





THE WHITE GHOST OF DISASTER

THE CHIEF MATE'S YARN

BY

CAPTAIN MAYN CLEW GARNETT

Hains, Thornton Jenkins

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The White Ghost of Disaster

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THE WHITE GHOST OF DISASTER

WE had been sitting in at the game for more than an hour, and no life had entered it. The thoughts of all composing that little group of five in the most secluded corner of the ship's smoking room were certainly not on the game, and three aces lay down to fours up.

The morose and listless ship's officer out of a berth, although he spoke little—if at all—seemed to put a spell of uneasiness and unrest on the party. The others did not know him or his history; but his looks spelled disaster and misfortune.

At last Charlie Spangler, the noted journalist, keen for a story or two, threw down his cards, exclaiming: "Let's quit. None of us is less uneasy than the rest of the ship's passengers."

"Yes," chimed in Arthur Linch, the noted stock-broker. "We have endeavored to banish the all-pervading thought, 'will the ship arrive safely without being wrecked,' and have failed miserably. Cards will not do it." This seemed to express the

sentiments of everybody except the morose mariner, whose thoughts nobody could read or fathom. He sat there, deep in his chair, gazing at a scene or scenes none of us could see or appreciate.

“Well! Since we cannot take our thoughts off ‘shipwreck,’ we may as well discuss the subject and ease our minds,” added the journalist again, still hot on the scent of the possible story which he felt that the ship’s officer hoarded.

The mariner, however, did not respond to this, and continued with his memories, apparently oblivious of our presence.

Under the leadership of the journalist the discussion waxed warm for some time, until the stockbroker, ever solicitous for the welfare of the stockmarket and conforming his opinions thereto, exclaimed loudly: “The officers and the crew were not responsible for the collision with the berg. It was an ‘act of God!’ and as such we are daily taking chances with it. What will be, will be. We cannot escape Destiny!”

“Destiny be damned!” came like a thunderbolt from the heretofore silent mariner, and we all looked to see the face now full of rage and passion. “What do you know of the sea, you land pirate? What do you know of sea dangers and responsibility for the safety of human lives? Man! you’re crazy. There is no such thing as Destiny at sea. A seaman knows what to expect when he takes chances. If you call that an ‘act of God,’ you deserve to have been there and submitted to it.”

The face of Charlie Spangler was glowing. His

heart beat so fast when he heard this sea clam open up, that he was afraid it might overwork and stop. "Our friend is right!" he exclaimed. "I infer that he speaks from knowledge and experience. We are hardly qualified to discuss such matters properly.

"You have something on your mind, friend. Unburden it to us. We are sympathetic, you know. Our position here makes us so," saying which, Spangler filled the mariner's half-empty glass and looked at him with sympathy streaming out of his trained eyes. We all nodded our assent.

Having fortified himself with the contents of the glass before him, the mariner spoke: "Yes, gentlemen, I am going to speak from knowledge and experience. It was my luck to be aboard of the vessel which had the shortest of lives, but which will live in the memory of man for many a year.

"It is my misfortune to be one of its surviving officers. I am going to give you the facts as they happened this last time, and a few other times besides. It is the experiences through which I have passed that make me wish I had gone down with the last one. I must now live on with memories, indelibly stamped on my brain, which I would gladly forget. Your attention, gentlemen—"

Captain Brownson came upon the bridge. It was early morning, and the liner was tearing through a smooth sea in about forty-three north latitude. The sun had not yet risen, but the gray of the coming daylight showed a heaving swell that rolled with the steadiness that told of a long stretch of

calm water behind it. The men of the morning watch showed their pale faces white with that peculiar pallor which comes from the loss of the healthful sleep between midnight and morning. It was the second mate's watch, and that officer greeted the commander as he came to the bridge rail where the mate stood staring into the gray ahead.

"See anything?" asked the master curtly.

"No, sir—but I smell it—feel it," said the mate, without turning his head.

"What?" asked Brownson.

"Don't you feel it?—the chill, the—well, it's ice, sir—ice, if I know anything."

"Ice?" snarled the captain. "You're crazy! What's the matter with you?"

"Oh, very well—you asked me—I told you—that's all."

The captain snorted. He disliked the second officer exceedingly. Mr. Smith had been sent him by the company at the request of the manager of the London office. He had always picked his own men, and he resented the office picking them for him. Besides, he had a nephew, a passenger aboard, who was an officer out of a berth.

"What the devil do they know of a man, anyhow! I'm the one responsible for him. I'm the one, then, to choose him. They won't let me shift blame if anything happens, and yet they sent me a man I know nothing of except that he is young and strong. I'll wake him up some if he stays here." So he had commented to Mr. Wylie, the

chief mate. Mr. Wylie had listened, thought over the matter, and nodded his head sagely.

“Sure,” he vouchsafed; “sure thing.” That was as much as any one ever got out of Wylie. He was not a talkative mate. Yet when he knew Smith better, he retailed the master’s conversation to him during a spell of generosity engendered by the donation of a few highballs by Macdowell, the chief engineer. Smith thanked him—and went his way as before, trying to do the best he could. He did not shirk duty on that account. Wylie insisted that the captain was right. A master was responsible, and it was always customary for him to pick his men as far as possible. Besides, as Wylie had learned from Macdowell, Brownson had a nephew in view that would have filled the berth about right—so Wylie thought—and Smith was a nuisance. Smith had taken it all in good part, and smiled. He liked Wylie.

Brownson sniffed the air hungrily as he stood there at the bridge rail. The air was chilly, but it was always chilly in that latitude even in summer.

“How does she head?” he asked savagely of the man at the steam-steering gear. The man spoke through the pilot-house window in a monotone:

“West—three degrees south, sir.”

“That’s west—one south by standard?” snapped Brownson.

“Yes, sir,” said Smith.

“Let her go west—two south by binnacle—and mark the time accurately,” ordered Brownson.

He would shift her a bit. The cool air seemed

to come from the northward. It was as if a door in an ice box were suddenly opened and the cold air within let out in a cold, damp mass. A thin haze covered the sea. The side wash rolled away noisily, and disappeared into the mist a few fathoms from the ship's side. It seemed to thicken as the minutes passed.

Brownson was nervous. He went inside the pilot house and spoke to the engineer through the tube leading to the engine room.

"How is she going?"

"Two hundred and ten, sir; never less than two and five the watch."

"Well, she's going too almighty fast—shut her down to one hundred," snapped Brownson. "She's been doing twenty-two knots—it's too fast—too fast, anyhow, in this weather. Ten knots will do until the sun scoffs off this mist. Shut her down."

The slowing engines eased their vibrations, and the side wash rolled less noisily. There was a strange stillness over the sea. The silence grew as the headway subsided.

The captain listened intently. He felt something.

There is always that strange something that a seaman feels in the presence of great danger when awake. It has never been explained. But all good—really good—masters have felt it; can tell you of it if they will. It is uncanny, but it is as true as gospel. The second officer had felt it in the air, felt it in his nerves. He felt—*ice*. It was danger.

Smith stood there watching the haze that seemed to deepen rather than disperse as the morning grew.

The men turned out and the hose was started, the decks were sluiced down, and the gang with the squeegees followed. Two bells struck—five o'clock. Smith strained his gaze straight into the haze ahead. He fixed and refixed his glasses—a pair of powerful lenses of fifteen lines. He had bought them for fifty dollars, and always kept them near him while on watch.

A man came up the bridge steps.

“Shall I send up your coffee, sir?” he asked.

“Yes, send it up,” said Smith, in a whisper. He was listening.

Something sounded out there in the haze. It was a strange, vibrating sound, a sort of whispering murmur, soft and low, like the far-away notes of a harp. Then it ceased. Smith looked at the captain who stood within the pilot-house window gazing down at the men at work on the deck below. The noise of the rushing water from the hose and their low tones seemed to annoy him. They wore rubber boots, and their footsteps were silent; but he gruffly ordered the bos'n to make them “shut up.”

“Better slow her down, sir—there's ice somewhere about here,” said the second mate anxiously. He was thinking of the thousand and more souls below and the millions in cargo values.

“Who's running this ship—me or you?” snarled Brownson savagely.

It was an unnecessary remark, wholly uncalled for. Smith flushed under his tan and pallor. He had seldom been spoken to like that. He would have to stand it; but he would hunt a new ship as

soon as he came ashore again. It was bad enough to be treated like a boy; but to be talked to that way before the men made it impossible, absolutely impossible. It meant the end of discipline at once. A man would retail it, more would repeat it, and—then—Smith turned away from the bridge rail in utter disgust. He was furious.

“Blast the ship!” he muttered, as he turned away and gazed aft. His interest was over, entirely over. He would not have heard a gun fired at that moment, so furious was the passion at the unmerited insolence from his commander.

And then, as if to give insult to injury, Brownson called down the tube:

“Full speed ahead—give her all she’ll do—I’m tired of loafing around here all the morning.” Then he rang up the telegraph, and the sudden vibrations told of a giant let loose below.

The *Admiral* started ahead slowly. She was a giant liner, a ship of eight hundred feet in length. It took some moments to get headway upon that vast hull. But she started, and in a few minutes the snoring of the bow wave told of a tearing speed. She was doing twenty-two and a half knots an hour, or more than twenty-five miles, the speed of a train of cars.

The under steward came up the bridge steps with the coffee. Smith took his cup and drank it greedily, almost savagely. He was much hurt. His feelings had been roughly handled. Yet he had not even answered the captain back. He took his place at the bridge rail and gazed straight ahead

into the gray mist. He saw nothing, felt nothing, but the pain of his insult.

“Let him run the ship to hell and back,” he said to himself.

There was a puff of colder air than usual. A chill as of death itself came floating over the silent ocean. A man on lookout stood staring straight into the mist ahead, and then sang out:

“Something right ahead, sir,” he yelled in a voice that carried like the roar of a gun.

Brownson just seized the lever shutting the compartments, swung it, jammed it hard over, and screamed:

“Stop her—stop her—hard over your wheel—hard over——”

His voice ended in a vibrating screech that sounded wild, weird, uncanny in that awful silence. A hundred men stopped in their stride, or work, paralyzed at the tones coming from the bridge.

And then came the impact.

With a grinding, smashing roar as of thousands of tons coming together, the huge liner plunged headlong into the iceberg that rose grim and silent right ahead, towering over her in spite of her great height. The shock was terrific, and the grinding, thundering crash of falling tons of ice, coupled with the rending of steel plates and solid planks, made chaos of all sound.

The *Admiral* bit in, dug, plowed, kept on going, going, and the whole forward part of her almost disappeared into the wall of white. A thousand tons of huge flakes slammed and slid down her decks,

burying her to the fore hatch in the smother. A thousand tons more crashed, slid, and plunged down the slopes of the icy mountain and hurled themselves into the sea with giant splashes, sending torrents of water as high as the bridge rail. The men who had been forward were swept away by the avalanche. Many were never seen again. And then, with reversed engines, she finally came to a dead stop, with her bows jammed a hundred feet deep in the ice wall of the berg.

After that it was panic. All discipline seemed to end in the shock and struggle. Brownson howled and stormed from the bridge, and Smith shouted orders and sprang down to enforce them. The chief mate came on deck in his underclothes and passed the word to man the boats. A thousand passengers jammed the companionway and strove with panic and inhuman fury to reach the deck.

One man clad in a night robe gained the outside of the press, and, running swiftly along the deck, flitted like a ghost over the rail, and disappeared into the sea. He had gone crazy, violently insane in the panic.

Brownson tied down the siren cord, and the roar shook the atmosphere. The tremendous tones rose above the din of screaming men and cursing seamen; and then the master called down to the heart of the ship, the engine room.

"Is she going?" he asked.

"Water coming in like through a tunnel," came the response. "Nearly up to the grates now——"

That was all. The man left the tube to rush on

deck, and the captain knew the forward bulkheads had gone; had either jammed or burst under that terrific impact. The ship was going down.

Brownson stood upon the bridge and gazed down at the human tide below him. Men fought furiously for places in the small boats. The fireroom crew came on deck and mingled with the passengers. The coal dust showed upon their white faces, making them seem strange beings from an inferno that was soon to be abolished. They strove for places in the lifeboats and hurled the weaker passengers about recklessly. Some, on the other hand, helped the women. One man dragged two women with him into a boat, kicking, twisting, and roaring like a lion. He was a big fellow with a red beard, and Brownson watched him. The mate struck him over the head with a hand spike for refusing to get out of the boat, and his interest in things ended at once and forever.

The crew, on the whole, behaved well. Officers and men tried to keep some sort of discipline. Finally six boats went down alongside into the sea, and were promptly swarmed by the crowds above, who either slid down the falls or jumped overboard and climbed in from the sides. The sea was as still as a lake; only the slight swell heaved it. Great fields of floating particles of ice from the berg floated about, and those who were drenched in the spray shivered with the cold.

The *Admiral*, running at twenty-two knots an hour, had struck straight into the wall of an iceberg that reached as far as the eye could see in the haze.

It towered at least three hundred feet in the air, showing that its depth was colossal, probably at least half a mile. It was a giant ice mountain that had broken adrift from its northern home, and, drifting southward, had survived the heat of summer and the breaking of the sea upon its base.

Smith had felt its dread presence, felt its proximity long before he had come to close quarters. The chill in the air, the peculiar feeling of danger, the icy breath of death—all had told him of a danger that was near. And yet Brownson had scoffed at him, railed at his intuition and sense. Upon the captain the whole blame of the disaster must fall if Smith told.

The second officer almost smiled as he struggled with his boat.

“The pig-headed fool!” he muttered between his set teeth. “The murdering monster—he’s done it now! He’s killed himself, and a thousand people along with him——”

Smith fought savagely for the discipline of his boat. His men had rushed to their stations at the first call. The deck was beginning to slant dangerously as the falls were slacked off and the lifeboat lowered into the sea. Smith stood in the press about him and grew strangely calm. The action was good for him, good for the burning fury that had warped him, scorched him like a hot blast while he had stood silently upon the bridge and taken the insults of his commander. Women pleaded with him for places in the boat. Men begged and took hold of him. One lady, half clothed, dropped upon

her knees and, holding his hand, which hung at his side, prayed to him as if he were a deity, a being to whom all should defer. He flung her off savagely.

Bareheaded now, coatless, and with his shirt ripped, he stood there, and saw his men pass down sixteen women into his craft; pass them down without comment or favor, age or condition. Thirty souls went into his boat before he sprang into the falls and slid down himself. A dozen men tried to follow him, but he shoved off, and they went into the sea. His men got their oars out and rowed off a short distance.

Muttering, praying, and crying, the passengers in his boat huddled themselves in her bottom. He spoke savagely to them, ordered them under pain of death to sit down. One man, who shivered as he spoke, insisted upon crawling about and shifting his position. Smith struck him over the head, knocking him senseless. Another, a woman, must stand upon the thwarts, to get as far away as possible from the dread and icy element about her. He swung his fist upon her jaw, and she went whimpering down into the boat's bottom, lying there and sobbing softly.

Furiously swearing at the herd of helpless passengers who endangered his boat at every movement, he swung the craft's head about and stood gazing at his ship. After a little while the crowd became more manageable, and he saw he could keep them aboard without the certainty of upsetting the craft. He had just been debating which of them he

would throw overboard to save the rest; save them from their own struggling and fighting for their own selfish ends. He was as cold as steel, hard, inflexible. His men knew him for a ship's officer who would maintain his place under all hazards, and they watched him furtively, and were ready to obey him to the end without question.

"Oh, the monster, the murdering monster!" he muttered again and again.

His eyes were fixed upon the bridge. High up there stood Brownson—the captain who had sent his liner to her death, with hundreds of passengers.

Brownson stood calmly watching the press gain and lose places in the boats. Two boats actually overloaded rolled over under the immense load of human freight. The others did not stop to pick them up. They had enough to do to save themselves. The ship was sinking. That was certain. She must have struck so hard that even the 'midship bulkheads gave way, or were so twisted out of place that the doors failed. The chief engineer came below him and glanced up.

As he did so, a tremendous, roaring blast of steam blew the superstructure upward. The boilers had gone. Macdowell just gave Brownson a look. That was all. Then he rushed for a boat.

Brownson grinned; actually smiled at him.

The man at the wheel asked permission to go.

"I'm a married man, sir—it's no use of me staying here any longer," he ventured.

"Go—go to the devil!" said Brownson, without interest. The man fled.

Brownson stopped giving any more orders. In silence he gazed down at the press of human beings, watching, debating within himself the chances they had of getting away from that scene of death and horror.

The decks grew more and more steep. The liner was settling by the head and to starboard. She was even now twisting, rolling over; and the motion brought down thousands of blocks of ice from the berg. The engines had long since stopped. She still held her head against the ice wall; but it would give her no support. She was slipping away—down to her grave below.

Brownson gazed back over the decks. He watched the crowd impersonally, and it seemed strange to him that so much valuable fabric should go to the bottom so quickly. The paint was so clean and bright, the brass was so shiny. The whole structure was so thoroughly clean, neat, and in proper order. It was absurd. There he was standing upon that bridge where he had stood so often, and here below him were hundreds of dying people—people like rats in a trap.

“Good Heaven—is it real?”

He was sure he was not awake. It must be a dream. Then the terrible knowledge came back upon him like a stroke; a blow that stopped his heart. It was the death of his ship he was watching—the death of his ship and of many of his passengers. Suddenly Brownson saw the boat of the second mate, and that officer standing looking up at him.

The master thought he saw the officer's lips move. He wondered what the man thought, what he would say. He had insulted the officer, made him a clown before the men. He knew the second mate would not spare him. He knew the second mate would testify that he had given warning of ice ten minutes before they struck. He also knew that the man at the wheel had heard him, as had the steward who brought up the coffee, and one or two others who were near.

