled each other, and sometimes even fought for a place alongside. Above them the whale-birds screamed and squawked as they hovered and lit

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for an instant to tear at the juicy covering of the carcass.

Our fighter had by this time gorged himself with several hundred pounds of whale beef, and being tired from the exertion of the encounter, he swam slowly away.

In the following weeks of cruising he found smaller game, but he now felt a contempt for all other creatures. He had vanquished the largest animal alive, and the feeling that he could conquer anything made him slow to tackle smaller fish.

For months he cruised to the westward and skirted the shores of the continent, finding enough to eat around the river mouths. In one harbor where there was much offal he lived for several years, only going to sea for a draught of fresh salt water now and then. He grew steadily in size until he reached full twenty feet in length.

His hide was now of a dull grayish-brown, shading to white on his belly. Upon it the little

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hard lumps of bony substance thickened. His jaws were nearly three feet wide, and he now had six rows of triangles, the outside and largest being over an inch on a side clear of the gums. His eyes were large and bright, and his nose broad and sensitive.

Several ugly little fish followed him around wherever he went. They had flat tops to their heads, and looked like black corrugated chunks of rubber with tails to them, the corrugated part of their heads being on top. With these slits they sucked strongly to the shark when he swam, making him tow them about without any exertion on their part. His hide, however, was too thick to mind a little thing like that, and he finally came to know each one so well by sight that he never made a chop at them. They were about the only living things he let pass him.

As time passed he developed a taste for company. A desire to meet his kind came upon him, and he left the lazy life in the harbor and went to sea again.

JOHNNY SHARK

He traveled through the West Indies, and there one bright hot day on the reef he met a shark that appeared most friendly. It was a new feeling that came upon him at the meeting, a desire to live in the companionship of the stranger for a time. He even found himself letting her take the first choice of some barracuda he had killed, and from one thing leading to another he waxed very affectionate.

They traveled together during a moon, and then they found a warm spot on the Bahama Bank where the hot stream flowed past beautiful coral hills that rose from the blue depths.

Here they lingered for some time, his mate giving birth to five soft-skinned little sharks. He was not much interested in this and once made a chop at one of the youngsters, cutting him in half.

For this his mate made a chop at him, and nearly cut off his side fin. Then, finding that everything was not as pleasant as it had seemed, he cruised away again to the southward.

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One day he came to a queer thing floating upon the water. It was not unlike a whale as viewed from underneath, but every now and then a peculiar creature with arms and legs swaying wildly, dropped from it and went to the bottom. Then, staying but a moment to collect some shellfish, it would rise again to the surface.

This interested him, and he lay by watching. Then, the smell of these creatures being somewhat appetizing, he made a dash at one as he arose.

He came to the surface with the man in his jaws, and he saw the whalelike object was full of similar animals. They shouted and made a great noise when they saw their fellow chopped in halves and carried away by him.

Now the taste of this peculiar creature was very good—much better, in fact, than the fish he had been eating. For a long time after his meal he waited a few fathoms below the surface, hoping another would descend.

Finally, he noticed a long line trailing away

JOHNNY SHARK

from the floating thing above. He watched it and smelled it, and found there was something tied to the end. He was a little afraid that there was something wrong with that line and a sudden fear came upon him. He hesitated. Then his old careless spirit came back, and he nosed the bait, finding it some kind of flesh he had never tasted before. He pushed it about while the instinctive fear of the peculiar smell held him. Then he made a chop and bolted the lump.

The line, however, would not cut. He chopped and chopped, again and again, backing away, but to no purpose.

Suddenly the line became taut. A sharp pain struck him in the throat, and he knew he was fast to the line by some sharp thing in the flesh he had bolted.

He became panic-stricken and fled away. But no sooner would he forge ahead a few fathoms than that line would draw so tight the pain was unbearable. He would be slowly and surely pulled back again.

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This lasted for some minutes, and then his old spirit of apathy came upon him, and he allowed the line drag him where it chose, while he held it like a vice in his jaws.

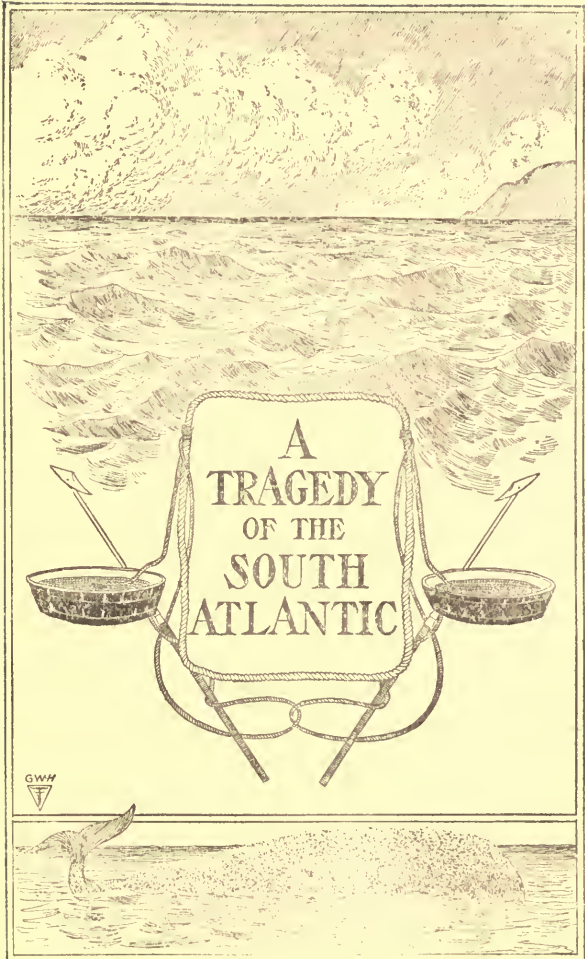
Soon he found himself at the surface, and the strange creatures like the one he had eaten made a great noise. There were several flashes like lightning, only not so bright, and with the noise like thunder he felt heavy blows upon his head. He made a desperate dash away, and tore the line slack for many fathoms, but the pain in his throat stopped him from going farther. Then he was lifted slowly back to the surface again.