No, there must be no investigation of his, Brownson's, blame in the matter. The master dared not face that. He looked vacantly at Smith. The officer stood gazing straight at him.

The liner suddenly shifted, leaned to starboard, heeled far over, and her bows slipped from the berg, sinking down clear to her decks, clear down until the seas washed to the foot of her superstructure just below Brownson. Masses of ice fell from her into the sea. The grinding, splashing noise awoke the panic again among the remaining passengers and crew. They strove with maniac fury to get the rafts and other stuff that might float over the side. Two boats drew away full to the gunwales with people. The air below began to make that peculiar whistling sound that tells of pressure—pressure upon the vitals of the ship. She was going down.

Brownson still stood gazing at his second mate.

Smith met the master's eye with a steady look. Then he suddenly forgot himself and raised his hand.

“Oh, you murdering rat, you cowardly scoundrel, you devil!” he roared out.

Brownson saw the movement of the hand, saw that it was vindictive, furious, and full of menace. He could not hear the words.

He smiled at the officer, raised his hand, and waved it in reply. It seemed to make the mate crazy. He gesticulated wildly, swore like a maniac—but Brownson did not hear him. He only knew what he was doing.

He turned away, gave one more look over the sinking ship.

“She’s going now—and so am I,” he muttered.

Then he went slowly into his chart room, opened a drawer, and took out a revolver that he always kept there. He stood at the open door and cocked the weapon. He looked into its muzzle, and saw the bullet that would end his life when he pulled the trigger.

He almost shuddered. It was so unreal. He could not quite do it. He gazed again at the second mate. He knew the officer was watching him, knew Smith would not believe he had the nerve to end the thing then and there. It amused him slightly in a grim sort of way. Why, he *must* die. That was certain. He could never face his own family and friends after what he had done. As to getting another ship—that was too absurd to think of.

The form of a woman showed in the boat. She had risen from the bottom, where the blow of the officer had felled her in her frenzy. Brownson saw her, recognized her as his niece, the sister of the

man he had wished to put in Smith's place. It was for his own nephew he had insulted his officer, had caused him to relax and lose the interest that made navigation safe, in the hope that Smith would leave and let his relative get the berth.

He wondered if Smith knew. He stood there with the revolver in his hand watching for some sign from his second officer. Smith gazed at him in fury, apparently not noticing the girl whom he had just before knocked into the boat's bottom to keep order. She stood up. Smith roughly pushed her down again. Brownson was sure now—he felt that Smith knew all.

But he put the revolver in his pocket. He would not fire yet.

The ship was listing heavily, and the cries of the passengers were dying out. All who had been able to get away had gone, somehow, and only a few desperate men and women, who could not swim and who were cool enough to realize that swimming would but prolong an agony that was better over quickly, huddled aft at the taffrail. They would take the last second left them, the last instant of life, and suffer a thousand deaths every second to get it. It was absurd. Brownson pitied them.

Many of these women were praying and talking to their men, who held them in a last embrace. One young woman was clinging closely to a young man, and they were apparently not suffering terror. A look of peacefulness was upon the faces of both. They were lovers, and were satisfied to die together; and the thought of it made them satisfied.

Brownson wondered at this. They were young enough and strong enough to make a fight for life.

A whistling roar arose above all other sounds. The siren had ceased, and Brownson knew the air was rushing from below. The ship would drop in a moment. He grasped the pistol again. He dreaded that last plunge, that drop into the void below. The thought held him a little. The ocean was always so blue out there, so clear and apparently bottomless, a great void of water. He wondered at the depth, what kind of a dark bed would receive that giant fabric, the work of so many human hands. And then he wondered at his own end there. His own end? What nonsense! It was unreal. Death was always for others. It had never been for him. He had seen men die. It was not for him yet. He would not believe it. He would awaken soon, and the steward would bring him his coffee.

Then he caught the eye of Smith again in that boat waiting for the end out there. His heart gave an immense jolt, began beating wildly. The ship heeled more and more. The ice crashed and plunged from her forward. Brownson was awakening to the real at last. He felt it in those extra heartbeats; knew he must hurry it. Then he wondered what the papers would say; whether they would call him a coward, afraid to face the inevitable. He hoped they would not. But, then, what difference would it all make, anyhow—to him? He was dead. His interest was over. What difference

would it make whether he was a coward or not? Men knew him for what he was, but he existed no longer. He was dead.

While he stood there with these thoughts in his mind, his nerve half lacking to end the thing, it seemed to him it was lasting for an eternity. He was growing tired of it all. He turned away again and entered the chart room.

His cat crawled from somewhere and rubbed its tail and side against his leg. Then the animal jumped to the table, and he stroked it; actually stroked it while Smith watched him, and swore at him for a cold-blooded scoundrel.

The ship sank to her superstructure. Her stern rose high in the air. It was now impossible to stand on deck without holding on. Some of the remaining passengers slid off with parting shrieks. They dropped into that icy sea.

Brownson felt the end coming now, and turned again to the doorway, looking straight at his second mate. Smith was trying to quell the movement among his crowd which was endangering his boat again.

The captain clutched the door jamb and watched. Then the ship began to sink. He could not make up his mind to jump clear. There was Smith looking at him. He dared not be saved when hundreds were being killed. No, he could not make that jump and swim to a boat under that officer's gaze. And yet at the last moment he was about to try it. Panic was upon him in a way that he hardly realized. He simply could not face the black gulf he

was dropping into with his health and full physical powers still with him. It was nature to make a last effort for his life. Then, before he could make the jump overboard, he saw Smith again shaking his hand at him and howling curses.

He pulled the pistol. An ashy whiteness came over his face. Smith saw it. He stopped swearing; stopped in his furious denunciation of the man who had caused so much destruction. He also saw the pistol plainly, and wondered at the captain's nerve.

"You are afraid, you dog—you are afraid—you daren't do it, you murdering rat!" he yelled.

The men in the boat were all gazing up at the chart-house door where the form of their commander stood.

"He's going to shoot, sir," said the stroke oarsman.

"He's afraid—he won't dare!" howled Smith.

Brownson seemed to hear now. The silence was coming again, and the sounds on the sinking ship were dying out.

Brownson gazed straight at his second officer. Smith saw him raise the pistol, saw a bit of blue smoke, saw his commander sink down to the deck and disappear. A cracking and banging of ice blocks blended with the report, and the ship raised her stern higher. Then she plunged straight downward, straight as a plummet for the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean. Smith knew his captain had gone to his end; that he was a dead man at last.

He stood watching the mighty swirl where the

liner had gone under. The men in his boat were also looking. They had seen all.

"Look—look!" shrieked a passenger. "The captain has shot himself!"

"She's gone—gone for good!" cried another. "Oh, the pity of it all!"

Smith did not reply. He was still gazing at the apparition he had seen in that chart-house door; the figure of the man shooting himself through the head. It had chilled his anger, staggered him. The awful nerve of it all, the horror——

"Hadn't we better see if we can get one or two more in her, sir?" asked the stroke oarsman. "I see a woman swimming there."

Smith did not answer. He seemed not to hear. Then he suddenly awoke to his surroundings. He was alive to the occasion, the desperate situation.

"Give way port—ease starboard—swing her out of that swirl—hard on that port oar," he ordered.

Smith looked around for the other boats. The chief mate's was in sight, showing dimly through the haze. She was full of people, crowded, and it was a wonder how she floated with the screaming, panic-stricken passengers, who fought for places in her in spite of Wylie's oaths and entreaties. Smith glared.

"The fools!" he muttered. "If they would only think of something besides their own hides for a second. But they won't. They never do. It's nature, and when the trouble comes they fight like cats."

He steered away from what he saw was trouble. He would not pick up the participants in the scuffle when they overturned the boat. He was full up now, carrying all his boat would hold. She rocked dangerously with every shifting of the crowd, that still trembled and scuffled for more comfort in her. Her gunwales were only a few inches above the sea, and it might come on to blow at any minute.

"Sit down!" he roared to the old man, who would shift and squirm about in the boat, interfering with the stroke oarsman, who jammed his oar into the small of the fellow's back, regardless of the pain it caused.

"Sit down or I'll throw you overboard! Do you hear?"

The old man whimpered and struggled for a more comfortable position; and Smith reached over with the tiller and slammed him heavily across the shoulders, knocking him over.

"If you get up again I'll kill you, you cowardly old nuisance!" he said savagely.

The old man lay quiet and trembling. A young woman upbraided Smith for brutality and talked volubly.

"Talk, you little fool!" he said. "Talk all you want to, but don't you get moving about in this boat, or I'll break your pretty neck."

"You are a monster," said the girl.

"Yes; but if I'd had my way, you would have been safe and sound below in your room instead of out here in this ice," snapped Smith.

The girl quieted down, and then spoke to the

young woman, who lay in the bottom of the boat where she had fallen when Smith struck her down. She was the niece of Captain Brownson.

"I never heard of such utter brutality in my life," she said.

Miss Billings, who had first found fault, agreed with her.

"Was your brother aboard, Miss Roberts?" asked Smith.

"Yes, he was—I think he went in the mate's boat—why do you ask?"

"Oh, I was just thinking—that's all. He would have been second officer next voyage. That seemed to be fixed, didn't it?"

"Yes; and if it had, this thing would not have happened," said the girl.

"No; probably it would not," said the second officer sadly. He spoke, for the first time, with less passion. He thought of the manner they had taken to get his berth, the insults, the infamy of the whole thing.

"No; I don't suppose you knew how it was done," said he, half aloud.

The girl sat up. She had stopped whimpering from the blow.

Smith watched her for a few minutes while he swung the boat's head for the gray mist ahead where he knew lay the iceberg. He thought the face pretty, the figure well rounded and perfectly shaped. He felt sorry he had used such harshness in making her behave in the boat. But there was no time for silly sentiment. That boat must be

manned properly and kept afloat, and the slapping of a girl was nothing at all. She might start a sudden movement and endanger the lives of all. Absolute trimming of the craft was the only way she could be safe to carry the immense load. The men rowed slowly and apparently without object. Smith headed the boat for the ice.

A long wall of peculiar pale blueness suddenly burst from the haze close to them. It was the iceberg. He swung the boat so that she would not strike it, and followed along the ragged side.

The two young women gazed up at the pale blueness caused by the fresh water in the ice. It was a beautiful sight. The pinnacles were sharp as needles, and they pierced the mist in white points, tapering down to the white-and-blue sheen at the base, where the ocean roared and surged in a deep-toned murmur. Great pieces broke from the mass while they gazed. Smith steered out and sheered the boat's head away from the dangerous wall. It was grand but deadly. A large block lay right ahead.

"Ease starboard," he said.

The craft swung clear. The mist from the cold ocean thinned a little. Right ahead was a flat plateau, a raised field of ice joining the berg. It sloped down suddenly to the sea, and the swell broke upon it as upon a rocky shore. A long, flat floe stretched away from the higher part. It was a field of at least a half mile in length. The huge berg reached a full half mile further. The whole was evidently broken from some giant glacier in the Arctic.

Smith debated his chances within himself. He scorned to ask his men, for he had seen much ice before in his seagoing. To remain near the berg was to miss a ship possibly; but to row far off was to miss fresh water. He had come away without either food or water, owing to the furious panic. He knew very well that, within a few hours at most, the famished folk in his boat would rave for a drink. They must have water, at least, even if they must do without food.

The iceberg lay right in the path of ships, as his own had proved, the liner running upon the great circle from New York to Liverpool. There was the certainty of meeting, or of at least coming close to a vessel shortly, for others of his line would run the same circle, the same course, as he had run it before.

With giant liners going at twenty-five knots speed, they usually kept pretty close to the same line, for there were few currents that were not accurately known over that route. The Gulf Stream was a fixed unit almost; and in calm weather other ships would certainly reckon with accuracy to meet its set. If he rowed far off the line, then he might or might not meet a ship. If he did not, then there would soon be death and terror in that boat.

He decided to keep close to the berg, and ordered his men to give way slowly while he navigated the field and skirted it, keeping just far enough out to avoid the dangerous breaks and floating pieces.

The morning wore away, and the occupants of his

boat began to grow restless. They had been cramped up for several hours now, and they were not used to sitting in a cold, open boat in a thick, misty haze without food or water. The old man began to complain. Several women began to ask for water. One woman with three children begged him to go ashore and get them a piece of ice to allay their thirst. Smith saw that the effects of the wild excitement were now being felt, and the inevitable thirst that must follow was at hand.

He headed the boat for a low part of the field.

"Easy on your oars," he commanded. The boat slid gently upon the sloping ice.

"Jump out, Sam," he said to the bow oarsman. "Jump out and take the painter with you." The man did so, hauling the line far up the floe.

One by one the rest were allowed to climb out of the boat. They gathered upon a part of the field that rose a full ten feet above the sea; and there they began trying to get small pieces of ice to eat. It was as salt as the sea itself, and they were disappointed, spitting it out. Smith took a man along with him and started for the berg. The boat was left in charge of four men, who held her off the floe.

Within half an hour, the whole crowd had managed to get fresh-water ice. The second officer kept them close to the boat and watched for any signs of change in the weather. They were allowed to go a short distance and get the stiffness from their limbs by exercise.

"I am very tired and cold. Can I get back into

the boat?" asked Miss Roberts, after she had been stamping her feet upon the floe for half an hour.

Smith looked at her. The print of his hand was plainly marked upon her face. He felt ashamed.

"Yes, you can go aboard," he said; and then, as if in apology for what he had done, he explained: "You must keep quiet in that boat, you know. You must not try to walk about, for it endangers the whole crowd. You understand, don't you?"

"Yes, I'll try and keep still, but my feet get so cold and I grow so stiff."

"Well, you must forgive me for having used you roughly. I had to do it. There was no time for politeness in that panic." He came close to her. His eyes held a light she feared greatly, and she shrank back.

"I hope it is not a time now for politeness," she said, with meaning.

"Oh, I wouldn't hurt you," said Smith.

"I hope not," said the girl.

Miss Billings asked if she could go aboard also. Smith allowed her, and called the boat in.

The two girls climbed into the boat, and the older women commented spiritedly upon the favors of youth. Smith shut them up with an oath. The woman with the three children huddled them back aboard as the ice caused them to shiver with the cold on their little feet. They had neglected to put on their shoes. The women, for the most part, were only half dressed, and few, if any, had on shoes. They had rushed on deck at the first alarm, and the time allowed for dressing was short. The ship had

gone down within fifteen minutes from the first impact with the berg.

Smith walked to and fro upon the ice for some time. The sun shone for a few moments, but was quickly hidden again in the haze.

A gentle breeze began to blow from the southward, and the haze broke up a little. Smith began to get nervous about the ice, and finally ordered all his people back into the boat, where they huddled and shivered, hungry but no longer thirsty.

During all these hours there had been no further sign of the other boats. Smith knew that at least ten of them had gone clear of the sinking ship. The chief mate's boat was the one he was most interested in at present. He wanted to see the man who had indirectly caused the disaster; the man whom Brownson was playing up for the berth of second officer. The thing was a reality now since the tragedy. Before it, he had looked upon the matter as slight indeed.

The second mate headed his boat out and kept clear of the drifting ice; but always under the lee of the berg, which offered considerable shelter from both wind and sea, which were rising. The danger of floating ice was not great during daylight, and he swung the small boat close and rode easily, keeping her dry and clear of water. He dreaded the plunging he must inevitably undergo in the open ocean with that load of women.

With the increasing breeze, the haze lifted entirely until the horizon showed clear all around. There was no sign of the other boats. Smith knew

then that they had steered off to the southward to avoid the ice. As the sea began to grow, the masses of ice broke adrift with distinct and loud reports, the plunging pieces from the higher parts making considerable noise above the deepening roar of the surge upon the base.

At three in the afternoon, Smith began to feel nervous. The ice was breaking up fast, and immense pieces were floating in the sea which bore them toward him. They grew more and more dangerous to the small craft, and the officer headed away from the vicinity and sought the open at last.

By five that afternoon, when the light was fading, he was riding a heavy sea, that grew rapidly and rolled quickly, the combers breaking badly and keeping two men busy bailing the boat. She made water fast.

The night came on with all its terrors, and the small boat was in great danger. Smith tried his best to keep her headed to the sea, which was now running high and strong. His men began to weaken under the continuous strain; and by ten that night they could no longer hold the boat's head to the sea. She fell off once or twice, and nearly filled when in the trough. There was little to do but make a last effort to hold her. The steady second officer came to his last resource.

There were five oars in the boat. Four of these he lashed into a drag by fastening two of them in the shape of a cross, and then lashing the other two across the end of the cross. He had a spare line of some length in the boat; and with this bent to

the painter, he had a cable of at least twenty fathoms, which he led over the bows and to the drag. The drag was weighted with some chain that lay forward. The fifth oar he kept aboard, and used it himself for a sweep to hold her head as nearly as possible behind the drag and to the sea.

He was tired, sore, and hungry, but he kept the boat's head true for hours, and his people huddled down in the bottom, and prayed or swore as the humor took them. The children wept, and some of the older women fainted and lay prone. These gave no trouble. Some of the younger ones still insisted on moving about, and brought the wrath of the mate upon them in no uncertain manner. Smith was making a fight for their lives, and would not tolerate any hysteria. He smote all who disobeyed with his usual impersonal and rough manner; but the two girls were now too much cowed to give him trouble. They lay in the boat's bottom and wept and sobbed the night long, holding to each other, while the boat tossed high in the air or fell far down the slopes of ugly seas. And all the time the water broke over her low gunwales as she sat well down under her load of living freight.

It was about midnight when the old man, who had been unruly from the first, sprang upon a thwart and plunged over the side with a shrill scream.

Smith saw him, and made a pass to catch him with the oar; but the old fellow drifted out of reach. The second officer swung the boat as far as possible toward him; but still he could not reach

the figure that showed floating for a few moments in the darkness. Then Miss Roberts, who was close to the stern sheets, spoke up.

“Oh, the pity of it, the pity of that old man dying like this! Will no one save him?” she cried.

Her companion sat up.

“There’s no one aboard here who can do anything but bully us women. If we had a man here, we might save him. I would jump after him myself, but I can’t swim. It’s horrible to see him drown right alongside of us in this darkness.”

Smith heard and smiled grimly. He was tired out, sore, and almost exhausted, but he was full of pluck and fight still. To drop the steering oar might prove fatal if a comber struck the boat. He called to the stroke oarsman who took the oar. Smith took the stern line, gave a turn about a cork jacket that lay upon the seat, and then over the side he went, calling the men to haul him in when he gave the word.

The affair had only taken a few moments, and the form of the old fellow was hardly under the surface. Smith floundered to him; but, being a poor swimmer, as most sailors are, he was quite exhausted when he finally grabbed him. Instead of easing on the line, he hung dead upon it, hardly able to keep his face out of the sea. The girls watched him over the gunwales, but keeping their places. Two men started to haul him in without waiting for a signal; and they hove upon the line with a right good will. It was old and dry-rotted, as most lines in lifeboats are, and it parted.

Smith felt the slack, and knew what it meant. The cork jacket held him above the surface, and he looked at the boat which seemed so far away in the darkness, but in reality was only a few fathoms. Yet it was too far for him to make it again. It meant his death, his ending.

He tried to swim, but the exertion of the day had been too much. His efforts were weak and ill-directed, and he floundered weakly about, drifting farther away all the time.

The stroke oarsman called for another line. There was none except that of the drag. It would not do to haul it in. The boat was doing all she could now to keep herself afloat, and to risk her broadside in the sea might be fatal for all hands.

Miss Roberts begged some one to go to the officer's assistance. Smith seemed to hear and understand. He floundered with more vigor. There was not a man among the boat's crew who dared to go over the side in the night. There was nothing more to do but watch and hope that the second mate would finally make it. But he did not. He struggled on for many minutes. They could see him now and then fighting silently in the night. He still seemed to hold the old man with one hand.

"It is dreadful—can no one do anything for him?" begged Miss Roberts.

"I can't swim a stroke, lady," said the man at the steering oar.

No one volunteered to go. Smith slowly drifted off as the boat sagged back upon her drag. Then he disappeared entirely in the darkness.

“The brute—I didn’t think it was in him,” said Miss Billings, with feeling.

“Don’t talk that way,” said Miss Roberts. “Don’t talk that way of a man who did what he has done. I forgive him with all my heart——”

The morning dawned, and the sea rolled with less vigor. The boat was still able to keep herself clear. The white faces of the men told of the frantic endeavor. The women were now nearly all too exhausted to either care for anything or do anything. They lay listless upon the boat’s bottom, and she made better weather for that fact. By nine o’clock a steamer was heading for them; and within an hour they were safe aboard and bound in for New York. They arrived a few days later.

The chief mate’s boat had kept her course to the southward after leaving the berg—she had gone ahead of Smith’s. By midnight that night she was almost dead ahead of the second officer’s boat when Smith jumped in to save the old man.

Daylight showed Wylie a dark speck on the horizon; and at the same time he saw the smoke of the approaching steamer. He had made bad weather of it, also; but with more men and less women in his craft he had kept to the oars, and, when it was very bad, had run slowly before it for several hours. This had brought him from many miles in advance to but a few ahead of Smith’s boat; and he was rowing slowly ahead again by daylight. He sighted her, and noticed there were no oars; but he saw the man steering, and rightly guessed that they were hanging onto a drag.

Mr. Roberts, the nephew of Captain Brownson, sat close to the mate. He had relieved him several times during the night. Large and powerful, he was able to aid the chief mate very much.

"I think my sister is in that boat," he said as they sighted her.

"It looks like the second officer's boat, all right," said Wylie.

They rowed straight for her as the smoke of the steamer rose in the east. Before they came within a mile, they saw that the steamer would reach them before they could reach the boat. They then rowed slowly, and watched, waiting.

"Something right ahead, sir," called a man forward.

Roberts looked over the side. He saw something floating.

"Starboard, swing her over a little," he said to the chief mate.

Roberts leaned over the side. He was nervous at what he saw. It had the look of something he dreaded. Then the object came drifting along, and he reached for it. Long before he grasped it, he saw it was the form of a man holding to a cork jacket with one hand and the collar of a man's coat with the other.

The old fellow floated high, and Smith's hand was clenched with a death grip in his clothes. His left hand was jammed through the life jacket, and the fingers clutched the straps. His head lay face upward, and his teeth showed bared from his gums.

"Heavens! It's Smith himself!" exclaimed Roberts. He hauled him aboard with the help of a man.

"It's poor Smith, all right," said Wylie sadly. The life jacket told a tale too plainly. Wylie knew what had happened.

"It's just as well he didn't come ashore. He was guilty, all right," said Mr. Roberts. "A man who wrecks a liner and kills hundreds of passengers might just as well stay out here. Shall we leave him?"

"Not if I know it," said Wylie, with sudden heat.

Within fifteen minutes they were picked up by the steamer and were safe. The manager of the line welcomed Mr. Roberts gladly when that gentleman came to seek him.

"I'm sorry we didn't have you that voyage, Mr. Roberts," he said. "I don't like to say anything against a dead man; but, of course, Smith was on duty when she struck—that is all we know."

"And I suppose you'll want me to go into the other ship, now, sir?" asked the officer.

"Yes, you can report to Captain Wilson any time this week. How is your sister? Did she recover from the boat ride?"

"Well, in a way, but she's forever talking about that blamed second mate, Smith, who seemed to have a strange sort of influence over her while she was with him in the boat. He struck her, too, the dog! It's just as well he didn't come back," said Roberts.

"Well, she'll get over that all right. Smith was a rough sort of man; but as we knew him, he was

a first-class sailor, a splendid navigator; and no one seems able to explain how he ran the ship against an iceberg during daylight. It's one of those things we'll never find out. The truth, you know, is mighty hard to fathom in marine disasters. It must have been a terrible blow to Brownson to have to kill himself, unable to face the shame for a mate's offense—but Brownson was always a sensitive man, a splendid fellow; and I suppose he would not go in a boat after what Smith had done. Brownson was captain, and might come under some criticism. Some of the men say he shot himself after upbraiding Smith for his crime."

"Yes. My sister tells me they had quite heated words while the liner was sinking," said the new second mate.

And so William Smith passed out. His name was never mentioned in shipping circles without reserve. But there are still some men who remember him, who knew plain "Bill" Smith, the fighting second officer of the liner that went to her end that morning off the Grand Banks. And those who knew Smith always think of that cork jacket. They made no comment. They knew him. It is not necessary.

THE LIGHT AHEAD

RED light on starboard bow, sir," came the hail from forward. The man was Jenson, a "square-head" of more than usual intelligence and of keen eyesight.

"All right," said the mate softly, with no concern. He gazed steadily at a point two points off the starboard bow, picked up the night glass, and took a quick look. Then he left the pilot house where he had been, and walked athwartships on the bridge.

He was a young man. His eyes squinted a little under the strain of night work and showed the wrinkles at their corners. His hair was black and curly, and his bronzed face, strong-lined and handsome, was full of the strength and vigor of youth. He had gone to sea at fifteen. He was now twenty-five and a chief mate in a passenger ship, a first-class navigator, a good seaman. And the company liked him. He was a favorite, a young man rising in the best ships. Five feet eight in his white canvas shoes and white duck uniform, he looked short, for he was very stout of limb; a powerful man who had gained his strength by hard work in the fore-castle and upon the main deck of several windjam-

mers whose records in the Cape trade were well known to all shipping men.

It was the midwatch. Mr. James had been upon the bridge about half an hour only. It was the blackest part of the night, the time between one and two, in the latitude north of Hatteras. James rubbed his eyes once or twice, brushed his short mustache from his mouth with his fingers, and felt again for the night glass just within the pilot-house window, which was open.

“How does she head?” he asked the helmsman softly.

“West, two degrees north, sir,” said the quartermaster at the steam steering wheel.

James looked again, and, replacing the glass, walked to the bridge rail and stopped.

The point far ahead to starboard was showing plainly. It was the red light of some steamer whose hull was still below the horizon. Her funnel tops just showed like a black dot, darker than the surrounding gloom. Her masthead light was very bright, shining like a star of the first magnitude that had just risen from a clear sky. He knew she was a long way off. Not less than twelve miles separated the vessels. There was plenty of time for a change of course. He began to hum softly:

“When the lights you see ahead,
Port your helm and show your red——”

“Yes,” he muttered, “it’s a good old saw—poetry of the night. I wonder if *she* knows of the poetry of—of—the sea——”

His mind went back to the days ashore, the last days he had spent upon the beach with her.

“And I have worked up to this for you,” he had told her with all the feeling he could muster, the strong passion of a strong man asking for what he desired most. “I have worked up to this for you, just you.”

The words rang in his ears. The scene was there before him. The beautiful woman, the woman he loved more than his life. He could tell her no more than that—he had done all he had done just for her, just to be able to call her his own.

The dead monotony of the life before him hung like a black pall, heavy in the night. He saw all the lonely years he must face, all the hard life of the sailor, for she had simply laughed lightly, looked him squarely in the eyes—and shook her head.

“No,” she had said gently. “No, you mustn’t think of it—I mean it——” And he knew that what he had done was as nothing to her, nothing at all—what was a mate to a woman like that?

The steady vibration of the engines below made the steel rigging shake. The low drone of the side wash as the surf roared from the bows made a soft murmur where it reached his ears. It made him drowsy, dreamy, and sullen. He cared for nothing now. What was a mate, after all? Any corner groceryman was far better in the eyes of most women. Perhaps he had been mistaken. Perhaps the position he had ideals of was not much. Yes—that was it; he had been mistaken. And he gazed

steadily out into the dark future, and subconsciously he saw a long, dreary life of toil and trouble, without the woman he loved to relieve the dark solitude.

Before him rose the lights. The red was now well up and rising fast. It had been but a flickering spark at first, showing soon after the bright headlight had risen. It was upon the port side of that vessel's bridge and high above the sea. It was electric, for no ordinary oil burner would show so far with color. The ship must be a liner of size, and must be going fast. Suddenly he saw a flash of green. It was the starboard light of the approaching ship. Then for an instant both side lights shone brightly.

The vessel then was not crossing his bows, after all. The green was her starboard light, and that was the one she must show. It was all right then. He would not change the course. If she swung out, she must be coming almost head on now, for her red had shone but two points off the bow, and the converging courses must be drawing together.

All right then. If they crossed before the ships met it was well and good. There would probably be a mile or more to spare, and he was even now crossing her course, for he saw her green light, which showed him he was right ahead of her, and his rate of speed would take him over in a few moments. Then her green would be upon his right or starboard side, showing that she was passing astern of him. It was simple, plain as could be. He paid little or no attention any longer.

And then suddenly the green light faded and the

red shone again. It caused the officer to stop in his walk, which he had begun again to keep in action.

“Port your helm a little,” he ordered as he realized the positions.

“Aye, aye, sir—port it is, sir,” came the monotonous response from the pilot-house window; and the clanking of the steam gear sounded faintly upon his ears.

The giant liner swung slowly to starboard, swung just a little; and, as she did so, the loom of a monstrous figure rose right ahead in the night. The glare of the bright headlight shone close aboard. The red of her port light was a dangerous glare; and at a space to port flickered a moment the fatal green of the starboard side light, flickered, and then went out, shut off by the running board as the vessel swung across the bows of the ship, where the mate stood gazing at her.

“Hard aport,” he yelled savagely.

“Hard aport, sir,” came the response from the wheel, and the voice showed more or less concern now.

There was an instant of suspense, a moment of silence, and the two giant shapes came close with amazing speed. The liner swung to her port helm, and her bows pointed clear of the light ahead. But the speed was awful. Both going at twenty-five knots an hour, making the closing speed nearly a mile a minute, brought the giants too close to pass clear.

There was a hoarse cry from forward. The mate knew he was not going to clear, and the roar

of his siren tore the night's silence. Then the huge fabrics came in collision. There was a gigantic crash, a thundering shock, and a tearing, ripping sound as steel tore steel to ribbons.

The shock made the rigging sing like a giant harp under the strain, and the "ping" of parting steel lines sounded in accompaniment to the tumultuous crashing of wood and iron. The cries of men came faintly through the uproar from forward, and this was followed almost instantly by frantic shrieks from aft as the effect of the shock was felt by the women passengers.

The liner had failed to clear, and, swinging too late to port, had cut slantingly into the other ship's quarter and tore away the greater part of her stern. Tearing, grinding, ripping, and snapping, the huge shapes ground alongside for a few moments as their headway took them along without reducing speed. Too late the reversing engines, too late the telegraph for all speed astern. The ships had come in contact. The mate had run into another ship that had shown him her red light to starboard. There was no mistake about it. The cry of the seaman on watch had been heard by fifty persons.

"Red light on the starboard bow, sir——"

It rang in the officer's ears. It sounded above the terrible din of smashing steel and beams, and even above the roar of the sirens telling of the death wound that had been given a marine monster of twenty-five thousand tons register.

The awful feeling of responsibility paralyzed the mate. The terror of what he had done numbed

him; stunned him so that he stood there upon the bridge like a man asleep. Fifteen hundred human souls were sinking in that ship, which was now drifting off to port in the night with their cries sounding faintly through the blackness, even rising to be heard through the roar of the steam. He thought of it. It was ghastly. Fifteen hundred souls; and he knew how badly he had wounded the ship. He knew the terrific power of the blow he had delivered—shearing off the after part of that vessel and letting in the sea clear to the midship bulkhead. There was no chance for her to float. The wound was too deadly. It was as bad as though he had rammed her with a battleship's ram.

The half-dressed form of the captain rushed to him—his captain.

“What happened?” he whispered hoarsely. He seemed to be afraid to ask the question loudly. “Great Heaven, did you hit her?”

The mate stood gazing at the huge shadow, and his tongue refused to answer the question. Then the voice beside him seemed to gain its power. It roared out:

“Bulkheads, there—close them, quick!” And the automatic device, worked from the pilot house, was pulled savagely.

The captain rushed into the pilot house. The man at the wheel who had left it to throw the lever to close the bulkheads sprang back to his post.

“How'd you do it?” asked the master again, in a low voice full of passion and strained to the utmost. “How'd you strike—don't you know you killed at

least five hundred men? You murdering brute—you were asleep.” Then he raised his voice again, and bawled down through the tube to MacDougal, the chief engineer.

“How is she—quick—get the pumps going—collision—keep the firemen cool, and for God’s sake don’t let them panic—keep them at their posts until we see what’s up. We’ve run down the express steamer *Blue Star*, of the Royal Dutch Line——”

The master turned to the pilot house again and looked out of the window. His chief officer was still standing where he had left him.

“In Heaven’s name, Mr. James, what’s the matter with you to-night?” he broke out wildly, in passionate tones, almost sobbing. “It’s all hands—get ’em out quick!”

He was a strange creature standing there in his undershirt and drawers, with his long gray beard streaming down across his breast. The man at the wheel even looked at him for a moment, but did not smile. It was tragedy, not comedy.

“Is she full speed astern?” asked the master quickly.

“Yes, sir, full speed astern, sir,” said the man. His face was white, and his hands shook a little while he held the spokes of the wheel. There was death for many that night, and he knew it. It would be hard to tell who would survive in the rush that was sure to come if the ship went down. Yet his seamanship told him that much was to be hoped from the forward bulkhead. It would hold her up if it could stand the strain.

In two minutes there was a rush of hundreds of feet upon the decks below the flying bridge. The second officer came up half naked, dressed in shirt and trousers, without shoes or stockings. He was a powerful man and short, with a tremendous voice, a real Yankee bos'n voice; and he roared out orders for the men, who jumped to their stations automatically.

The captain came again to the bridge and took command. He yelled to the boat crews below, and strove to quiet the crowding passengers who pushed and fought about the boats in spite of the after guard and seamen.

"Get down there and wade into that mess, Wilson," said the master to the second officer; and he jumped down and went bawling through the press, pushing and pulling, striking here and there a refractory passenger who would insist upon trying to fill the small boats.

"There is no danger—no danger whatever," roared the captain again and again from the bridge. The petty officers took up the cry, and gradually the press about the starboard lifeboats grew less. The boats upon the port side had been all carried away or smashed to bits. Ten boats were left.

A man rushed up the bridge steps coming from aft.

"She's sinking, sir," he panted, pointing to the dim shadow of the rammed ship drifting astern. The steady roar of her siren told of the danger, and seemed to be a resonant cry for help.

The master gazed aft. Then he rushed to the

pilot-house window and took up the night glass hanging there. He looked hard at the ship now lying astern and riding with her bows high in the air. The man was right. She was rapidly going down. Ten minutes at the most would tell the whole story.

“Get the starboard boats out, Mr. James,” called the captain in an even tone, “and let no one but the crews in them. The first man who attempts to get in will be shot. Go to the vessel and bring back all you can—quick——”

But the form there had vanished before he had finished speaking. The chief officer had awakened at last from his stupor. His responsibility came back to him with a rush of feeling. But an instant before he had faced the end. He had decided to kill himself at once, and was just about to go to his room for his gun. He was too ashamed to face the ordeal, the ordeal of the officer who has run down a ship in a clear night. There had been literally no excuse for him. He could not plead ignorance of the laws; his license as officer made that impossible. He knew what to do when raising a light to starboard when that light was red. The rules were plainly written. Every common waterman knew them by heart. He had disobeyed them by some mischance, some mistake he could not exactly define; but he knew that under it all was that dull, sullen apathy from a wrong, or fancied wrong, that had caused him to be negligent.