There he lay a huge, dark shadow under the clear water. He was growing faint and dizzy from the blows upon his head, and the last he saw of the bright sunlight was the blue water foaming about him, and a row of eyes looking over the edge of the floating thing.

They passed a bowline over his tail and hitched the throat-halliard block to it. Then they

JOHNNY SHARK

hoisted him tail first into the air, and cut the hook from his mouth. A diver cut off his tail and hung it on the jibboom end for luck. Later they cut him adrift and he sank slowly down to the white coral below, lying there upon his side, a grisly sight. The shadow above disappeared, and then the scavengers of the reef came creeping up to do their work.



A
TRAGEDY
OF THE
SOUTH
ATLANTIC

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A TRAGEDY OF THE SOUTH ATLANTIC

THE whaling schooner *Erin* was a modern vessel. She had a little of the "old greaser" about her. She had been built and fitted out at New Bedford, Mass., the mother-port of nearly all good whaling craft, and she was manned by men who had served their time in whaling ships. Her tonnage was not over three hundred, but she was so strongly put together that she looked somewhat heavier than she really was. Her bow was like that of a clipper, and her stern had the modern overhang of a cruising yacht, but her beam was great and her top-sides bulky, showing a tumble-home like that of the ancient frigates. Therefore, she was not considered fast. Her spars were short and stumpy, and she had no foreboom,

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owing to chunky smokestack that arose from her main deck, over which the foresail passed. She was flushed fore and aft, save for a heavy-built superstructure over her engines, through which the smokestack protruded, and it was evident that she could stand a great amount of rough usage. Being built for southern whaling in the vicinity of Cape Horn, she needed all the strength that could be put into her, and Captain Jackson, her commander, always kept her down to a draught of fifteen feet, even when running light, to enable her to hold up to the tremendous rolling seas off the Cape. Forward, she carried a peculiar sort of cannon on her forecastle, which fired an exploding harpoon weighing a hundred pounds, heavy enough to put a quietus upon any ordinary member of the whale family. Her boats and other gear were of the usual type; but, as she was not to carry oil, either in bulk or casks, her deck was devoid of the ordinary furnace of the sperm-whaler, and her hold of the odor which comes from the usual mass of rancid blubber

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when packed for a long voyage from the Arctic Ocean, in vessels hunting the right whale. She was, in fact, a stanch, trim little vessel. Her crew of thirty men had been selected and shipped, and Captain Jackson cleared for his last cruise.

When well off shore, the boiler was cooled and sails set, for there must be no waste of coal, and the *Erin* stood to the southward on her long run to the Falkland Islands, where she would begin her hunt for the giants of the southern ocean.

The run south was made without any unusual experience. On the sixty-first day out she raised the huge mountains of Patagonia to the westward, and, shortening sail so as to drift not over four knots an hour, she hauled on the wind and stood through the "black water" between the Falk Islands and Staten Land.

In December and January, the Antarctic summer months, the air is quite cold as far north as the fiftieth parallel. The "blow" of a whale stands out sharply against the sky as the warm air in the animal's lungs turns into vapor,

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giving the hunter a chance to see it at a distance of several miles. Objects seem to lift from off the horizon as in a mirage, only they are not inverted.

Here, in the summer season, the great rorqual, or finback whale, disports himself in ease and security, for, until lately, he has had few known enemies, and has been unmolested by man. Dozens of these great creatures often follow a huge bull leader, and they jump and plunge about as lively as they would if their weight were reckoned in pounds instead of tons.

The huge, timid creature who led a school under the shadow of Tierra del Fuego, that season, was a giant of his kind. One hundred feet of solid bulk was between the tips of his tremendous flukes and the end of his hideous head. A hundred tons of bone and sinew, covered with a coating of thin blubber, to keep out the cold of the icy seas.

His head was ugly and flat-looking, and his mouth a hideous cavern, full of slabs of whale-

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bone, from which depended masses of horrible hair to act as a sieve for the whale-food poured down his gullet. His back slanted away to a place amidships, where a lumpy knob rose, as if he were a hunchback, and from there aft he sloped in long and sinuous lines to the spread of his tail or flukes, which were fully two fathoms across. The blades of the *Erin's* wheel were not nearly so large or so powerful as the blades of bone and cartilage that drove him ahead through the yielding medium, or raised the tons of flesh and blood to a height that showed a full fathom or more of clear sky under his thin belly when he breached. He was a giant, a descendant from prehistoric ages when monsters of his kind were more common than they are to-day. It is doubtful if ever anything existed in flesh or blood of greater size.

How old the giant was no one could learn. His age could hardly have been less than two centuries, for whales grow slowly. They are like other warm-blooded animals, and it takes many

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years to build up a mass of a hundred tons of flesh fiber. He was known to Captain Jackson, who had seen him on former voyages, but as yet he had not made his acquaintance; for, in spite of the old whale's size and age, he was very timid. He would rush from a pair of fierce "killers,"—the dreaded sharks who attack toothless whales,—and only his tremendous size and activity would prevent them from following him. Consequently, whenever Jackson lowered his small boats, with the intention of making him a visit, the old fellow would wait only long enough to allow the boats to approach within fifty fathoms of him. Then he would begin to edge away, and, before the whale-gun could be brought to bear, he would be in full flight to windward, his flock or school following in his wake. Many were the maledictions cast upon him by the whalers, whose tired muscles bore witness to his speed, and, finally, he was left alone to roam at will in the "black water." Where he went to, at the beginning of winter, it was impossible to tell,

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but, at the first easterly blow, he would disappear, bound for other parts, leaving nothing behind but a crew of angry sailors, and taking with him the memory of an undisturbed old age.