He would not go upon the witness stand and say that, because a woman did not love him, he had allowed his ship to ram a liner with fifteen hundred

souls aboard her in a clear night. No! Death was a hundred, a thousand times better than such ignominy, such a miserable, cowardly sort of excuse. He would blow his brains out just as soon as he saw the finish, just as soon as he knew his vessel would float. Then came the captain's voice of command:

“Get out the starboard boats and save all you can——”

Yes, it was his duty; his above all others. He was at number one boat before the master had finished his orders.

Six good men were at their stations. The falls were run taut, the boat shoved clear, and down she went with a rush into the sea. Nine others followed within a minute, and ten boats pulled away into the darkness astern, where the roar of the siren still sounded loud and resonant—a wild, terrible cry of death and destruction.

James met a boat coming toward him before he reached the ship. She was full. Sixty-two men and women filled her, and she just floated, and that was all, her gunwales awash in the smooth sea. The swell lifted her, and she rose high above him, a dark object against the sky. Then she sank slowly down into the trough, and disappeared behind the hill of water that ran smoothly from the northeast in long, heaving seas.

The night was still fine, and the wind almost nothing at all. The banks of vapor rising in the east told of a change; but the change was not yet. James noticed the weather mechanically, as a good seaman does, from a small boat when at sea at

night; but he was thinking of the huge shadow which now drew close aboard.

As the boat came under the port side, he could see the passengers crowding the rail in the waist, where the lifeboats were being filled and sent away as fast as men could work them. Seven boats were alongside full of human beings. Two more were being lowered. Three came from under the stern as he drew alongside.

There was a mass of people still to be taken off. He saw at a glance that the liner had twenty large lifeboats for her complement. One was smashed. There was every reason to believe she would send out nineteen with at least a thousand people in them. There would be several hundred more to take besides these. The life rafts might do it, but he knew the danger of life rafts in the furious struggle in a sinking ship.

The thing would be to save the passengers with his own boats. This he might do if the ship floated long enough. She was sinking fast, as he could see by her rising bows. She was probably even now hanging solely by her midship bulkhead, and that would most likely be badly smashed by the collision, for he had struck the ship far enough forward to do it damage, although his vessel had only cut into her well aft. The blow had been slanting. A little more time, perhaps a few seconds, and the ships would have swung clear.

He came alongside and hailed the deck.

“Send them down lively—come along now, quick!” he called up in his natural voice. It was

the first time since the collision he had spoken. It sounded strange to hear his own tones coming natural again.

In a few moments he was crowding and seating the women and children in his boat. Then came the men from everywhere. They crowded down the falls, jumped into the sea, and swam alongside, begging to be hauled aboard, or climbed over the high gunwales themselves. One powerful young man, stripped to the waist, dived clean from the hurricane deck, and almost instantly rose alongside. Then he swung himself into the boat, and stood amidships hauling others in until the craft settled down to her bearings and the men at the oars could hardly row.

“Shove off—give way,” ordered James.

The boat started back slowly, the men rowing gingerly, poking and striking the passengers in the backs with the oars until the crowd settled itself. Then she went along slowly toward the ship, and the women in her prayed, the men swore, and the children wept and sobbed. And all the time the fact that he was the cause of it all impressed James queerly. He could not understand it, could not quite see why he had done it, and yet he knew he had. One man spoke to the athlete who had dived.

“They should burn a man who would sink a ship like this on a clear night; they should burn him to a stake—the drunken, cowardly scoundrel——”

And James sat there with the tiller ropes in his hand; sat silent, thoughtful, and knew in his heart the man had spoken the truth. If he could only be

sure of the passengers—he would not give them a chance to say anything more. His boat came alongside his own ship. The crowd above cheered him—they did not know—he was a hero to them, the first boat with the rescued. How quickly they would change that cheer when they learned the truth! He almost smiled. His set face, strong-lined, bronzed, and virile, turned away from the people in the boat. He gave orders in the usual tone. The passengers were quickly passed aboard. Then he started back for another load.

By this time the sides of his ship were crowded with boats. She was taking aboard over a thousand people, and the sea was still smooth.

The swell heaved higher as the small boat went back toward the sinking steamer. James noticed it. The sky to the eastward was dark with a bank of vapor. The air had the feeling of a northeaster. It was coming along, and there was plenty of time, for it would come slowly. The last of the passengers would be either sunk or aboard his own ship before the breeze rose to a dangerous extent.

The men rowed quickly. They were anxious. The horror of the whole thing had fallen upon them like a pall; but they strove mightily to do their share. James found his boat to be the last to reach the sinking ship.

The liner was well down now by the stern and her deck was awash aft. She rose higher and higher as he gazed at her, her decks slanting, sloping, and she rolled loggily in the growing swell. Her siren stopped. A dull, muffled roar from the

sea, a smothered explosion told of the end of the boilers. She would go in a moment. The passengers were clinging, grabbing to anything to hold on. The deck slanted so dangerously that many were slid off into the sea where they plunged, some silently and hopelessly, others screaming wildly with the terror of sudden death.

James watched them. He saw many die, saw many go to their end. Others swam; and he strove to pick them up, forgetting himself in the struggle.

He picked up sixteen in this manner, steering for them as they swam about in the night calling for help. The last one was a girl, a beautiful girl of twenty or less. He hauled her into the boat.

A sudden, wild yelling caused him to look. The sinking liner stood upon end, her forefoot clear of the sea. She swung loggily to and fro for a moment, settling as she did so. Then, with a rush, she plunged stern first to the bottom, the crash of her bursting decks as the air blew out being the last sound he heard.

The ship was very close to him. Her swing as she foundered brought her closer. The vortex sucked his boat toward her, drew the craft with a mighty pull. A spar, twisting, whirling in the swirl, struck the boat, and instantly she was a wreck, capsized, engulfed in the mighty hole the sinking liner made in the sea with her last plunge.

James found himself smothered, drowning, drawn downward by a great force he could not fight against. The whole ocean seemed to pull down upon him and crush him into its black depths.

The whole thing took such a small space of time, he hardly realized his position. The utter blackness, the salt water in his eyes and mouth, all paralyzed his mind for a few moments. Then he thought of his end. It was just as well. He was drowning, going to the bottom. He must soon go, anyhow; he could not face those wrecked passengers; and with the thought came a grim peacefulness, a satisfaction that the fight was all over. He could now rest at last.

But nature within him was very strong. He was a powerful man. When he gave up the struggle, his natural buoyancy lifted him to the surface of the sea. He came up, his head appearing in the air, and he breathed again in spite of himself. Then the old, old fighting spirit, the desire to survive which is so strong within the breast of every young animal, took charge. No, he would not go down yet. He must see the finish, the end of things in which he was concerned.

He swam about aimlessly. The swell heaved him high up, dropped him far down; and he noticed that now the sea was running, the small combers rising before a stiff breeze. These burst upon his face and head and smothered him a little. He turned his back to them, and swam on, on, and still on into the darkness.

He saw nothing. The ship, the boats had all gone. Once he was about to cry for help; but the thought was horrible, distasteful to the last degree. He had no right to call for help. He would not.

But he swam and tried to see something to get upon.

Something struck him heavily upon the head. Stars swam before his eyes. He reached upward with his hands, and they met a solid substance. Then he sank slowly down, down—and the blackness came upon him.

The object that had hit him was a small boat. In it were a man and a girl, the girl James himself had picked up from the sea a short time before. The man was a seaman, and he heard the boat strike. He reached over the side, caught the glimpse of a human form as it struck the boat's side and sank.

The seaman took up the boat hook and was about to poke the body away. He was sick of dead men, sick of seeing corpses floating about. He had met half a dozen already that night. But this one seemed to move, and the hook caught in his clothes. He pulled the body up, and saw the man was not dead, but dazed, moving feebly in a drunken way. Then he pulled James into the boat.

James regained his senses after half an hour; and during that time the boat ran before a stiff squall of wind and rain that swept it along before it into the darkness. The seaman steered with an oar, and kept the boat's head before the wind. The mate opened his eyes, and in the gray of the early dawn he saw a man he did not know, a seaman from the sunken liner, steering the boat calmly before the gale that was now coming fast with the rising sun. Near him in the bottom of the boat lay the girl hud-

dled up and moaning with cold and fright, and fatigue.

James arose and staggered aft.

"How'd I get here?" he asked.

"I pulled you in, sir," said the sailor. "Are you from the ship that sank us?"

"Yes. I'm the mate, the chief officer."

"Well, if I'd 'a' know'd it, I mightn't have taken the trouble," said the seaman.

James said nothing. There was nothing for him to say. He knew the sailor was right. He knew the officers of his ship were men to scorn, to hate—but he would not say it was himself alone who had done the terrible deed. Something stopped him. It might have been sheer shame—or fear. He looked at the girl. Then he went to her and raised her, placing her upon a seat and trying to cheer her up.

"We'll be picked up soon—don't worry about it. Our ship will stand by and hunt for all the missing——"

"But I'm dreadfully cold," said the girl, with chattering teeth.

"Put my coat on, then," said James; and he took off his soaked coat and made her put it on.

The man grinned in derision.

"Say," he said, "who was on watch when you hit us?"

James took no notice. He would not answer the question. Then the girl spoke up.

"Yes, whose fault was it? You belong to the other ship, you'll know all about it. They ought to hang the man who is responsible for this awful

thing—my poor mother and father—oh——” And she broke into a sob.

The man at the steering oar smiled grimly.

“Yes, miss, that’s right, they sure ought to hang the officer who runs down a liner on a clear night when he’s bound to see the lights plainly. I don’t make no excuses for him—it’s more’n murder.”

“You were on watch, on duty—you are dressed?” said the girl.

“Yes, I knowed it when I first seen you,” snarled the seaman. “I reckon you’re the man who did it—what was the matter? Couldn’t you keep awake, or what?” The tone was a sneer, an insult, yet the sailor did wish to find out how so unusual a thing could happen as the running down of a ship on a clear night when her lights could be seen fifteen miles or more.

James tried to defend himself. It was instinctive. The contempt of the sailor was too much. On other occasions, he never allowed the slightest insolence from the men of his own vessel. But now the officer was numb, paralyzed. He was guilty—and he knew it.

For hours they sat now in silence, the seaman holding the boat steady before the northeaster, which grew in power until by nine in the morning it was blowing a furious gale, and the sea was running strongly with sweeping combers. There was nothing to do but keep the boat before it. To try to head any other way meant to risk her filling from a bursting sea. The exertion of steering was great. The seaman, with set face, held onto the oar, and

James could see the sweat start under the constant strain, but he said nothing—he waited.

“You’ll have to take her, sir—a while—I’m getting played out,” panted the man.

“All right,” said James, “give her to me—now——”

He took the oar during the backward slant as she dropped down the side of the sea that passed under her. He was ready for the rush as she rose and shot forward again upon the breaking crest of the following hill. The exercise did him good. It made him think clearly, it took his mind from the hopelessness of his life.

All that day the two men took turns keeping the small boat before the sea; and they ran to the southward a full half hundred miles before the gale let up. Both were too exhausted to talk, too thirsty to even speak—and there was neither water nor food in the boat. Her ration of biscuit and water had been lost when she had been drawn down by the sinking liner.

The sailor had righted the boat after great effort, aided by the sea; and owing to the smoothness of the swell at the time he had managed to get her clear of water. Then he had picked up the girl who had been floating about, swimming and holding onto fragments of wreckage since James’ boat had gone under.

The mate noticed that, although the girl had not spoken to him again after knowing he had caused the disaster, she still wore his coat. He studied the matter, the inconsistency of women, and he thought

it strange. The sun shone for a moment before it set that evening; and in the glowing light James gazed steadily at the woman. She was very beautiful. She had not made a complaint since the morning. The sea was still running high, although the wind was going down with the sun, yet the girl had not been seasick, nor had she shown any suffering.

"How do you feel now?" he whispered, as he waited his turn at the oar.

"I'm all right, thank you. Do you think we will get picked up?" she said.

"We'll be picked up to-morrow—sure," said the officer. "We are now right in the track of the West India ships, and will sight something by daylight when we can set a signal. Are you very thirsty?"

"Tell me first, how did this accident occur? Were you really asleep, or just what? I can stand the thirst, and I'm warm enough now. This water is like milk in comparison with the air, it's so warm."

"We are in the Stream," said James; "the Gulf Stream, and that is about eighty along here—it's better than freezing in the high latitudes."

"You haven't answered my question," said the girl.

"I don't know—I don't remember what it was. I must have lost my head—been asleep—or something—yes, I was on duty, on watch—it was my fault entirely. I saw your ship, saw her red light to starboard—the right, you know. She had the right of way under the rules. I intended to swing off, waited a few minutes to see her better—then her green

light showed—and—then it was too late. I went hard aport, did my best—but hit her—we were going very fast—both ships were going twenty-five knots—making the approaching speed fifty miles an hour—nearly a mile a minute—I must have lost my head just a moment—maybe I was dreaming——”

“I know you are not to blame,” said the girl, placing her hand in his. “You have told me the truth, a straight story—but yet I don’t see how it all happened. I’m not a sailor, anyhow; perhaps I couldn’t understand. But I feel you didn’t do it on purpose——”

“No, no,” whispered James. “How could a man do a thing like that on purpose?” He could not tell her the truth. He was ashamed to mention a woman, to say he was sullen, depressed, stupefied at the loss of a love he bore a woman.

He took his place at the oar for the last time that night. The sea was no longer dangerous. They spoke of rigging a drag with the oar and thwarts, making a drag by the aid of the painter or line, which still was fast to her forward. They had finished this before dark, and then they lay down, exhausted. The girl stood watch. In the dim dawn the girl gave out. She had stood watch all night, and she was exhausted.

“I understand,” she muttered to herself, “this poor fellow, this officer was tired out—he slept—I don’t blame him at all, it was not his fault.”

The sun shone upon the three sleeping, the boat riding safely and dry to the drag made of the oar

and thwarts. James aroused himself first, awakening dimly with the warmth of the sun. He sat up. The two others slept on. The girl was breathing loudly, almost panting, and her parted lips were blue. Yet she was beautiful. James knew it. She was exhausted, and help must come soon for her.

He sat and gazed at the horizon, and when the sea lifted the boat, he stared hard all around to see if anything showed above the rim. Hours passed in this fashion. The girl moaned in her sleep. The sailor shifted uneasily, and grunted, snored, and murmured incoherently. They were all very thirsty.

It was about ten o'clock in the morning that James saw something to the northward. It was just a speck, just a tiny dot on the rim of sea; but he knew it was a ship of some kind, a vessel passing. The minutes dragged, and he was about to rouse the sailor to get him to help watch. Then he remembered how the fellow had striven so manfully the day before when they rode out the gale. No, he would let them sleep.

By noon, the vessel was close aboard and coming slowly with the wind upon her port beam. She was a schooner bound south. James could see the lumber on her decks. Her three masts swung to and fro in the swell, and she made bad weather of the sluggish sea. The foam showed white under her forefoot, and told of the speed being at least a few knots an hour. James called the sailor.

"Get up—turn out—there's a schooner alongside," he said. The man moved slightly, and slept on. James shook him roughly.

"Lemme alone," muttered the seaman.

"Ship ahoy!" yelled the mate as the schooner came within a quarter of a mile and headed almost straight for them. He stood up and waved his arms. Nothing came of it. The girl awoke. She sat up and realized the position. In a moment she had taken off her skirt and handed it to the mate. He waved it wildly; and his yelling finally awoke the exhausted seaman. The man stood up and bawled loudly. Then he washed his mouth with salt water, and yelled again and again. James swung the skirt. The girl prayed audibly.

The schooner stood right along on her course. She had not noticed the boat. Passing a few hundred fathoms from them caused all three to become frantic. The men bawled, cursed, and begged the schooner to take them in.

The captain of the vessel, coming on deck, happened to look in their direction. He spoke to the man at the wheel, who for the first time seemed to take his eyes from the compass card. Then, taking his glass, the captain saw that three living souls were in the small boat. The next instant he was bawling orders, and the schooner hauled her wind and came slatting into the breeze.

Six men appeared on her deck. James saw them working to get the small boat clear from her stern davits. Then they seemed to realize that this was unnecessary, and the schooner, flattening in her sheets, worked up to them slowly, rising and falling into the high swell. She stood across to wind-

ward, and then came about, easing off her sheets and drifting slowly down upon the boat.

She drew close aboard.

"Catch a line," yelled the captain from her deck.

James waved his hand in reply, and a heaving line flaked out and fell across the boat's gunwales.

In another moment they were being hauled aboard.

Explanations came at once. The master of the schooner was bound for South America.

"Of course, I'll put you all aboard the first home-ward-bound ship I fall in with," said he.

"But you surely will put us ashore at once," said the girl, after she had drunk tea and changed her clothes. They were eating gingerly of ship's food and drinking water ravenously.

"That I cannot do, miss," said the captain. "I'm bound to Valparaiso with cargo, and I must take it there."

"But we will pay you to take us ashore—pay you anything, for I am very rich," said the girl.

The master smiled sadly. The effects of the forty hours in the open boat were evidently having their effect upon the young woman.

"No," he said, "you go below, and the steward will give you all you want to eat, and your clothes will be dry enough to put on again before night. We might fall in with a ship bound north any time now. Then you'll have a chance."

James knew the man was within his rights, of course. He was glad to be in the schooner. The sailor didn't seem to mind where he went. One

ship was very much like another to him. The consul would be bound to ship him home, anyway. The girl was given a stateroom in the after cabin; and she soon slept the sleep of the exhausted.

The mate stayed on deck. The whole thing had a strange look to him. He had decided to kill himself. He dared not go back to the States, anyhow, to face the charges that would be made against him. He might slip overboard any night on the run down, and no one would be the wiser.

The fact that the schooner was bound to South America seemed to give him a respite. There was no hurry to commit the desperate act that he felt he must, in all honor and decency, do. He might live a month at least before dying.

After the awful struggle through the gale and shipwreck, he felt a desire to live more than before. The whole affair was more distant, almost effaced. And now he was not going back, anyhow.

The captain asked him few questions regarding his wreck, seeming to feel a certain delicacy about it. The day passed, and the next and the next, and no ship was sighted going north. They were now drawing out of the track of vessels, and a strange hope arose with the mate that they would not meet one.

The girl sat with him often, and they talked of other things than shipwreck. She was beautiful—there was no question about it. The glow of returning strength made her more lovely. James found himself wondering at her. She had been the only human being so far that would condescend to

speak to him without contempt. He was lonely, very lonely, and the girl seemed to feel he needed some one to cheer him up. She did not realize his weakness. He was very strong to her; a strong man who had suffered from an accident, due, perhaps, to his carelessness, but not to criminal negligence. But he knew, he knew, and could not tell.

The days passed, and the terror of the thing he had in his mind began to fade slightly. He knew he must die. The sailor, his shipmate who had been picked up with him, had told every one in the schooner that he, James, was on watch and was responsible for a terrible disaster, the death of a great number of persons. James saw it in their looks. He knew he would never get a ship again, never hold a place among white men. Yes, he must die.

It gave him a sort of grim satisfaction to feel that he was just to live a certain length of time, that he would cut that short at the last moment. He wondered how a prisoner felt when the sentence of death was pronounced upon him. He had pronounced it upon himself. It was a genuine relief, for the vision of those terror-stricken, drowning passengers was always with him night and day, except when he was in a dreamless sleep. That sleep seemed to be portentous of what he would face.

The days turned to weeks and the weeks to months. The voyage was long and the winds light. They were ninety days to the latitude of the Falklands when they struck a furious "williwaw" from the hills of Patagonia. The schooner was in a bad

fix. She was lightly manned; and, in spite of the addition of James and the seaman from the wreck, she held her canvas too long.

The struggle was short but terrific. The foretop-sail blew away and saved the mast; but the main held, and the topmast buckled and finally went by the board. The headsails had been lowered, but they blew out from the gaskets, and the jibboom snapped short off under the tremendous threshing of flying canvas. The maintopmast, hanging by the backstays, fell across the triatic stay, and the steel of the backstays cut into the spring until it finally parted under the jerks, and the mizzen was left to stand alone. It went by the board, and the great mast, snapping short at the partners, went over the side, and smashed and banged there at each heave of the ship.

There was desperate work to do to save the vessel. Her master did wonders and showed his skill; but the most dangerous and deadly task of going to leeward to cut adrift the lanyards was left to James. No one else would go.

James was a powerful man, and had won his way to an officer's berth by endeavor, not by nepotism. His hope was that he might be killed in the struggle. He dared anything, tried to do the impossible—and did it. How he succeeded in clearing away the wreck of that mast remains a mystery to those who watched him. He was almost dead when dragged back and the schooner floated clear.

The girl had seen the whole affair from the glass of the companionway. She had held her breath,

almost fainted again and again at the sight of James in that fight for life. To her it was simply grand, tremendous—she had never been touched by a man's heroism before.

When it was all over and the schooner, dismantled and storm-driven, lay riding down the giant seas that swept around the Horn in the Pacific Antarctic Drift, she watched over and attended the officer as he lay in his bunk with a broken arm, a cut across the head, and the toes of one foot gone. She knew that there was something behind the will to do as James had done. But she could not fathom it, could not tell why he was unresponsive. He lay silent mostly, and seldom looked at her. Yet he was sane in his conversation, not delirious in any way. It worried her. It caused that peculiar thing that is in every woman to make the man she admires responsive. And the more she showed her feelings, the less he seemed to care. It ended the way it usually does under such conditions. She fairly worshiped him.

After that storm the weather grew very calm. The dark ocean seemed to be at rest for a spell. The schooner was now to the south'ard of the Falklands, and the captain decided that he would not venture around the Horn in the desperate condition he was in. Stanley Harbor was under his lee, and he bore away for it. Then, with the perversity of the southern zone, the wind hauled to the eastward and blew steadily for a week; blew right in their faces.

James came on deck before they were within a

hundred miles of the land. He sat about in the cold of the evening wrapped up in rugs, and the girl waited upon him, brought him anything he wished. In the long hours of daylight—for it was light enough to read until midnight—they sat near the taffrail. The captain said nothing; he would not notice. He liked the man who had saved his ship. The girl was sympathetic, and James often held her hand. She did not attempt to withdraw it.

But he would not tell her he cared for her. That was absurd. He had already sacrificed his life. He was as good as dead. Yet he wondered at the passion that had brought him into such desperate trouble and had caused so much ruin and death. He pondered silently, and now often watched the girl furtively.

Into the beautiful harbor, the great fiord of Port Stanley, they came, the schooner making fairly good way in spite of her crippled condition. Her arrival was greeted with joyous acclaim by the land sharks, who smelled the wound and saw the damage. They would make a good haul. Ships didn't come often—but when they did, well, they paid.

The governor was notified of the arrival. He was told everything but the relation of the passengers to the ships to which they originally belonged. The master was generous; and, besides, it was not America they were now in. It was an outlying foreign colony at the edge of the world, a place where one seldom went or heard from. They might go ashore if they wished. The seaman asked

to remain aboard. He was allowed to do so, and consequently did not go ashore and talk too much.

James passed that last night in high spirits. He was going out on his last voyage. He was going to die, going to leave the woman who he knew loved him, who had been so sympathetic, so lovable. They were on deck a long time that evening, and the captain, being wise and old enough to understand, did not molest them.

“Good night,” she said finally. “Good night. I’ll see you to-morrow before we go ashore. We can take the ship across to the straits, and meet the regular liner as she comes through from Punta Arenas. We’ll be home again in a few weeks.”

“Good-by,” he said simply. That was all. She went below.

Shortly after four bells—two o’clock in the morning—James, with set face and grim resolution, stole on deck. He gazed up at the Southern Cross for a few moments, at the beautiful constellation that he would see for the last time; then at the grim, barren hills back of the settlement.

It was a farewell look, his farewell to things in this world. He was determined not to be disgraced. He would die like a man, as he could no longer live like one.

Then he dropped softly over the side, and sank down—down into the quiet waters of Stanley Harbor.

The instinct of woman is often more certain than her reason. The girl had noticed something strange

in the man's behavior. She had woman's instinct to divine its cause. She had not gone to bed that night, but waited to see just what might happen to the man who owned her very soul. She had not realized before that she loved this officer, this man who had confessed partly to his disgrace. The realization awakened her wits. She would see what he meant.

At the slight splash, she was on deck in an instant. Her first thought was to call for help. Then she knew to do so was to call for an explanation; and she realized the disgrace that would follow instantly upon the explanation. She seized a life buoy always hanging upon the taffrail, and with it dropped over the side.

She swam silently toward a spot that showed disturbed water rapidly drifting astern with the tide. Within a minute she had reached the form of James, who had not placed enough weights in his clothes to insure quick sinking. He was lying silently upon his back, waiting—waiting for the end that must come shortly.

“Swim with me,” she pleaded. “You must—come with me—we'll swim ashore together.”

Before the morning dawned, the pair were upon the beach, several miles distant from the schooner. James saw he was doomed to life. He could not even die. Then the beauty of the woman, the sympathy, the love he could not deny, had its way with him, and they decided to vanish into the country, to disappear together.

This might or might not have been hard to do in

the islands where every one is well known. But it happened that Captain Black, of the whaling station situated near the entrance of the fiord, was on deck that morning. He saw an amazing thing, a woman and a man swimming together, and finally making the land near the point.

Calling a couple of men, he started for them in his whaleboat, and caught up with them before they had gone more than a few fathoms from the shore. They were chilled through, cold and exhausted. He took them aboard the whaling steamer, and soon saw that he had a seaman of parts in Mr. James. Men were hard to get. All of his crews were convicts or ticket-of-leave men; and the addition of a man even with a wife was something to be taken advantage of.

He took James aside and asked him a few questions. He was satisfied that he would not get into trouble by giving the officer a billet; and he forthwith made him one of the company in charge of a small boat. The affair would be kept secret, and the governor would be told nothing. He probably would not ask too many questions, anyhow.

"I shall ship you both to the north'ard station, fifty miles up the coast. You can have a shack there—plenty of peat for fires and good grub—I'll inspect you once a month. Johnson will be in charge of the station. You can take this letter to him. Your wife can go with you if you wish."

James looked at the girl. She nodded her head.

"Is there a priest about here?" asked James.

"Yes. Why?" asked Black.

“Well, if you’ll kindly send for him, he can marry us before we start.”

Back of the northward station, on the ramp that rises sheer back from the beach like a table-land, there are a few cottages. These are occupied by the crews of the whaling station and their families. In one of them is a handsome woman with two little tots—happy-faced and smiling she is. But she seems a bit out of place in her surroundings. Mrs. James Smith they call her, and she is apparently very happy, very happy indeed, in spite of it all.

James Smith is the best gun pointer in the fleet, the best harpooner with the gun-firing harpoon. He is a sober, quiet, steady man, who has nothing now of the ship’s officer about him. He never talks of wrecks. If some one starts a conversation regarding them—and they are much hoped for in the Falklands—he goes away.

Sometimes in Jack’s saloon down at Stanley, he has been known to sit and stare out over the dark ocean, to sit and often mutter:

“Was it right, after all—was it worth while—was it?”

But he is a sober, quiet, industrious man, who goes about his duties without enthusiasm, without effort.

THE WRECK OF THE "RATH- BONE"

EIGHT bells, sir," came the voice from without, following the *rap, rap* upon the door of my room. I had just five minutes to dress myself and get out, and I rolled over, listening to the sounds on deck. As I had only taken off my sea boots, I was in no hurry to turn to. My sou'-wester hung upon a peg, but my oilskin jacket was still buttoned up close about my neck, where it had been during my sleep; and the oilskin trousers scraped noisily as I slid my legs to the edge of the bunk.

I had slept three hours and forty minutes, and must go out and relieve Slade, the second mate, who had, in turn, relieved me at the end of the mid-watch. It was now just five minutes of four in the morning, a cold, snowy nor'easter blowing, and the brig running wildly into the thick of it.

We had cleared from New York for Rio, and were trying to run out into the warm Gulf Stream before the gale overblew us and forced us to heave to, to ride it down. January at sea on the coast was hard, indeed.

I swore at the hard luck, for my sleep had seemed

just an instant, just a second's unconsciousness, and I was stiff and soaked with sea water; so cold that I had to keep on my oilskins to sleep at all. I had finally steamed my body, incased as it was, into some sort of warmth, and the first movement sent the chills running down my spine. I threw off my blankets and stood shivering, trying to jam my feet into the wet boots as the bells struck off, and I was due on deck.

Slade stood with his shoulders hunched to his ears at the break of the poop, holding to the rail to steady himself as the brig plunged and tore along under a reefed fore-topsail and close-reefed spanker, with the wind abaft the beam. The gray light of the winter morning had not come yet, and the snow beat upon my face, as if some invisible hand hurled it from the utter blackness to windward.

The dull, snoring roar of the wind under the feet of the topsail told of the increasing velocity of the squalls; and the quick, live jerk of the ship as she went rushing along the crest of a roller for an instant, and then slid along the weather side, dropping stern foremost into the trough, with a heave to windward, indicated that we were doing all we could.

"Southeast b'south!" yelled Slade into my ear. "You'll have to watch her."

I knew what he meant. She was steering hard, and might broach to in any careless moment.

"Call the old man if there's any change," he added, and stumbled down the poop steps to the main deck, where the watch were huddled under the

lee of the deck house. Then he disappeared aft, and the night swallowed him up.

I made my way to the wheel. Bill, a strong West Indian negro, was holding her steady enough, meeting her as she came to and swung off. He was assisted by Jones, a sturdy little fellow with a big shock head. I could just make out their faces in the light from the binnacle, which burned, for a wonder, in spite of the gale. It generally blew out in spite of all we could do to keep the lamps lit. Beyond was a hopeless blackness.

I went to the weather rail and tried to see to windward. A fleeting glimpse of a white comber caught my gaze close aboard; but beyond a few fathoms I could see nothing at all. Aft under the stern the torrent of dead water boiled and roared, showing a sickly flare from the phosphorus. We were going some, probably twelve or fifteen knots an hour; and right ahead was nothing—that is, nothing we could see; just a black wall of darkness.

Vainly I tried to make out the light of the coming morning; but the snow squalls shut off everything. Pete, sharp-eyed fellow of my watch, was on lookout on the forecastle head. I knew Pete's eyes were the best ever, but he could see nothing in that wild gale of snow and sleet and inky darkness. I went to the break of the poop again, and hailed the deck below.

"Keep a sharp lookout ahead, there," I said, bawling the words out to reach through the storm. Then I stood waiting, for there was nothing else to do.

Two bells came—five o'clock—and the watch re-

ported all well and the lights burning brightly. Our starboard and port—green and red—lights were none too bright at any time, yet they were well within the law, and had served the ship for five years or more.

I answered the hail, and stood trying again to see something over the black hills of water that were rushing to the southwest under the pressure of the gale. Something made me very nervous. I began to shiver, and the snow struck my face and melted enough to run down my neck, making me miserable, indeed. I still stood gazing right ahead into the night, hoping for the dawn which was now due in another hour, when I heard a yell from the forecastle head.

"Light dead ahead, sir," came the hail.

I looked and saw nothing, but took Pete's word for it.

"Keep her off all she'll go," I roared to the wheel.

And just as I felt her swing her stern to the following sea, I saw close to us the green light of a steamer, and above it her masthead light. Then the thing happened.

A wild cry from forward, followed by the loom of a gigantic object in the gloom ahead. We were upon the vessel in a moment.

A tremendous crash, grinding, tearing, splintering. The brig staggered, seemed to stop suddenly, and then the deep, roaring note of the gale smothered the rest.

We struck, fairly head on, swung to, glanced along the ship's side, and were lying dismasted in

the trough of the sea, our foremast over the side, and nothing but the lower main mast standing. The seas tore over us, and we lay like a log, while the shadow of the steamer passed slowly astern.

The old man was on deck before I knew just what had happened. So also was Slade. The smashing and grinding of the wreckage alongside told of the spars; but we were too stunned to think of them.

Was the hull split open with that furious impact? That was the thought in our minds. Ours was a wooden vessel—little, light, and very strong. Did we ram our plank ends in? If so, we were lost men, all of us.

It was fully a half minute before we spoke of it. We knew just what to do, but we were stunned for a few moments. Then we made for the main deck, and tried the pumps. The water was coming in lively.

"All hands on the pumps!" came the skipper's order; and we manned the brakes with the feeling that it was just a respite, just a little time to lose. The men took to them with a will, however; but I had a sinking feeling in the pit of my stomach, and I worked half-heartedly for a few minutes, until I brought myself around with a jerk. I was mate. I had the responsibility. And more than that—it had happened in my watch on deck. I was the one who must do the most.

"Come along, bullies—get a couple of axes!" I roared, and made my way to the weather fore channels, where the rigging of the topmast and lower

mast held the wreckage alongside, being drawn taut, as it were, across the deck, the spars to leeward, and banging and pounding against the ship with each surge. "Get into those lanyards!" and they chopped away in the gray light of the morning, cutting everything they could, and clearing the weather rigging of the strain.

The wreckage now hung by the lee rigging, and drifted farther aft. The wheel was lashed hard down, and a bit of spanker raised again upon the mainmast, the halyards still being intact, although the boom had been broken by the shock. We soon had canvas on her aft, and she headed the sea, dropping back from the wreckage to a mooring hawser bent to the standing rigging of the foremast. We got a lashing to the foot of the mast, and she dragged the mass broadside, making a lee of it, and riding easily to the heavy seas, which now took her almost dead on her bows.

When I had a chance to look about me again, the light of the morning had grown to its full height, and we were able to see around us.

The gray light made things look almost hopeless for us. The pumps worked full stroke, and the water gained rapidly on us. There had been three feet made during the first half hour. We were settling, and the brig was riding more heavily, taking the seas over her head with a smothered feeling that told of what was coming.

I had a chance to breathe again, and I looked out over the gray ocean, where the white combers rolled and the heavy clouds swept along close to their tops.

A large, black object showed to the westward of us, and we recognized her as a steamer. She was very low in the water, and upon her rigging floated the signal, "*We are sinking.*" She was the one we had run down.

The old man stood gazing at her as I came on the poop. He was trying to make her out; and this he did finally, when the wind stretched her flag in a direction so that we could see it plainly. She was one of the Havana steamers bound up from Cuba, and was about five thousand tons. Her number was that of the *William Rathbone*.

"No better fix than we are," snarled the skipper. "What was the matter? Didn't you see him? He's big enough."

"Too dark," I said. "You know what kind of a night it was—look at it now. We might do something if we were sure of floating ourselves—no boat would live in this sea five minutes; but it'll smooth out, maybe——"

"Maybe blow a hurricane!" howled the old man, his voice rising above the gale. "Get the boats ready, anyhow—get the steward to put all the grub he can get in them—too bad, too bad," he went on.

While Slade helped to get the boats ready for leaving the brig, I went to the bow and tried to see just what damage we had done ourselves. It was dangerous work, as the seas came over in solid masses, and more than once I came near getting washed overboard. Splintered plank ends, a crushed stem showed through the wreck of the bowsprit, which still hung by the bobstays and shrouds,

jammed foul of the catheads, so that only the end swung, and struck us a blow now and then. It was a hopeless mess.