On that December morning, when Captain Jackson hauled on the wind and stood offshore, the sun shone brilliantly. The wind was light and from the southwest, and objects stood up plainly from the sea. The lookout at the mast-head had just been relieved, when the time-worn cry of "blo-o-ow" reached the deck. Away to the southward rose the jets, looking almost as high as water spouts, as the warm vapor condensed in the cool air. It was a large school, or, more properly speaking, herd, for a finback is no more a fish than is a cow. Jackson came on deck and watched the blows, counting them over and over to get the exact number of his game. Whalebone at so much a ton was within easy distance, and it looked as if a few thousand dollars' worth of the substance would find its way

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below hatches by dinner time. The forward gun was overhauled and the line and harpoon cleared, the latter being charged with a heavy load of powder. The explosion would open the huge barbs of the harpoon and drive them deeper into the monster, expanding in his flesh, making it absolutely impossible to withdraw them by pulling on the line. They would not hunt him after the manner of the tame and harmless sperm whale, that can be killed with about as much ease as a cow in a pasture, in spite of all the sailors' yarns to the contrary.

The whales paid no attention whatever to the schooner. They played a quiet, frolicsome game, breaching and sounding, and coming often to the surface to breathe. There were some young ones among them, and the huge leader, the giant bull, seemed to take a special pride in one whose antics were more pronounced than the rest. He would come near it and seem almost to touch it gently with his side flipper, and the little fellow would make a breach clear out of the

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water, apparently with pure joy at the notice bestowed. Then he would come alongside the big fellow and snuggle up to him in a most affectionate manner, and the giant would roll toward him and put out his great arm or flipper, as if to bestow a caress. He was a very affectionate old fellow, and, as the vessel drew nearer, his size and actions were remarked by the mate, who called the skipper's attention to them. Just then the great whale breached, and the sun, striking fairly upon his dark side, showed several deep lines that looked like huge scars. His long, thin shape and hideous head were plainly outlined against the sky, and, as he struck, the sea resounded with the crash. He disappeared, and the little fellow breached and followed him.

“That's the big coward, the leader,” said Jackson. “You kin tell him by them cuts he has in his sides, an' there aint nothin' bigger afloat. He is an old one and wary. You wouldn't think a whale with them scars on him would be scared at a little boat, hey? Them was cut a long time

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ago, mebbe, but they were done in a fight sech as ye've never seen."

"Mebbe he got licked?" suggested the mate.

"He wouldn't be here if he had," said Jackson. "Howsomever, here he is, and it's our business to get him and cut him up, if we kin."

To stop the leader of the whales was the object, for, if he was held, the rest would either scatter or await developments. In either case they would not get very far away, and could be reckoned with afterwards. The *Erin* was held pointed toward the spot where the whale was expected to rise, and the mate went forward and stood behind the gun with the harpoon loaded in it, and ready for a shot as soon as he should come within twenty fathoms. The old coward, however, had seen the approaching ship, and, with a peculiar movement of his flukes upon the water, he gave the signal for danger.

Somewhere in that oily brain the memory of his past life was stored in a strangely simple but vivid manner. He remembered, although he was

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unable to reason it all out like the human being who hunted him ; but, a thousand moons before, he had gone forth in the ocean from his birth-place in the South Pacific, and had held his way proudly and with force. Fiercely he had fought for everything he took of the world's belongings, and the joy of battle had run warm in his blood. It had surged through his great frame at the sight of a stranger, and he had striven and conquered all who had opposed him or refused to do his will. Many had died, for a sea fight is usually to the death, and the strangeness of the passion had gradually worked its way into the old mind, and he held aloof. The experience of a hundred years taught him something. The oily brain learned slowly. The instinct, or feeling, had gradually come upon him that to fight is a great waste of energy, for life was more pleasant in the companionship of his many wives and young ones, and continual strife was not the right thing. To avoid it, if possible, was the thought uppermost in his old head ; so, when he

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saw the approaching schooner, he gave a warning stroke upon the sea.

Instantly all the whales sounded.

But Captain Jackson was an old whaleman. He was after whales, and he had come thousands of miles to hunt them. The animals must come up again, soon, and to be near the spot where they would reappear would probably mean a capture. With a keen sense of reasoning, the bull knew that bodies that travel through the air must necessarily be retarded by the wind. Therefore, to windward he led the herd, and Jackson did not underestimate his cunning. With fires started under the boiler, the *Erin* held her way straight into the eye of the breeze, and the mate leaned over the forecastle rail, gun-lanyard in hand, peering into the clear depths for the dark shadow below that would show the presence of a rising monster. Jackson stood at the wheel with the signal pull in his hand, waiting to "shake her up" at the first sign of the game. The wheel turned slowly below, and the slight jar of ma-

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chinery vibrating the hull was the only sound save the stirred water abaft the rudder from the thrust of the screw, gurgling and murmuring in a soft undertone.

The whalemens were gathered about the fore-castle head, or stood near the boat falls, ready to lower away at a signal, and secure their victim. The sun shone strongly, and objects were visible at a great depth below the surface of the sea. Ten minutes passed, and Jackson was getting nervous. He had tried to gauge the rapidity of the old bull's headway through the water, and had figured that he would come up somewhere in the vicinity of the vessel on her course. But not a sign of a whale had shown, and ten minutes had passed. They must be badly gallied, indeed, to stay under much longer. The old bull was cunning; but he, Jackson, knew a thing or two. It was pitting the old brain of an animal with a century or two of experience against that of an old man with keen intelligence. The skipper felt confident. He would take a long shot at the

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big fellow, and, once fast to him, whalebone would be plentiful for a few days. While the mate was leaning over the rail forward, looking down into the depths, he noticed a sudden darkening of the water just ahead of the vessel. He sprang to the cannon and stood ready to fire. The great shadow rose toward the surface, and the men saw instantly that it was a huge whale. Jackson was right, to a hair. The great bull was coming up under the jib-boom end. A man raised his hand aloft and gave a low cry, while the rest stood back from the gun to escape the shock of the heavy discharge and powder-blast. Jackson rushed to the rail and leaned over.

But the great shadow did not materialize into anything more. It remained deep down beneath the surface, fully twenty feet below, and, as the schooner forged ahead, it drifted alongside, a few fathoms distant. The signal was made to stop the engines, and both the schooner and the whale lay quietly drifting, the animal deep down and perfectly safe from a shot.

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“It’s the coward, all right,” said Jackson, coming to the mate’s side; “that big coward bull what won’t show up for nothin’. I never seen sech a scary whale. Look at him—sink me, jest look at him! Blamed if he didn’t wink at me. Will ye look at that eye?”