A great sea rose ahead, with its crest lifting for a break, and I ducked behind the windlass, holding on with both hands. The solid water swept over the bows, and I was almost drowned; but I held on. There was nothing I could do forward, and no men could work there. The steady grind of the pumps took the place of desperate rushing about the decks. The men stood in water to their knees as the seas swept her, but they still kept it up. As fast as one man gave out another took his place, regardless of watch; and the waiting ones chafed under the shelter of the mainmast.

The boats were on booms over the forward house, where the seas could not wash them away; and Slade had them all ready to leave, although it was a study how to get them overboard in that sea with nothing forward to raise them with. The mainstay still held, and the mainmast was strong enough; but there was nothing forward at all above them. I went aft and waited.

Old Captain Gantline was still standing at the poop rail watching the steamer. Our drift was about equal to hers, and we sagged off to leeward together, keeping about a mile apart. The steamer was settling.

"Of course, he ought to have gone clear of us!" howled the old man as I came up. "I don't blame you, Mr. Garnett; I don't blame you—but you certainly swung us off at the last minute when you

knew the law was to hold your course, and let him get out of our way."

"But he was dead ahead, sir. I saw his lights right aboard. To luff meant to come to in that sea, and that would have been just as bad, for he'd have struck us aft—probably cut us in two."

I really had done nothing out of the way. The steamer had not seen us, that was certain. I was supposed, under the law, to hold on until the last moment, and I had done so. I had only swung her off a little; tried to clear when I saw he would not. I knew the law well enough, and had followed it up to the moment of striking. Our swing off had made our bows fetch up against the steamer, and had probably caused him serious damage. But it had saved us from being cut down by her sharp steel stem, which would have gone through our wooden side as if through butter.

No, I did not feel guilty; although there were evidently some hundred passengers and crew of that ship in dire peril and sore put to it. The old man knew I had done the best thing I could for us, and there was no possible way of avoiding a collision in a wild, thick night like the last when the ships were invisible but a few fathoms distant.

We waited, and the brig settled slowly, while the wind still held from the northeast, and the sea still ran strong and high. There was apparently no chance for launching a small boat. The scud flew fast and the gray wind-swept ocean looked ugly enough, the surface covered with white. The steamer was slowly sinking, like ourselves, and

it was only a question whether either would go through the day or not. I hoped that it would not come in the night. There's something peculiarly nerve-racking in wild night work in a sinking ship. The very absence of light lends terror to the already awful situation, and the wild rush of the wind and seas makes chaos of the blackness about.

The day dragged slowly. It was like waiting for the end of the world. The vessels drifted apart but another mile or two, and we were still close enough to exchange signals. We had long ago run ours up, telling that the same state of affairs existed aboard the brig. If some passing coasting steamer came along, all might still be well with the passengers and crews of both of us. But not a sign of anything showed above the horizon.

At five o'clock—two bells—that evening, the brig was well down in the water; and she was taking the seas nastily over her. The main deck was all but impossible to remain upon, and the men at the pumps had to lash themselves to keep there. It would be only a question of a few hours now. The drawn faces told of the strain. Slade, the second mate, came to me.

"All over but the shouting," he said. "How'll we ever get them boats clear in this sea?"

"Better start now before it's too late," I said, and went to the old man for orders.

"All right, get them over," said the old man, in answer to my question; and we started on the last piece of work we were to do in that brig.

Bill, the West Indian negro; Wilson; Peter, the

Dutchman; and Jones were to row; and, with myself at the steering oar in command, made the working crew. Besides these men we had three others, making eight men all told for our boat. Slade went with the old man, dividing the little crew up evenly.

We had a good crew. Long training in that little ship had made them good men. But for their steadiness we would never have got those boats clear. It was desperate work getting them over the side without smashing them. With a tackle upon the main, however, we managed to lift them clear and let them swing aft, lifting and guying them out by hand. Then we dropped them over the quarter, and let them tow astern to the end of a long line, and they rode free, being lighter than the ship and pulling dead to leeward.

I was the first to leave, as became my place. The old man, as captain, must be the last. I hauled the boat up, and we climbed in, jumping the now short distance as she took the seas and rose close to the taffrail. The brig was very low, and settling fast.

"Go to the steamer first," said the old man; "then head westerly until you get picked up or get ashore. We are not more than one hundred and fifty miles off—good-by."

I dropped over, and the line was cast off, letting the boat drift slowly back, but still heading the sea so that she rode almost dry, in spite of the combers.

The *Rathbone* was in view about three miles distant, and by the weight upon the four oars we held her so that she drifted off bodily in that direction, while still heading well up to the wind. There was

plenty of light left yet, but there was a night coming, and I hoped we would get a chance to board the big vessel before it was black dark. Perhaps she was not so dangerously hurt as she looked.

I saw the old man's boat come away and take the general direction of our own; but the seas were too high to see her often. She was evidently making good weather of it, and I thanked the lucky stars that we had whaleboats for our business, and not the tin things they use for lifeboats in steamers.

By keeping the boat's head quartering to the wind and sea, she drifted bodily off toward the *Rathbone*, and before dark we drew close aboard.

There was much action taking place on her decks as we came close enough to see. Passengers ran about, and forms of seamen dashed fore and aft. It was evident that they were hurrying for some purpose, and that purpose showed as we noted the list to starboard the ship had. She was very low forward, and seemed to be ready to take the final plunge any moment.

Our boat had been pretty badly smashed getting her overboard, and she was leaking badly from the started seams. In that strong, rolling sea she had all she could do with the crew in her; and I fervently hoped that I would not be called upon to take passengers. Four rowing and three for relief was all right, but a dozen more would swamp her.

We came close under the *Rathbone's* lee. She lay broadside to the sea, and her high stern, raised as it were by her sinking head, shut off the sweep of the combers.

"Steady your oars," I commanded, as we came within a few fathoms. A man in uniform rushed to the ship's rail and hailed us through a megaphone. He was followed by several passengers.

"Can you come aboard and help us?" he bawled. "We're sinking—all the boats gone to starboard—captain killed and chief mate knocked on the head by wreckage."

"Men have refused duty," howled a man standing near him. "Mutiny aboard, and we're going down—come aboard and help us."

While they hailed, I noticed the boats to port going over the side. One had already gone down, but she had fouled her falls, and had dropped end up, smashing against the ship's side and filling. Struggling men tried to clear her, but the sea was too heavy. A life raft was pushed over the rail, and fell heavily close to us, held by a line. It surged in the lee, and, as the ship drifted down, it struck her heavily, smashing the platform.

"Don't go, sir," said Jake, in a voice that barely reached me.

"We'll have troubles enough of our own," said another.

"Shut up, there are passengers—don't you see the women?—we've got to help them," I said.

I looked for the other boat. It was not in sight. The forms of two women came to the rail, one a young girl.

"Throw me a line," I yelled to the man in uniform.

A small line came sailing across the boat. I seized it, and went forward.

"Jake and you, Bill, come with me, the rest lie by—keep her clear whatever you do," I said, and waved my hand to those above to haul away. With the bowline under my arms, I was soon on deck. Then I helped to haul my two men up.

"I'm the second," said the man in uniform; "but I can't make 'em do anything. Just stretched one out when the rest knocked me over and took to the boats."

Without delay we made our way along the port rail to amidships, where the boats were being lowered. Men crowded around them, and fought for places. The fireroom crew, white-skinned and partly clothed, their pale faces dirty with coal dust, stood around the nearest boat, and worked at the lashings, cursing, swearing, and shoving each other in the suppressed panic of men who are hurrying from death.

The canvas covering was ripped off, and four men sprang into her, the rest shoving her bodily outboard. The men at the falls howled and swore, slacked off without regard to consequences, and the craft dropped a few feet, then swung off, and came with a crash against the side.

"Fine discipline," I said to the second mate, who was close to me.

A form touched my elbow. I turned, and saw a young girl.

"Aren't they going to take us along with them?" she asked quietly, but with a voice full of pleading.

I looked at her. She was not over twenty, and very pretty. Her big eyes were looking right into mine.

"Sure, lady, you shall go," I said.

Jake and Bill stood right behind me.

"Have you a gun?" I asked the officer.

"No; haven't got a thing—let's hoof 'em."

"Avast slacking that boat down," I roared, rushing in.

"Tell it to George," snarled a big fireman, shoving me aside.

I hooked him under the jaw with all my strength, and he staggered back. Jake slammed the next man in the stomach, while the second officer waded in now, striking right and left in the press.

"Get back—stand back!" we roared; and, for a wonder, forced our way along the ship's side, taking the falls.

"Get a line below the block hook. Hold her off," came the order, and some one passed a line at the after fall, while a man in the boat pushed manfully against the ship's side to steady her.

"Now, then, slack away together," I yelled; and Bill, who had the forward fall, slacked off with me, and the craft went rushing down just as the ship rolled to leeward. She struck the sea, the block unhooked; and, as the sinking ship rolled up, she fell clear, and hung to her painter. We had got one down all right. The men then rushed.

Four of us fought back with all our might; but the weight of frantic men was too heavy for us. We were forced back and down, struggling under

the crush of fighting firemen and seamen, who trampled, struck, and then tore loose to slide down the hanging boat falls or jump over into the sea, to climb in the floating craft below. The men below in the boat saw they would be swamped by numbers, and cut the painter. She drifted off, then crashed up against the ship's side, and finally swept around the stern, where she met the sea. That was the last I saw of her.

With my clothes half torn off, oilskins hanging in rags, my face bleeding, and utterly exhausted, I got to my feet, and we made for the next boat. The press about her was not so great, and we managed to make way against it. It was the last boat, and the remaining few men left aboard were not enough to hold us. Among them were some passengers, whom we got aboard—four of them—and then finally sent the boat down clear. I looked around for the girl. Two women were in the boat, and the second officer said there was another aboard. I was out of breath, and stood panting a few moments, gazing aft through the bloom of the evening trying to see what had become of that girl. She was not in sight. I remembered she was near the other boat.

"I'll run aft and try to find her," I yelled, and rushed down the deck.

At the door of the saloon I saw a form huddled up on a transom just inside.

"Come," I called roughly; "come along, quick—the boat's waiting."

"Oh, it's you," she said; and I saw it was the girl

I was looking for. She sat up. "Did you ever see such brutes?"

"Never mind that now. Get a move on—the boat won't wait."

As I spoke, I felt the ship drop suddenly forward. I turned quickly, and gazed forward. It was almost dark now; but I could see the white surge burst over the forecastle head.

"She's going," I yelled, and grabbed the girl.

A great sea crashed against the house, bursting it in, roaring, smashing, and pouring like a Niagara into the saloon. The deck forward had gone under, the stern was rising high in the air, and the slanting deck told me there was not a second to lose.

The girl sprang up, and we dashed together to the taffrail, which was now fully twenty feet above the sea. There was nothing below but that life raft, the boats had gone to leeward to keep clear. Without a moment's hesitation, I dropped the girl into the sea, and sprang after her.

Hampered with my ragged slothes and oilskins, I could hardly swim a stroke. A rushing comber struck me, and I felt myself going down, unable to fight any longer. My breath was gone.

When I came to I was lying upon the life raft, and the girl was clinging to me with one hand, and passing one of the lashings of the raft with the other. It was black dark. Only the rushing seas about me told of our whereabouts; and the wild flings of the raft as it swept along with the rush made me aware of the present. I tried to see, raised my head, and felt very weak.

"How'd we get here?" I asked.

"I grabbed you and puiled you up," she said simply. "You were hit on the head by it—better tie yourself fast with that piece of cord, I can't hold you any longer."

I took a few turns of the side lashings of the raft about our bodies, and, as the seas washed us, I noticed that the water felt so much warmer than the air. We were clear of the sea a few inches, but each comber dashed over and soaked us, washing so heavily that it was necessary to hold one's head up in order to breathe freely.

"Did you see the boats?" I asked. "They'll pick us up presently."

"No; I couldn't see anything. I had all I could do to pull you on the raft. You're pretty heavy, you know. Then I had to hold you for what seemed an hour, but maybe was only a few minutes. Do you think they'll find us?"

"Sure. They wouldn't leave us. Ship went down, didn't it—rather sudden, and they had to let go. My men will stand by if it takes all night," I said.

"I sincerely hope you are right about it. I don't much fancy this raft for a place to spend the night. Will we be drowned on it, do you think?"

"No fear; we're all right. It can't sink. All we have to do is to keep a lookout for a boat and sing out for help. Why, there's five boats altogether, counting ours. Five boats, and it's just dark, not after six or seven o'clock at the most."

"How far from land are we?" she asked, seemingly cheered but still somewhat doubtful.

"Not far," I lied. I thought of a hundred and fifty miles of floating to get in—if the boats didn't pick us up. I began to experience that sinking feeling that comes to many when the outlook seems pretty bad.

The girl was silent for some time after this, and seemed to be thinking of her troubles, for once she gave a little gasp of complaint.

"Cheer up," I said; "don't give way to it yet. We'll be all right soon."

As the hours passed and no boat come near, I began to feel very nervous. I could see but a few fathoms distant, and knew the chances were growing less and less. I hailed the blackness, bawled out as loud as I could, keeping it up at minute intervals. The wind seemed to be going down, but the sea still ran quickly, and was high and strong, lifting the raft skyward at each roll, and then dropping it down gently into the hollow trough. We felt the wind only when on the top of the seas, and it chilled us; but the warm edge of the Gulf Stream soaked us, and we could stand it for a long time. The sea was as warm as milk.

How that long night passed I don't know. It seemed like eternity. Several times I lost consciousness, whether from exhaustion or from the blow I had received upon the head I cannot say. I held to the girl, and together we stood it out. Our lashings kept us upon the piece of platform remain-

ing upon the two hollow iron cylinders comprising the raft.

The girl lost her power of speech some time during the night, and seemed to faint, her head dropping upon the slats of the platform. I held it up to keep the water from her nose and mouth, and finally propped her head so that little water broke over it. It was all I could do.

The raft swung around and around, sometimes with the sea on one side and then with it upon another. I felt for the oarlock, which is usually placed at either end to steer by, but it was gone. So also were the oars that had been placed between the cylinders and the platform. We simply had a float, that kept us bodily out of the sea, and that was all.

After hours and hours of this wild pitching and rushing upon the crests of high, rolling seas, the motion began to get easier, and I noticed that the wind was rapidly falling. The crests no longer broke with the furious rush and tumble as formerly. Then the gray light of dawn came, and I began to see about us.

The form of the girl lay alongside me, lashed to the platform. Her hair trailed into the sea in long tresses from her head, and her face was white as chalk. I thought she was dead, and shook her to see if there was any life to stir up. She lay limp. I took her hand and felt the wrist. A slight pulse told of the vital spark still burning. It seemed brutal to arouse her, to bring her back to the horror of her position. But I felt that it was best. I called to her, and she finally opened her eyes.

She shivered, placed one arm under her, and then raised herself painfully into a sitting posture.

"Cut the cord around my wrist, will you, please?" she said. "I promise not to fall off."

"Better let it stay," I said. "I'll loose it so you can move about a little. Seems like they missed us in the dark."

"Well, do you still think they'll pick us up? See; it's light now, the sun is coming up. I don't know as I care very much. Do you?"

"Sure I care. Why not? We'll be all right soon."

She let her head fall forward, and gave a little sob; just a bit of a cry.

"Well, then I'm glad I pulled you out of the water," she said. "Seems like we might just as well have gone during the night. Do you really think it's worth struggling for like this? Life is good—and I want to live—but this is too hard—too terrible—and my poor mother——"

"We'll be picked up before breakfast, sure," I said. "The boats must have drifted just the same as ourselves. Something'll come along soon."

And yet deep down in me I knew that this was a bare chance. We were out of the track of ships, well off shore for the coasters, and not far enough for the Bermuda ships, like the *Rathbone*, which had stopped at the island on her way north.

The sun rose, and daylight broadened into the morning. The wind fell rapidly, and the sea began to get that easy run of the Atlantic when undisturbed. I loosened my lashings and stood up, gaz-

ing about us. The motion of the raft was still severe; but I could stand, balancing myself. I shivered and shook with the wet and cold; but I now felt that with the sun shining we would soon be in better straits. As the raft rose upon the swells I looked all around the horizon. But there was nothing; not a thing save the sea in sight.

"You can't see anything?" The girl's voice sounded strange, querulous, and pitiful. She was sitting with her head bowed upon her hands, which rested on her knees. Her wet dress clung to her, and she looked very frail, very delicate.

"No; I can't see anything yet," I answered; "but we'll sight something before long. Tell me, were you from Bermuda?"

"Yes; I was visiting my aunt there," she said. "I just graduated from the convent of the Sacred Cross last month. I've never been anywhere, or seen anyone, until this year. My mother is the only other near relative I have living."

"Well, you've made a good start seeing things," said I, trying to smile at her. She turned a little pink, just flushed a bit; but it gave her white face a more natural look. She was a very pretty girl.

"How old are you?" I asked.

"Eighteen. Why?"

"Oh, nothing, only——"

I felt like a fool. Why should I bother this child about her age? She had saved my life by dragging me upon the raft, and I would save hers, if possible. It produced a feeling in me I could not quite understand. I liked to hear her talk, to have her

look at me. She was very pretty; a good, innocent young girl.

"I could eat a house, roof, and foundation," I ventured finally, seating myself. The wash of the sea now hardly reached us, and we were drying out fast in the cool breeze and sunshine.

"Yes; I could eat a ship, masts, and spars," I went on.

"Well, I suppose I'll be tough enough," she said, glancing at me with some show of fear in her eyes. "I once read of men on a raft who ate each other; but I never thought it would be my turn. No, never."

"Don't be absurd," I said. "I don't intend to eat you—not yet."

She looked at me very hard. Her eyes were moist; big, lustrous eyes. "No," she said seriously, "I don't believe you will," and she put her hand in mine.

"Aw, don't be frightened, kid," I said. "I may look like the devil, but I'm not."