The old whale was lying almost motionless, and his eye could be seen distinctly. He was watching the vessel carefully, and the rippling water from the bends actually did give him the appearance of opening and closing one eye as the waves of light flashed upon it. He seemed to be very much absorbed in profound contemplation of the ship. Perhaps he had not expected to find her so close aboard when he intended to breach for a breath of air. However, there was plenty of time. Breathing was something he was not obliged to indulge in more than once every half-hour or two, and he would not come up until he had put a little more distance between himself and the vessel. All hands were peering over the side at him when, suddenly, several

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blows sounded close aboard. All about, jets of spray and vapor shot skyward, and fully a dozen whales breached and then disappeared again. The mate rushed for the gun and Jackson sprang to the engine signal, while the second and third officers, "bos'n," harpooners, and the rest, ran for their gear. When they looked over the side again the shadow of the giant had disappeared, and the sea was as quiet as a lake. In a few minutes a huge form breached about a quarter of a mile ahead—the bull had breathed, and was quietly going to windward. The animals were not badly galled as the word is applied to thoroughly frightened whales. They had gone along at a steady, but not fast, gait, and had come up together as if at a signal. The schooner was not troubling them very much, and the sea was wide. There was room enough for all.

The high, grim cliffs of Staten Land rose higher and higher as the morning wore on. The *Erin* was heading inshore, still pointing into the

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breeze, and now and then a great spurt of foam and a blow would show where the whales led the way straight ahead.

“Of all the low-lived critters I ever see, that cowardly bull air the meanest,” said Jackson, after seven bells had struck; “but I’ll fix him, if I chase him clear to ’Frisco. I won’t mind burning a few tons o’ coal fer him. Put an extra charge of powder in behind that iron, and loose off at him when we come within thirty fathom.”

“Looks like he’ll be a-climbing the mounting ahead thar in a minute,” said the mate, motioning toward the high and ragged hills which rose out of the sea.

“We’ll strike ile in half an hour, or I’m a sojer,” said the skipper decisively. “You tender yer own, and don’t give no advice, an’, if there’s any climbin’ to be done, I’ll do it.”

The animals still held along inshore, and it looked as if they would soon be in shallow water. The leadline was gotten out when the vessel came within half a mile of the rocks, and a sounding

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was taken. No bottom was found at fifty fathoms, and she was allowed to drift further in, her engines barely turning fast enough to give her steering way. The land was very near, and Jackson was nervous. The heavy snore of the swell upon the ledges sounded plainly over the sunlit sea, and every now and then a spurt of foam showed that, although the ocean was calm, there were heavy breakers falling upon the shore, caused by the lift of the offshore heave. That barren island was not an inviting coast, and to strike upon a sunken ledge would mean disaster. Jackson stood upon the poop, with his hand upon the signal, ready to reverse the engines and swing clear, when there seemed to be a slowing down in the movements of the game ahead. Then the water whitened about the ship, and the cause became evident. They were running through a great mass of whale-food, and the tiny gelatinous bodies were so thick that the color of the sea was changed by them. Jackson rang off the engine.

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“We’ve got ’em now,” he said quietly, and watched the surface of the ocean.

The big bull whale had run into the mass of food, and had slowed down a little to allow quantities of it to pour down his gullet. There was no unseemly haste in getting away from the pursuing stranger. He would suddenly slew to the southward, when he reached four or five fathoms of water, and then the pace could be increased until the following craft would be dropped behind. He was a cool-headed old bull, and there was no occasion for nervousness—all would have gone well with the whole herd, if it had not been for a willful young cow.

As the *Erin* slowed down the whales ahead were swimming upon the surface, taking in the food in enormous quantities, apparently enjoying their dinner, and showing no interest in the vessel that held along, with her sinister purpose, in their wake. She barely rippled the water, as she went through it, and Mr. Collins, the mate, stood behind the gun on the forecastle, with the

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lanyard in his hand, ready to fire at any back that might break water within thirty fathoms. The rest crowded about the rail and waited, some standing by the line, ready to snub it as soon as a stricken animal should become weak enough to allow them.

The young cow that lagged behind the rest was not very large, but she had a thousand pounds or more of good bone in her mouth, and she had breached dead in front of the vessel, with her tail toward it. The bull saw the distance gradually closing between his followers and the ship, and he gave again that peculiar stroke with his flukes which meant danger. All save the lagging whale instantly sounded. She was enjoying the food, and failed to regard the signal, and the *Erin*, going up astern, quietly approached her.

On account of a whale's peculiar development, it is difficult for it to see directly ahead or astern, and an object approaching exactly in line can do so quite often without being perceived until

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within close range. The schooner came drifting slowly down upon the animal, and was within thirty fathoms, when the big bull suddenly breached a short distance ahead, the little fellow who had been under his care being with him. Again he gave the sea a heavy blow with his flukes and disappeared, and nothing broke the smooth surface.

But the young cow was obstinate. She enjoyed the food, and failed to note how close the ship had approached. Suddenly the mate straightened himself and looked along the cannon sights. There was a flash and a loud report, and the exploding harpoon was launched full at the broad back that lay drifting almost awash just ahead. The heavy missile went straight to its mark.

“Stand by to haul line!” came the order, while the mate sprang forward and slipped another charge into the harpoon gun.

The line whizzed out for a few fathoms before the men could snub it, but there was no need for

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a second shot. The missile had done its work, and the stricken cow began the flurry that ends in death. Round and round she went in a circle, convulsively throwing herself clear of the sea and lashing the water into a lather with her flukes. Blood dyed the foam and her spiracles were crimson. Then she slowed down, and, with a few shudders of her great frame, lay motionless.

The fluke chain was gotten out, and she was soon fast alongside. A man was sent aloft to watch, and the operation of removing the whale-bone blades from the mouth began. While this was going on, the rest of the herd did not run away or get galled. The big bull was seen approaching, after a time; and, for an hour, while the work of cutting in went on, he came up repeatedly at a short distance from the vessel. The men thought little of this, as the whale-food was thick, but Jackson pondered at the strangeness of the old fellow's behavior. He was an old whaleman, and knew that, at the death of one,

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the rest of a school usually get badly galled, and seldom wait for a second attack. A sperm whale will stand, but a finback, never; and, as the old bull rose again and again close aboard, he watched him furtively from the corner of his eye while superintending the work overside. In spite of the fact that the cow was fat, the blubber was not stripped. She was cast adrift early in the afternoon, having yielded a mass of prime bone, and her carcass floated astern, to be devoured by the countless sharks and birds that come, apparently by magic, from the void of sea and sky.

It was late in the afternoon when the *Erin* started ahead again, and the mate took his place at the gun. No sooner had the carcass floated a half-mile distant than the old bull was seen to swim alongside of it. The schooner was turned slowly around and headed back again.

The old bull had come up to the carcass and examined it. The cow was quite dead, and the fact that she had been killed by the stranger

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gradually became clear to him. Suspicion became conviction on his part, and he turned toward the rest of his charges and led the way straight out to sea. Away out toward the Falkland Islands he headed, and reluctantly the rest followed. The pace was increased to a rapid gait, and soon the pursuing vessel was under a full head of steam, plowing through the heavy swell at a great rate, in an effort to keep the flying herd in sight. The sun sank behind the ragged peaks to the westward, and the darkness soon put a stop to the chase. Jackson had secured one of the herd, but the others were galled and were headed offshore, where they disappeared in the gathering darkness. Soon the engine was rung off and the vessel put under easy canvas for the night, while Jackson walked the poop and gave forcible expression to his opinion of the old coward who had so ignominiously run away.

Away into the vastness of the southern ocean the old fellow led his charges, always keeping the



THE LINE WAS WHIZZING OUT.



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little whale he had with him close aboard. He missed the mate who had been slain, but he knew that she had disregarded his warning. He had done all he could. Now he would take the rest far away to other feeding grounds, and the ocean would leave no trail to show the stranger whither he had gone. The young one near him needed protection, and he would keep him close until he was large enough to look out for himself. On the edge of Falkland Channel was plenty of food at that season of the year, and a few hundred miles would put the stranger safely out of sight. The old brain longed for rest and quiet. Strife was a useless thing, fit only for the young and unthinking, or those possessed with the killing spirit.

The morning dawned, and, as the sun rose slanting from the southern ocean, the old bull took a look around. Nothing broke the even line of the horizon, and then, the feeling that the stranger had been left behind coming upon him, he slowed the tremendous pace. One hundred

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miles of trackless sea had been placed between him and the rocks of Staten Land.

For many weeks the herd cruised to the northward of the Falkland Islands, the old bull still keeping the young whale under his protecting care. Finally there was born a pretty little baby whale with rounded lines, weighing, perhaps, a little more than half a ton. A pair of the fierce "killer" sharks soon scented the tender little fellow, and made a concerted rush, one day, to seize him before the older whales could prevent; but the bull smote one a blow with his flukes that crushed him as flat as if a house had fallen upon him, and the other took flight. He was a watchful old fellow, and had to keep on the lookout night and day, for the mother whale was weak, and would recover slowly.

As the days passed the weather began to change. The zone of the "variables," or that of the "roaring forties," is not to be depended upon long for sunshine and pleasant breezes. One day it started in for a gale from the eastward, and

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the sea was white with rolling combers. The whale-food was driven south, and the animals were forced to follow. The sun shone only for a short time each day, being but a few degrees above the sea line, and the high-rolling sea made life upon the surface uncomfortable. The bull headed for the South Orkney Islands, and for days the little band of giants went along below the surface, only coming up every now and then to breathe.

As they made their way southward, the wind grew less violent. The high black cliffs of the islands offered no shelter to vessels, but to the whales the lee of the land was comfortable, and the sea was swarming with food. There they would rest a while and take life easy, beyond the reach of the hurricanes from Cape Horn.

The old bull guided the band among the sunken peaks, and for weeks they fattened under his care, when one bleak morning he came to the surface of the sea and noticed a black shape approaching. There was something strangely

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familiar in the outlines, and, after watching it for some minutes, he remembered the schooner *Erin*.

She was heading straight toward the whales, and was going slowly, as if in no particular hurry, and upon her fore-castle was the same murderous gun which had slain the cow near Le Maire Strait.

The young whale, who was in company, breached playfully into full view and sounded. The vessel did not change her course, but headed straight for the cow with the newborn calf, who was feeding a mile distant to the southward.

The old bull instantly struck the water with his flukes and headed for her. The rest of the herd took notice of the warning, and sank from view; but, whether the cow failed to notice it, or her young one was disobedient, it was too late to find out. The schooner made a sudden spurt of speed, and, coming close to the mother, fired the harpoon into her before she fairly realized what was taking place.

A TRAGEDY

The dull boom of the shot told the old whale what had happened, before he came up to look. When he arrived within a hundred fathoms, the mother was in her last agony, and her little baby was being towed along with her, being unable to realize its mother's death, and still holding to her with all the tenderness of a child.

The old bull lay watching events, and once tried to make the little fellow let go by giving the sea some tremendous slaps with his flukes; but he was too young to understand, and, while the bull watched, a boat was lowered and the sailors began their work of destruction. They rowed slowly toward the infant, and suddenly one rose in the bow and hurled a harpoon into his soft baby side. The little fellow gave a spring upward in his agony. A man quickly pulled him alongside the boat and another drove a lance through him.

Jackson was standing upon the poop, looking on, and the mate was on the forecastle, loading the gun for another shot when an opportunity

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should offer. The men in the waist were overhauling the fluke chain to make fast to the dead mother, while the man at the wheel held the spokes idly. The skipper turned toward him.

“ Seems to me that that’s the old cowardly bull we fell in with to th’ no’t’h’ard ; aint it? ” he asked.

“ Yes, sir ; it looks like him fer sure,” answered the man ; “ jest see him, sir.”