And I sat there like an idiot holding that girl's hand, while the sun rose and shone warmer and warmer upon us, drying our garments and cheering us wonderfully. I had never met a girl of this kind before; and it was something of a problem how I was to keep her alive and cheerful on that raft. I swore fiercely at Jake, at Jones, and the rest for leaving us adrift. My oaths were something strange to the girl, for she shivered and drew her hand away.

"Please don't," she said quietly. "What good does it do to use such language?"

"Eases me a lot, miss. What's your name?"

"Alice Trueman."

I mumbled the name a few times, then relapsed into silence. After that there was nothing more said for a long time; but I saw her looking at me at intervals. Evidently I was an animal she was not used to, and I wondered at a mother who would bring up a girl to view a man as such a terrible sort of creature. I was a rough sailor; but I was human.

The day advanced and the wind fell to a gentle breath. Then it became quite still, a dead calm, while the swell rolled steadily in from the eastward, but smoothed out into long, easy hills and hollows, upon which the raft rode easily and the platform kept clear of the sea at last.

We took turns standing up and looking about the surrounding waste to see if there were any signs of a ship. Nothing showed upon the horizon, and the day wore down to evening. We were both very hungry and thirsty. I knew that the limit would soon be reached if there were nothing to eat or drink. The sun was now warm, and we ceased shivering as it settled in the west. The darkness of the night came on with its terrors, and still there was no sign of help from anywhere.

"I really don't think I can stand it any longer, captain," said the girl.

"I'm not the captain—just the mate," I answered; "but you'll have to stick it out for the night."

Miss Alice gave a little sob. "I'm *so* hungry and thirsty," she wailed. And added plaintively: "I've never been hungry in my life before."

"Probably not," I said, sitting close to her and taking her hand in mine again. She made no resistance, and I passed my arm about her. "You must remember you've seen very little of the world yet. I've been hungry often—expect to be again before I go."

"You see, I've had everything in the world I wanted. My father died very rich—and I can't stand the things people can who are used to them," she lamented.

"Cheer up," I said. "While there's life there's hope, you know."

She gave a little sigh, and let her head fall back upon my shoulder. And so we sat there in the growing darkness, together upon a raft in the middle of the Atlantic. As I look back upon it, there seems to be a bit of sentiment lacking. I felt nothing but pity for the girl at the time. I wasn't the least unhappy. I wasn't the least disturbed, except that hunger was gnawing at me and the fear the girl would die there. Personally I was not displeased with the position. Such is youth.

"Alice," I said finally, "I find a lot of comfort in you being here with me, but I honestly believe I could stand it better if you were safe ashore. You've been a mighty brave little companion though."

She gave my hand a bit of a squeeze, and sighed like a tired child. Then she closed her eyes.

I was aroused by a hail.

"Hey, there, aboard the raft!" came a yell from the darkness.

"Boat, ahoy!" I howled, in desperation, hardly believing my ears.

"Stand by and catch the line," came the yell again, and I jumped up and stared into the gloom.

A dark spot showed close aboard. The sound of oars came over the water. A man's voice hailed again, and I recognized Jones, my bow oarsman.

"Mr. Garnett—— Is it you?" he cried; and a line came hurtling across the platform, striking me in the face. I seized it, snatched a turn upon one of the slats of the platform. The boat came alongside, while they held her off with the oars and boat hook.

"A girl—one of the passengers, hey?" asked Jones. "Climb aboard, sir, and we'll take her in all safe enough."

Wilson and Jones sprang upon the platform, and helped me lift the girl to her feet. She opened her eyes at the motion, and gave a cry of joy.

"I'm so glad!" she said, and fainted dead away, while we placed her in the stern of the whaleboat.

"Water, in the name of Heaven!" I panted. "You cowards! Why did you leave us?"

"Hunted for you, sir, all night," said Jones, getting at the water breaker and measuring out a full quart. I held it to the lips of the girl, and she revived enough to drink part of it. I drank the rest, and drew another measure, drinking it off in a gulp.

"Grub," I said, without further ado; and, while

they shoved clear of the raft, I took a share of the ship's biscuit, eating ravenously.

"Sit up and chew a bit of bread," I said to Miss Alice.

She raised herself with an effort, and soon recovered sufficiently to eat something. Then she nestled close to me, let her head fall again upon my shoulder, and went to sleep like a tired child.

We were heading almost due west for the coast now, and could not be very far away from coast-wise traffic. I felt that the end would soon come, and that we would be picked up.

Before midnight a light showed ahead. It was a steamer's headlight, and I soon made out her green light, showing she was heading north, inside of us. We would pass very close.

"Give way strong; give way together. Let's get out of this," I said; and the men set to the oars.

The light grew brighter, the green still showing. Soon the black form of the ship's hull showed through the gloom, her masthead light now looming high in the air, and her side light close aboard. We were drawing in, and I stood up and bawled out for help. The black bulk of her hull towered over us, and for an instant it seemed that she would run us down.

"Hold—back water—hold hard!" I yelled, and the men obeyed.

The ship tore past us, the foam of her bow wave splashing into the boat. I roared out curses upon the men above in her. Then she went on into the night. I howled, swore at her, called her skipper

every name I could devise. The men seconded me, and together we called down enough curses upon that ship to have sunk her. Suddenly she seemed to slow up, to stop, and then lay dead in the gloom.

"Row, you bullies, row for your lives!" I yelled; and the men gave their last spurt, putting their remaining strength into the pull. We drew closer, and a voice hailed us from the ship.

"Ship ahoy!" I called again. "Throw us a line and stand by to pick us up."

We came alongside. A line was dropped down, and Jones seized it, snatched a turn, and we were fast. The ship was wallowing slowly ahead; but we hung alongside safe enough.

"Pass down a bowline," I sang out; "and be quick about it."

The line came down into the boat, and I slipped it over the head of Miss Alice Trueman, jamming it under her arms.

"H'ist away on deck," I directed; and the girl went aloft. The rest of us came one after the other.

"I can't take your boat, sir," said the captain; "haven't any room."

"Forget the boat. Give me something to eat and drink, and a place to lie down for a few weeks," I said, and I was led below.

Two days later we were at the dock in New York. I had not seen Alice since she had been turned over to the care of the stewardess; but I waited for her to come on deck. She came, pale but self-possessed. She was still weak, but was now nearly recovered.

The ship was being warped to the pier, and it would be a few minutes before we could leave her. I came up and held out my hand.

"Well," I said, "Alice, how about it? You were a good companion in trouble, a brave shipmate in the face of terrible danger. Somehow it has drawn me to you. I want to see you again."

"Always, Mr. Garnett; always will I be glad to see you—but do you think it wise under the circumstances? Don't you think we had better say good-by now? It will only be more difficult later on. You know what I mean——"

She looked up at me with moist eyes—eyes that told so much. I was taken all aback; but I understood. I was only a sailorman, a mate of a sailing ship. She was an heiress—a lady, as they say, educated and refined. She couldn't make me what she knew I would have to be to retain her respect and love, the love she would want to give. It was for my own good she was saying good-by. Yes, I believe she meant it only for that.

"Sure, girl, I was only fooling," I said, with my throat choking so that the blamed ship reeled and swung about me.

"Believe me, it's best so," she whispered, looking at me strangely with eyes now full of tears. She held out her hand, raised her head, put up her lips.

"Kiss me good-by. You were awful good to me. Good-by."

I felt that kiss burn my lips for many a day—yes, for a long time.

THE AFTER BULKHEAD

AFTER coming home from the East I had, like many other ship's officers, taken up steam. There was more in it than the old wind-jammers, and the runs were short in comparison. It was not long before I went in the Prince Line, as they needed navigators badly.

I was chief mate of the liner, and it was my unpleasant duty to do about everything. Old Man Hall, captain and R. N. R. man, did little beside working the ship's position after we got to sea. Ashore, he left everything to Mr. Small and myself, as far as the ship was concerned, and if there were a piece of frayed line, a bit of paint chafed, we heard all about it within two hours after he came aboard.

Small was second under me, while the third and fourth officers were hardly more than apprentices, both being for the first time in the ship and not more than twenty-one or two years of age.

Captain Hall was nearly seventy, and somewhat decrepit, but he was an accurate navigator, and had kept his record clean, making one hundred runs across the Western Ocean without accident. Masters of merchantmen are good or bad, accord-

ing to their records, according to their reputations. Some said Hall had excellent luck. But, anyway, he was a good man, a fair-minded skipper, and he always brought in his ship on schedule, which was saying a good deal, for the Prince Line steamers were not noted for keeping close to time—any old time was good enough for most of them until the *Prince Gregory*, of twenty thousand tons, came along and made the lubbers look up a bit.

She was the largest ship of the fleet—which comprised ten good steamers—and she was fitted with all the modern conveniences, from telephones to wireless, had a swimming pool, barber shop, gymnasium, café, and elevators to the hurricane deck.

With only four watch officers, and six cadets, who were about as useful as a false keel on a trunk, I had enough to do before clearing.

The chief engineer was an American, for a wonder, and his six assistants, including donkey man, were Liverpool cockneys. They drove a swarm of fire rats and coal passers that would have made a seaman crazy in two days, but Smith took things easy below, and, although he had to push her to keep the new record, he let his assistants do the heavy work. That's the reason he grew so fat—grew fat and even-tempered, while poor Small and myself sweated out our lives after the usual routine.

We had forty men in the crew, and needed more, for we often had a thousand emigrants in the steerage. Sometimes we carried bunches of those big chaps from the European forests, Lithuanians, strong, sturdy brutes, totally without sense.

It was in December that we took over five hundred of them on board, and while I was polite as possible, I put Small wise to keep a lookout on the critters. They were miners, for the most part. Contract men, going to the mines in Pennsylvania.

By some means a quantity of their baggage got below with that of the cabin passengers. We had a lot of cabin folks that voyage. There was a bunch of actors, men and women you hear at the opera, drummers galore, buyers who were coming home from the fall trading, several millionaires; and, among the society or upper-strata people, the ones without occupation to give them distinction, were the Lady Amadoun and her following.

Lady Amadoun was American born, but French by adoption, or, rather, marriage, preferring in her youth the suave manners of older generations to the rougher ones of her own countrymen. Raoul, Vicomte Amadoun, her husband, had not turned out the soft and gentle creature he appeared before marriage. In fact, he had followed the usual time-worn game of demanding money at unusual crises, which, as you know, has a tendency to make intelligent women think twice before coming across with it. The Vicomtesse Amadoun, or countess, as they called her, was young; in fact, looked hardly twenty-five—but, of course, a countess has maids to fix her up a bit!

You see, being first officer, and sitting at the head of my own table in the saloon, the countess came under my observation more than I intended. Old Hall had his own cronies, who sat with him, and

Driggs, the steward, gave the most prominent passenger my right-hand seat—sort of compliment. Driggs was a good steward, and owed his place to my exertions in his behalf.

It was about this confounded baggage that I had a chance to further acquaint myself with nobility, for the trunks of the countess—and she had about fifty, including those of her friends who came with her—got mixed with the stuff that the baggage-master had sent by mistake to the first-class baggage room—the unlovely dunnage of the human moles who were roosting low in the steerage, and paying two pounds sterling a head for the privilege.

“I would take it as a great favor if you would allow me to get into my baggage by to-morrow at the latest,” said the countess, beaming upon me from the adjacent seat at my table at dinner that day. “You see, we’ve been all over Europe, and while traveling through Russia I picked up some very pretty furs, which will be nice to use on deck during this cool sea weather.”

“Madam,” said I, “I shall be at your service right after eight bells to-morrow, when I leave the bridge.” So I warned the baggage man, below, to have the place cleaned out a mite, so that her ladyship could go below without getting her frock spoiled from contact with the steerage passengers or their belongings.

To be sure that he would do my bidding—he belonged to the purser’s force—I went below that morning, and looked the baggage over myself. I passed in through the steerage, and noted the men

stowed there. Two big brutes of Lithuanians sat upon their dunnage, and jabbered in their language.

“Hike!” I said abruptly to the pair. “Git away from the baggage, and let the trunk slingers dig up.”

“Oh, Mister Mate, Mister Chief, we have our trunks here, also, and want to get to them,” answered one fellow in fairly good lingo.

“Beat it!” I ordered. “Make a get-away as quick as you can. Only first-class passengers can take their baggage out, or get a look-in. Why, you lubber, if every one of you steerage rats wanted to get into your trunks, it would take about fifteen hundred stewards and baggage men to take care of you.”

“But it is of great importance that we see our things—there are some things in my trunk I must get at, some important things——”

“Try and fergit them until next Wednesday, when they can be dumped on Ellis Island; nuff sed—no more lingo—beat it!”

The pair went away in very ugly humor, and I started the work of clearing that baggage room of their dunnage, and trying to select the trunks of the countess from the raffle. I managed to get about twenty of them, and let it go at that.

The next day I took the countess below, and personally showed her over the trunks. She was accompanied by the count and her maid.

“Now, Marie, which trunk was it in, *ma chère*? You must remember it very well,” she said, looking at the mass of baggage.

“*Mais oui*, it must be that grand affaire—that beeg one—see!” And the maid pointed to an immense Saratoga trunk, big enough to hold the clothes of a full man-o’-war’s crew.

The baggage master and I pulled the trunk out of the ruck, and the count produced a bunch of keys.

I sauntered over to the other side of the room, where the gratings separated the steerage from the rest. The two fellows I saw there yesterday were watching through the slats, and did not notice me.

“*Deux cent*,” said one, in a whisper.

“Whew, *mon Dieu*——”

I knew that there was something about two hundred, but just what I couldn’t quite log. My lingo goes mostly to Spanish and Chink, having sailed to those countries.

The countess asked me to move the big trunk to the side of the ship. I did so without seeing the reason for the extra work, but the lady was gracious, and there was really no reason for not doing it. Two other trunks were opened, and the furs brought out. Then the lady went on deck again, after thanking me most profusely. Raoul was more reticent. He was not the tongue-lashing Frenchman he looked. He seemed preoccupied; but all very rich and powerful men seem that way to me, and after all I was but the chief officer. Perhaps the skipper would have drawn him out more.

Nothing happened until we were within sight of the Nantucket Shoals lightship. That night the countess and her husband were on deck, and, the air being cool, they were well wrapped in furs. I

watched them from the bridge. They kept well forward, near the starboard forward lifeboat. That was my boat under the drill orders, and I remembered it afterward.

It was about two bells—nine o'clock in the evening—when there was a most terrific roar from below. The ship shook as though torn asunder. As I gazed aft, the deck seemed to rise and blow outboard. Something struck me heavily, and I was down and out for a few minutes. When I arose with ringing ears, I looked aft again, hardly realizing that I was awake and not dreaming. The siren was roaring full blast, and a throng of men and women were rushing forward toward the bridge. Old Hall came out of his room half dressed, and ran to me.

“What is it—what’s happened?” he yelled in my ear.

“Don’t know,” I howled, and even then I didn’t believe I was awake.

The chief engineer ran up.

“Starboard engine room full, sir—something blowed up below—whole side gone above water line—won’t float ten minutes,” he howled.

“For God’s sake, shut off that siren, then!” yelled old man Hall. Then, turning to me, he ordered: “Stand by the boats, and get the passengers out.”

In a few minutes the roar of the steam stopped. Hall stood calmly upon the bridge, and gave the orders for the small boats, and away they went one after the other. The wireless was sending its call

for help, but there was no time for us to listen to replies; we had plenty to do.

The *Prince Gregory* settled slowly by the stern, and raised her bows high in the air. There she stopped, and, for a wonder, did not fall from under us.

“Get into the boat, quick!” I said to the countess, and she sprang with amazing ease into the stern, followed by her husband and the maid.

“Nix on the men!” I yelled, and grabbed the count. “Come out—women first,” and I dragged him from the boat with no show of deference. He struck me savagely in the face, and I stretched him out with the boat’s tiller. Seamen tossed him aside, and the swarm of women crowded up and into the craft while I held the men back as best I could.

I knew it was to be a close haul. Seven hundred men and women, and only twenty boats! The life rafts would be doing duty pretty soon, and no mistake.

I saw very little of the fracas around me, as one never does see much if he is tending to his own business, and mine at that time was getting forty-five women into a small boat, many of them in before she was lowered away.

Luckily there was no sea running at all. It was calm and foggy, the water like black oil.

I slid down the falls, and when we loaded up I took command at the tiller, and went out a little distance to clear the wreck in case of trouble. We lay at rest a hundred fathoms distant, and watched the scuffle aboard. Men yelled like mad, screamed, and

fought. I caught the flash of a gun, and heard the report. I knew Hall would not stand for lawless rushing the boats, and was doing some fierce work. Pretty soon the outcry died away more and more, and still the black hull showed plainly, her bow still pointing skyward, and her stern submerged.

"God's blessing, there's no wind or sea!" I said to Driscoll, my stroke oarsman.

"You're right there, cap," said he. "What was it anyway?"

"Blessed if I knew—she's just blowed up, whole stern gone out of her. She can't float two hours, and there'll be no one out here before daybreak if they do get the signal."

"You brute!" exclaimed the countess, who was sitting close to me. "Why didn't you let my husband come in this boat?"

"If he was a man, he wouldn't have wanted to," I snapped, hot at the insult.

"I notice *you* are here, all right, you ruffian!" she retorted, sneering. "What do you call yourself?"

I thought best not to answer her. Words with women are generally wasted, and the woman always gets the last one, anyhow. The countess had always been so courteous and gentle that I supposed the excitement had turned her head; and then, after all, I had treated her husband a bit rough. He was a gentleman, and I was only a mate. That made a difference in her point of view, although I can't say it did so much in my own.

I talked to Driscoll, and watched the *Prince Gregory* as she lay there in the oily sea. Boats came

and went toward the light vessel, and, thinking it would be a good thing to get rid of my cargo, I trailed off after the bunch, and was soon alongside the lightship.