As they looked, the great whale lay watching the men in the boat. His old oily brain was working, and the rapid events of the last few minutes were gradually making an impression on his mind. He was wondering at the slaughter, and could hardly understand how it was done so quickly. The mother had been a favorite for many years, yet there she lay, suddenly dead before him. Would the strange craft follow him over the seas, and kill off the herd one by one, until all were gone? The boat approaching the young whale stirred his attention. He smote the sea savagely with his flukes to

A TRAGEDY

warn him of the danger. Then the iron went home, and the little fellow was dead beside his mother. Something flashed suddenly through the old brain. The pent-up reserve of years seemed to give way within him, all thought of safety fell away, and the old feeling of the conqueror rose within his heart.

“ Good Lord, what’s a-comin’? ” gasped Jackson.

His remark was not addressed to anyone in particular, but was caused by a terrific commotion in the sea which caused the men to drop their gear and look out over the side to see what was taking place.

The coward, the giant bull who had fled so often from them, was heading straight for the small boat and was tearing the southern ocean into foam with his flukes. Straight as a harpoon from the gun forward, he shot with tremendous speed, hurling his hundred tons of bone and sinew like a living avalanche upon the doomed craft.

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“Starn all,” was the hoarse yell from the third officer, who stood upon the stern sheets and swung madly upon the steering oar. Men strained their necks forward over the schooner’s rail to see. The unfortunate men at the oars of the whaleboat struggled wildly. An oar snapped. There was a wild cry, and some sprang up to dive over the side into the sea. At that instant the whale leaped high in the air, clearing the water fully two fathoms. Then he crashed down upon the boat, wiping all out in a tremendous smother of spray. He was close to the *Erin*, and the mate stood waiting. There was a loud report as Collins fired the exploding harpoon into him, taking him almost “on the fly,” as it were, and then as he disappeared beneath the surface there was a heavy jar that shook the *Erin* from stem to stern. She had been rammed.

For an instant not a man aboard moved. Then Jackson, with a face as white as chalk, came forward and called below to the engineer.

A TRAGEDY

The line was whizzing out upon the forecastle head, showing that Collins had made the shot of his life. He had struck the whale, but just where he had no idea. He stood watching the line as it flaked away with the rapidity of lightning, but said no word to the men to have it snubbed. He had felt the heavy jar beneath the schooner's keel, and knew what it meant as plainly as if he had seen the stroke.

Two,—three,—four,—five hundred fathoms went whirling over the side, and silence still reigned aboard. The sea had smoothed again where the whaleboat had been a few moments before, but the only signs of her were a few floating splinters. Not a man ever appeared again.

Suddenly the strain was broken.

“Water comin’ in fast below, sir,” was the word passed on deck.

Jackson walked aft as if in a dream. The mate left the gun, and the last fathom of the line flaked overboard unheeded. It brought up suddenly, taut as a bowstring, then snapped. The

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mate paid not the least attention to it, but went slowly aft.

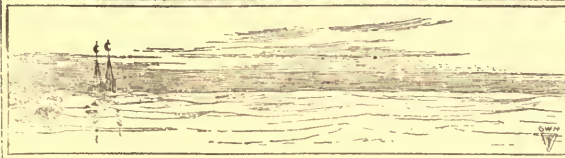
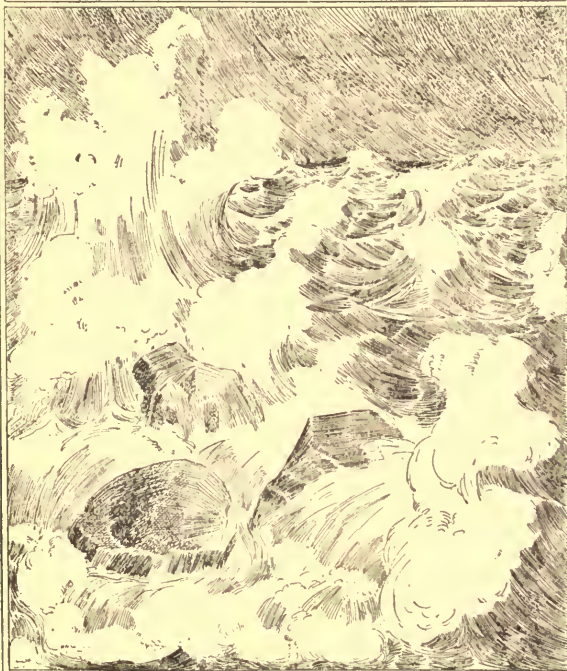
“ Shall we provision the boats, sir? ” he asked, as he approached the captain.

Jackson stared at him. “ D’ye know what it means? ” asked the old whaleman huskily.

The mate nodded. Half an hour later, four boats full of men were heading northward for the Falkland Islands, and the only thing that remained upon the spot where the *Erin* had floated a short time before was the carcass of a mother whale with her baby alongside, while above them the birds hovered and screamed as if to mark the grave of the lost ship.

The next year a Scottish whaleman from the Falklands fell in with an old bull whale whose starboard side bore a tremendous wound, partly healed. He was so wary, however, that he was soon lost sight of, and the school that followed him gave no chance for a catch.

IN THE WAKE OF THE WEATHER-CLOTH



IN THE WAKE OF THE WEATHER- CLOTH

WE had raised the great tower of the Hatteras lighthouse in the dim gray of the early morning. The huge spark flashed and faded as the lens swung slowly about its axis some fifteen miles to the south'ard of us. Objects now began to be more distinct, and our masthead could be made out against the leaden background above. Up there the fierce song of the gale roared dismally as the little vessel rose upon the giant Gulf sea, and swung her straining fabric to windward. Then, quartering the heave of the foam-crested hill, she would drop slowly down that dread incline and roll desperately to leeward as she started to meet the rushing hill to windward and above her.

With a bit of the gaff hoisted, and leach and

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luff lashed fast down, we were trying to fore-reach to the eastward and clear the death-trap under our lee—the fatal diamond of the Hatteras Shoals. Buck and I had been on deck all the day before, and all night, and we welcomed the growing light as only hard-pressed men at sea can welcome it. It meant a respite from the black hell about us, and the heavy snore of some giant comber would no longer make us catch our breath in the dread it might be the beginning of that white reach where no vessel that enters comes forth again.

We could see we had many miles between us and the end—miles that meant many minutes which might be utilized in the fight for life. We were heading nearly east now, and the stanch little craft was making better than south, while the gale had swung up to nor'-nor'west. She was forereaching ahead, though going fast to leeward, and it looked as if we might claw off into the wild Gulf Stream, where in spite of the sea lay safety. To leeward lay certain death, the

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wild death of a lost ship in the white smother that rolled with the chaotic thunder of riven hills of water.

Buck's face was calm and white in the morning light, and his oilskins hung about him in dismal folds. White streaks of salt showed under his eyes, which were partly sheltered by his sou'wester, and the deep lines in his wet cheeks gave him a worn-out look. He must have been very tired, for as I came from behind the piece of canvas lashed on the weather quarter to serve as a weather-cloth, he left the wheel and dropped down behind the bulwarks.

“Begins to look better,” I bawled, taking off the becket from the wheel spokes, which had been hove hard down all night. “She needs a bit of nursing,” and Buck nodded and grinned as he ducked from the flying drift.

She was doing well now, and after trying to ease her a while I put the wheel back in the becket and bawled down the scuttle to our little black boy to get us some junk and ship's bread.

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Our other man, John, a Swede, had turned in dead beat out an hour before, and as we four were all hands, I thought it just as well to let him sleep as long as he could. As master, I would have to stay on deck anyway.

Buck and I crouched in the lee of the bulwarks and tarpaulin, munching the junk and watching the little ship ride the sea. We could do nothing except let her head as close as we dared to the gale.

As long as the canvas held all would be well. The close-reefed mainsail would have been blown away in the rush of that fierce blast, and it would have been folly to try to drive her into that appalling sea. If anything started we were lost men. She was only a twenty-ton vessel, but she had a good nine feet of keel under her, and could hold on grimly. We had used a sea anchor for twenty-four hours, but while it held her head to the sea it caused her to drift dead to leeward, so we had at last cut it adrift and put a bit of storm staysail on her to work ahead.

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“ I’m glad we didn’t run durin’ the night,” said Buck, “ she wouldn’t ’a’ done it an’ gone clear—just look at that fellow ! ”

As he spoke a giant sea rose on the weather beam, a great mass of blue water capped with a white comber. The little vessel’s head dropped down the foam-streaked hollow until we were almost becalmed under the sea that followed. A dirty, dangerous sea to run in.

“ I thought you might have run when we saw how bad it was—an’ trust to luck to go clear. But fight on, says I, even when you know you’re losing. If you’d started to run you’d never been able to swing her up again if we’d had to—an’ now we’ll go clear. She’ll stand it.”

Buck was an American and John a Swede. The latter had hinted at running off before the storm when we found ourselves close in. Buck cursed him in my presence in true American fashion.

“ Never give up a fight because you’re beat at the start,” says I. “ It’s them that fights when

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they have to, an' because it's right, that always win. We did seem dead beat last night, an' when that light flashed out bright I was almost willing to say Amen. But I knew it ware wrong, an' we must fight it out. A man that fights to win is no sailor. It's him that fights when he *knows* he will lose—an' then maybe he won't lose after all."

The sun showed a little through a break in the flying scud, and the water looked a beautiful blue, streaked with great patches of white. Buck was gazing hard to the southward and could make nothing out except the Hatteras Light. He was tired, and refused to move from a wash of foam along the deck where he sat.

"You see," he said, wiping the spray from his face, "a man can't tell nothin' in this world. There's no use tryin' to at sea—an' the more you risk sometimes the more you win. It isn't always judgment. There ware old man Richards. He knew the coast, but he trusted his

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judgment too much—an' I'm the bum ye see now. I don't mean nothin' agin your boat, Cap'n.

“ You remember Richards? Had the ole *Pocosin*. Used to run her from Nassau to Hunter's P'int. 'Taint much of a run, even for that kind o' hooker, but in the winter this Cape is hell, an' that's a fact. You kin almost jump from wrack to wrack from the Core Bank to Bodie's Island. I've seen forty vessels, big an' small, on the beach here in one season—an' we aint out o' the business yet, either.”

We were drifting down fast on the outer shoal, and I could see, or fancy I could see, the Ocracoke Lighthouse. The wind had increased a little with sunrise as usual in a northeaster, but it seemed to be working a bit more to the northward and getting colder.

“ It was just such a day as this. We hove the *Pocosin* up when she was almost in sight of the Capes and not ten hours' run from Norfolk. But she ware ramming her nose into it harder and

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harder, an' there we was. We couldn't get no farther.

“ It ware pretty bad when we started inshore, with the glass a-fallin' an' the sky like the inside of a lead pot. Then came the breeze and big northeast sea what stopped us.

“ We couldn't push her through that sea. It was more'n common heavy, and even with the whole mainsail on her she wouldn't do a thing but rear up on her hind legs an' throw herself into it so she'd go out o' sight to her foremast. Man, she ware an' old boat, an' if she'd kept the racket up she'd have split in two!

“ We could see Cape Henry light by dark, but it warn't no use, so we wore around before it ware too late an' got the foresail an' jib stowed safe. Then we came to on the port tack, lowering down the mainsail and reefing it to balance the bit o' staysail forrads. 'Twas a piece o' work takin' in that mainsail, an' that's the truth. You may search me if it didn't fair blow the hair off yer head by this time. I don't mind a bit o' breeze,

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Cap'n, but when I say it ware blowin' then, it aint more'n half the truth. It ware fair howlin'.

“ We got the sail on the boom, and then that same boom took charge for twenty red-hot minutes while she threw it from port to starboard—an' all hands hangin' onto the mainsheet tryin' to get it in when it slacked with the throw.

“ ‘ Balance-reef her,’ says the old man, an' we lashed her down, givin' about ten feet o' leach rope hoisted taut with the peak downhaul fast to windward. Then everything was made snug, an' with the bit o' staysail hauled to the mast we hung on to see what would happen next.”

Buck rose for a minute and gazed steadily to the southward as though he had seen something. Then he settled down again.

“ Me? I was mate, you know. I'd been with Richards over a year. He had his wife an' daughter aboard that trip—yessir—about as fine—she was about seventeen.”

A sea struck the vessel while Buck was looking to leeward, but he paid no attention to it as the

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spray filled his collar. He seemed to be so deeply occupied in some object that I began to get a bit nervous, and reached for the glasses to try and pick out a new danger. But he evidently saw nothing, for he went on slowly after a bit.

“There were six of us men and a little coon boy in the galley. It gave us three men in a watch, an’ that ware enough. I saw we were goin’ to the south’ard fast, the sea was northerly yet, but the wind was working fast to the eastward and we warent reaching off a little bit. She was heavy with lumber an’ goin’ sideways like a crab—not shoving her nose ahead like we are now. It was dead to leeward, and you know how that is to the north’ard of Core Bank or Lookout.

“The old man had the wheel fast hard down and was standin’ there watchin’ her take them seas. It was growing dark an’ them fellers from the Gulf looked ugly. They just wiped her clean from end to end, roarin’ over her an’ smotherin’ everything.

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“ ‘We got to fight fer it to-night,’ said I. ‘Better try the close-reefed mainsail before it’s too late. A bit o’ fore-reachin’ an’ we’ll clear.’

“ ‘ ’Twon’t stand,’ says he, ‘ ’twon’t stand ten minutes in this breeze. Let her go. If she won’t go clear we’ll run her fer Ocracoke. It’s high water at eight-bells to-night.’

“ That may have been good judgment, but you know that entrance is a warm place at night in a roarin’ northeaster. I got a bit nervous an’ spoke up again after an hour or two.

“ ‘ Better try her with the mainsail ; we’ve got to fight her off,’ I said again.

“ ‘ ’Taint no use,’ said he. ‘ Let her go. A man never dies till his time comes.’

“ I’d heard that sayin’ before, but I never knew just how a feller could reckon on his time. Seemed to me somebody’s was comin’ along before daylight. Finally I kept on asking the old man an’ argufyin’—for there was the two women—an’ he gave in. Before twelve that night we had her under a single reef and shovin’

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off for dear life. It ware blowin' harder now, an' the first thing away went that staysail. Then we tried a bit o' jib, but she gave a couple o' plunges and drove her head under a good fathom. When she lifted it up the jib ware gone.

“ There we ware with the old hooker a-broachin' to an' no head sail on her. The seas ware comin' over her like a cataract and the dull roar soundin' louder an' louder. There ware the two women below——

“ Still the fight waren't half over. Ther ware the new foresail to close reef. It would have held an hour or two. That would have driven us off far enough to have gone through the slue. But no. The old man had had enough.

“ ‘ Take in the mainsail,’ he bawled, and all hands wrestled for half an hour with that sail while all the time we were goin' fast to the south'ard. ‘ Close reef foresail,’ says he; ‘ we'll try an' run her through.’ Then he took the lashin's off the wheel.

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“There ware no use sayin’ nothin’ more. We ware hardly able to speak as it was. We put the peak o’ that foresail on her an’ the old man ran the wheel hard up. It ware near daybreak now, and she paid off an’ streaked away before it through a roarin’ white sea. Just as she struck her gait we saw the flash o’ the Hatteras Light.

“The old man saw it. It ware bright enough for all hands. So bright my heart gave one big jump an’ then seemed to stop. There ware the two women below, the girl—we tore along into the night with six men an’ one little black boy holdin’ on to anything they could an’ lookin’ out over the jib-boom end——”

Buck was silent for a moment. Then he went on.

“It had to come. I saw it first. Just a great white spout o’ foam in the blackness ahead. It ware the outer edge o’ the Diamond Shoal.”

Buck’s voice died away in the roar about us and close as I was to him I could hear nothing

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he said, though I saw his lips move. I went to the binnaele and peered into it. The lighthouse was drawing to the westward. The roar aloft was deepening as she swung herself to windward, but she was making good weather of it and holding on like grim death.”

“How did you get through?” I asked, ducking down again behind the shelter.

“We didn’t. We didn’t get through. The *Pocosin’s* there yet—or what’s left of her. One more hour of fightin’ off under that reefed foresail an’ we’d have got to sea—we’d have gone clear. There waren’t nothin’ happened—just a smashing crash in the night. Man, ye couldn’t hear or see nothin’. Both masts gone with the first jolt, an’ up she broaches to a sea what was breakin’ clear out in seven fathoms. I tried to get aft—good God! I tried to get to the companion——”

Buck was looking steadily to leeward and the drift was trickling out of his eyes.

When he turned he smiled and his tired face

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looked years older as he wiped it with the cuff of his oilskin. The gale roared and snored overhead, but breaks in the flying scud told that the storm-center was working to the northward and the cold meant it would go to stay.

“I don’t know but what’s that’s so about a feller not goin’ till his time comes, Cap’n. I came in the next day on a bit o’ the mainmast, a little more dead than alive, but I’m tellin’ you fairly, Cap’n, if it warden’t fer you an’ your little ship, I’d just as soon have gone to leeward this mornin’. A feller gets sort o’ lonesome at times—especially when he’s got no ties——”

“Haven’t you any?” I asked cheerfully.

Buck looked slowly up and his eyes met mine. They rested there for a moment. His lips moved for a little, but I heard nothing he said. Then he let his gaze droop to the deck planks and bowed his head.

A long time he sat there while I watched the lighthouse draw more and more to the westward. Suddenly he looked up.

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“She’s all clear now, sir, an’ if you say so I’ll go below an’ start a bit o’ fire.”

“Go ahead, and tell Arthur to come here?” I said.

I watched him as he staggered below. He was tired out, wet, and despondent. The fate of the *Pocosin* was too evident for me to ask questions. I respected him for not mentioning the girl again. It was evident what she had been to him. It was long ago, but the memory was fresh before him. He was passing near the grave of the one woman he had loved, and there was more than the salt drift in his eyes as he went down the companion. In a few minutes a stream of black smoke poured from the funnel in the deck and was whirled away to leeward. Soon the smell of frying bacon was swept aft, and I went below to a warm breakfast to be followed by a nap, while the plunging little vessel rode safely into the great Gulf sea. We had gone past the graveyard of the Diamond Shoals.

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