As fast as we could, we sent the women aboard, finding that the little ship would hold hundreds of passengers, in spite of her diminutive size. Inside of half an hour, she had fully five hundred people in her, and was jammed to the rails, below and on deck. Still, it was better than an open boat, and I kept bringing them by scores, until there were no more, save a few boatloads, and these we kept afloat in the lifeboats.

During this time I thought little, or not at all, about the count. The ship still hung by her after bulkhead, and Lord knows the man who set it in her deserves praise enough. How it stood that strain is a wonder to this day. If there had been any sea running she would have gone down like a stone, for no unbraced cross-section of a ship can stand the surge of ten thousand tons in a seaway. It must have burst like blotting paper when wetted down. With ten men—all second-class passengers—in my boat besides the crew, I went back to the ship for the last time, and watched old man Hall as he stood upon the bridge. I could just make him out through the hazy gloom of the night, but I could hear his voice distinctly, as he gave orders to the few men who stayed with him.

“Do you want any more help, sir?” I asked, coming alongside.

“What’s that—you, Jack?” he answered. “No, I

reckon not. She'll hang on for hours, if the weather remains calm like this. All the passengers safe?"

"All aboard the lightship, or hanging to her by painters—there's a line of boats half a mile long trailing on behind her, and they're safe enough, as they can't get lost as long as they hold to her. Tide runs hard here on the edge of the Stream, but her wireless is going right along, and she says two cutters left Boston half an hour ago, under full steam—ought to be here before late in the morning, anyway. Never lost a man, hey?"

"No," says he, "not that I know of; and that's some remarkable, too."

I thought it was, also, but said nothing more for a few moments, watching the half-sunken hull slowly rolling from side to side in the smooth swell.

While I watched I saw the form of a man coming from aft, along the rail of the main deck, which was just awash. As every one had left the after part of the ship and the engine room abandoned, I thought this strange, and watched the figure until it came almost amidships. Then it disappeared in the cabin.

"More men aft, sir?" I asked Hall, who still stood leaning upon the bridge rail, waiting for help.

"No, on one left aboard—just Jenkins and his crew of four men—myself, that's all." Jenkins was carpenter.

"Saw a man coming from aft, sir—must be some passenger overlooked. Shall I jump up, and see to him?"

"All right," came the response, and almost before he spoke the men who waited on their oars shoved the boat astern until she was almost level with the sunken deck. I sprang out of her, and sung to them to lie by and keep clear of the captain's boat, which lay alongside, just forward of us, waiting until the old man found it necessary to leave.

I made my way in through the pasageway to the saloon, and found the deck still clear of water, although the sucking roar and surge of the sea beneath told of the immense volume in the lower decks. The lights had long gone out, with the drowning of the dynamos, and I felt for a cabin door, intending to grab one of the emergency candles which are always in place on the bulkheads.

I found one, and struck a light; then made my way along the passage in front of the lower state-rooms, calling at intervals for any one who might be near and unable to realize the peril of a foundering ship. I admit it was some ticklish. I had my hair raised more than once when the ship took a more than usually heavy roll, and the rushing thunders below started with renewed force. What if she should drop? It was a bad thought, and not tending to still my pulse. I couldn't help thinking of the thousand fathoms or so of blue sea beneath my feet——

I thought I heard a footstep crossing the passage in front of me. It is strange how, above the general thunder of rushing water, a slight sound makes itself evident. It was like standing upon the shore during the running of a heavy surf. One can al-

most talk in a whisper while the thunder reverberates along the coast.

A shadow crossed in front of me, and I hailed again. It was a man, and he was coming from below, from the sunken lower decks. He came up the staircase of the lower saloon, and darted along the passageway to port.

“Hey, there! Stop!” I yelled.

The man turned, and in an instant I recognized him. It was the Vicomte Raoul.

He eyed me with a savage look, and waited for me to come up.

“What ees it you want?” he growled.

“Just you!” I told him. “Don’t you know you are in danger of getting killed down here?”

“And how does that matter interest you?” he retorted, with those shrugging shoulders and arched eyebrows he could handle so well.

“It don’t, except that, as I’m an officer, it’s my duty to see you leave the ship under orders of the captain.”

“I noticed you were not so queek to have me leave dees sheep when I first started,” he sneered, “and eef I go back for my jewels, my valuables, eet ees no affaire of yours—eh?”

“It is only to the extent that I must see you off the vessel,” I said.

We were standing near the after companionway, and I noticed the splintered planking, where the force of the explosion had blown it upward. It was directly over the baggage room, where the trunks

were stowed below. This was now under six to ten feet of clear water.

“If you want to get into your trunks, you will have to be a good diver,” I said. “There’s no chance in the world of getting below here—she’s flooded full to the after bulkheads number four in the wake of the starboard engines. You couldn’t do a thing below if you got there.”

In a more courteous tone, the count explained:

“Eet is a matter of small valuables in my room, not my trunk. Go along like a good fellow, and I will follow instantly. I just go below to my room—I come with you instantly—go!”

“Well, I’ll wait here if it don’t take too long,” I said. “It’s against orders, and if anything happens to you I’ll get it, all right. Hurry up, and beat it back—the boat’s waiting, and the ship’ll drop any minute. It’s only that number four bulkhead holding her.”

‘Ah, yes, dat number four! Eet ees just at my stateroom door, zat number four you call heem. Wait, my good fellow, I come immediate,” and he went down the companionway, which was knee-deep at the bottom in sea water.

He splashed through the shallow wash, and disappeared along the gloomy passage, where the candle-light failed. I stood above and waited, holding my breath at times, and cursing the luck that made me weak enough to allow him to do such a foolish thing as go below for valuables. However, I had treated him pretty rough at the first getaway, and felt he had a right to some consideration.

Suddenly I remembered that his stateroom was not below on that main deck! It seemed to me he had rooms forward and above; but the excitement had caused me to forget this detail, and I was so taken up, even at the time, that I only remembered it in a half-dazed way. What did he want below, then?

I waited, and the minutes flew by, seeming long enough. The candle ran its hot grease down upon my hand, and burned it. I was getting sore and impatient at the wait. If anything happened, I could never be given a reprimand, for I would never show up to receive it. The ship would go down and take me with her, all right enough. I hadn't a chance in the world—and I was waiting there for a count, a man who had sprung into the mate's boat to get clear, when there were hundreds of women waiting and screaming to go!

There was a sharp explosion from below. The ship shook a little, and rolled to port.

“Just Heaven! Did that bulkhead go?”

A form tore down the passageway, splashed through the water at the foot of the companion, and was upon me in an instant. Raoul struck me fairly between the eyes, and I went down to sleep—that was all I remember of the inside of the *Prince Gregory*, as she lay foundering off the Shoals.

When I came to, I was in the boat, with Driscoll bending over me and pouring sea water upon my head. The dark stain showed me that I was bleeding fast, and the sailor tore off the sleeve of his jumper, and tied it about my forehead. I tried to

sit up, but everything swam and rolled about me horribly. Finally I managed to get my head up.

“What’s happened?” I asked.

“Bulkhead gave way, sir,” he told me. “You was hit on the head by wreckage. I run in after you, an’ jest managed to git you clear. She’s gone, sir!”

“What! The ship?” I cried.

“Sure, sir.”

“And the old man—Jenkins, and the rest of them?”

“All got clear just in time—seems like Jenkins and his gang were at the bulkhead from forrards, trying to shore it up, when *bing!* she went, and them as was left beat it—all got clear, sir.”

“See anything of a passenger—that chap we had a run-in with at the first getaway?” I asked.

“Yes, sir; one man got away in the skipper’s boat—that’s them headin’ for the lightship over there,” and he pointed to a blur that showed through the hazy night. I began to gather my senses again, but I couldn’t make head or tail of it. What did that fellow nail me for? I had hit him, to be sure; but that was for a purpose. He surely intended to fix me, all right. About a minute more, and I would have gone with the ship.

“Cowardly rat!” I whispered.

“Who?” asked Driscoll.

“That white-livered dog who knocked me out,” I said, gritting my teeth at the thought.

“Better lie quiet, sir; better keep still—you’re

bug a bit, but will be all right to-morrow. Does it hurt you much, sir?"

"Shut up!" I commanded ungratefully, and Driscoll gazed at me sorrowfully, pulling away again at his oar, for we were now almost to the lightship.

All that night we lay trailing astern. There was a long line of lifeboats reaching nearly half a mile back, all hanging to the taffrail of the ship.

About daylight she got in touch with a passing passenger ship, bound in, and while we were busy shifting the hundreds of passengers the cutters showed up, and helped to expedite matters by towing the small boats. Before breakfast time we had all the outfit aboard and away for New York. Hall and myself went aboard the cutter *Eagle*. We waited for several hours, to see if there were anything more to find drifting about, and then away we went for home, thanking the captain of the Nantucket Shoals lightship for what he had done.

"I don't understand it at all—don't seem to be just right," repeated Hall over and over to the captain of the cutter. "She just blew up—that's all there is to it. We had a drove of miners aboard, and you know how hard it is to keep those fellows from carrying explosives in their dunnage. You simply can't stop to search them. There was probably a couple of hundred pounds of blasting powder, at the least—went off like a mine blowing up a battleship. That bulkhead in the wake of the starboard engine room saved us—that's all!"

I was out of a ship. When we got in, the manager laid me off for a month, and then gave me the

second greaser's berth on the old *Prince Leander*, a bum ship—and that's a fact. When I reached the other side again, I saw by the papers that a certain Frenchman had tried to collect nearly a million francs on his insurance for cargo and personal belongings in the *Prince Gregory*. It seems that he had shipped tons of expensive machinery and had insured it fully. The stuff was cased tightly, but one case marked for him had broken while being handled on the dock, and nothing but bricks fell out.

The insurance companies held up the claim. I hurried to the consul's office, and told of the episode of the trunk, and how I was hit over the nut by a certain French gentleman during the fracas. The description answered to the man of machinery, and when I told of that last little crack I had heard below, the consul waited not on the order of his going, but ordered a cab and fairly threw me into it. We tore to the office of the underwriters, and I told my tale. Then I began to see the light, at last.

It was the old game tried under a new guise—and it had nearly cost the lives of a half thousand human beings. The horror of it appalled me, and I found myself wondering if I were to be trusted about without a nurse again. However, I was not censured severely. The crook was well known to the police, and since then the police of many countries have been trying to locate a gentleman who answers to the description of the Vicomte Raoul de Amadoun.

CAPTAIN JUNARD

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

This fact made a peculiar impression upon him. He felt now that his instinct was correct, that he

was indeed in danger. His mind cleared quickly from the stupor of sound sleep, and he remembered. He was carrying papers of peculiar importance in his strong box, or safe—papers relating to a deal in shipping connected with a revolution in a Central American state. A rival line had tried to stop the affair, which grew into political importance when secret agents of the United States tried to find out how deeply it might affect the Panama Canal. The concession had not been granted. The Canal Zone was not yet in existence, and the United States was sure to get it if this deal went through. The president had watched the affair with hungry eyes. Now the papers were in his—Junard's—possession, aboard his ship, bound for the state department in Washington.

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

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

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

the binnacle made his outline plainly discernible, and Junard recognized him as Swan, a quartermaster of long service and excellent ability.

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

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

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

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

When Junard turned to reënter his room, he heard a slight noise. There was a rustle, a whirl, and the door of the room to port clicked to. It had been shut when he jumped from his bunk. He gazed in the direction of the safe, and saw that it was now standing wide open, the door swinging

slowly with the motion of the ship. He sprang to the switch and turned on the light, full power.

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

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

snoring away in a chair near the water-cooler at the foot of the stairway.

"Sam!" he called sharply.

The man awoke with a start.

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

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

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

"Sure?"

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

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

It was not nightmare, after all. The thing was real. The papers had been taken from the safe, and they were worth perhaps a million to the finder, if not much more; that is, if they could be gotten out of the ship and into the hands of those who were antagonistic to the deal. He pondered a few minutes more, and then decided to go on deck and stand the next watch upon the bridge, remaining there, with the excuse that the cape was drawing abreast and he would take his departure from it. He decided not to say anything to either officer. The thing had best be kept secret, for the very existence of the papers might imperil his company, if that existence were known to certain parties. He hastily dressed and went on the bridge.

Mr. Dunn, the second officer, was now on watch, and it was about a quarter of an hour past midnight. The cape was drawing up, and was fast approaching the port beam. The ship was running about sixteen knots through a smooth sea, with a stiff northeast trade blowing almost dead ahead.

Junard came to where the second officer stood. Mr. Dunn turned and spoke to him, remarking upon the blackness of the night and the clearness of the Cape Maysi light.

Captain Junard said nothing, but watched the second officer narrowly, and tried to fathom his demeanor, looking for some sign that might show a knowledge of what had transpired aboard within the past few minutes. Dunn had been upon the bridge when that safe was shut, when the revolver had been taken away. Yet Dunn had been in the

employ of the company for ten years, and was a reliable man, a sailor who had always done his duty without murmur. He had a fine record.

The light drew abeam, and the ship ran close to the low, rocky point where it juts out into the sea. The high mountains a few miles back showed dimly in the gloom, making a huge shadow in the background. As the light is upon the north side of the low promontory and shows across to the southward, the land was very near as the ship steamed past it and laid her head for the passage.

Junard gazed hard at the shore. He was thinking. Would any one try to get into communication with Cuba here at the cape? There was a question. If a small boat lay near, with lights out, she might get close to the ship without being observed, for it was quite dark, and the loom of the land made it darker than usual. It was nearly six hours' run to the next light, in the Bahamas, across the channel, and the Inagua Bank was too far to the eastward to invite shelter for a small boat. It would be either at the cape, or near Castle Rock, or Fortune Island, he believed, that an attempt might be made to get into communication with the ship. This he must stop. No one must get in communication with the land before daylight. Then he would search every passenger thoroughly, go through all rooms, and take a chance at the result. At Castle Rock he would be on watch, if nothing occurred here.

He gazed steadily into the blackness ahead. The stiff trade wind blew the tops of the seas white. They broke in whitecaps, which showed now and

then through the gloom of the night. He strained his eyes, but nothing showed ahead. The glass showed a dull, dark sea; there was nothing in the line of vision within three miles—that is, nothing as large as a whaleboat. He was sure of this. There might be something under the dark loom of the land, but the glass failed to show anything.

“You take a four-point bearing upon the light, Mr. Dunn, and get the distance accurate,” said Junard. “The mate took his bearing before he left the deck, but you can take another—we are about abreast now—she’s doing exactly sixteen.”

Knowing that this would take the second officer until the light bore four points abaft the beam, Junard left the bridge and went aft without notice. He slipped down to the main deck, and went along the gangway until he reached the taffrail. The whirl of the wheel shook the ship mightily here, the long, steel arm of the tiller under the gratings shook and vibrated with the pulsations. The chains drawn taut clanked and rattled in the guides and sounded above the low murmur of the shaking fabric. Junard gazed over the stern and watched the thrust of the screw as it tore the sea white and whirled a giant stream astern that showed sickly white with the phosphorescent glow.

When he turned again, he was aware of some one watching him. A head had appeared and vanished from behind the end of the cabin structure. The captain sprang for it with a bound. He turned the corner in time to see a skirt disappearing into the alleyway leading into the saloon. He was upon it

with a catlike rush. He reached the saloon door just as it closed in his face.

Without hesitating an instant, he plunged against it, and it gave way to his great weight and power. He burst with a crash into the saloon.

The under steward who was on watch aft saw an apparition of a man in uniform coming through the door like a bull. He had opened his eyes in time to recognize the captain, who ran right across the cabin and out upon the deck beyond.

Junard was swift. He made a reach for the figure as it flitted into a room which opened upon the deck nearly amidships. His iron grip closed upon the skirt, which stretched out in the wind behind the fleeing figure. Then something struck him full in the face, took his breath, and blinded him. He clung to the cloth, choking, coughing, and blinded; made a grab with his free hand to clutch the person—but his grip closed upon empty air.

When he got the ammonia out of his eyes, which were almost blinded by the scorching fluid, he hurried to his room and bathed his head copiously in cold water until he regained his sight.

“Well, it’s a woman, all right,” he commented. “We’ll have her all right in the morning; she won’t get a show to-night to get away with anything. I guess I’ve got her measure.”

In a few minutes he sent for the purser.

That individual came to the captain’s room with fear and trembling. He had been playing draw poker, and breaking the rules of the ship, regardless

of discipline, and expected, of course, to get a rating.

“Give me the passenger list,” said Junard.

It was produced. They ran over it, looking for the location of all the women under thirty or thereabouts in the ship. Junard said nothing of his adventure, and the purser was amazed at his appearance.

“Had a bad night, captain?” he asked.

“Yes, rather. There’s a case of cholera aboard—among the women—I don’t know which one, but we’ll have a chance to find out to-morrow. Don’t speak of it to any one, mind you; don’t let it out under any conditions—you understand?”

“Sure not,” said the purser, paling a little under the news. “How did you come to find it out, sir?”

“Never mind that now. Just keep an eye on all the women in this ship, and don’t let any of them get to throwing things overboard, or trying to do anything foolish. Watch them, and tell me of anything that might happen.”

The purser, amazed, went back to his game of poker with certain passengers; but before doing so, he instructed several of his force to watch both gangways for the rest of the night. He did not know what the “old man” expected, but supposed that cholera patients attempted to throw things overboard, or tried suicide. The thought of the dread disease aboard made him forgetful of the game, and he lost heavily before morning.

Junard, still smarting from the ammonia thrown in his face, came again upon the bridge. He had saved his eyes by a fraction, for the fluid had struck him right in the nose and mouth, and only the spray of it had gotten into his face higher up. It had been squirted by a fluid "gun" of the kind commonly used by bicyclists for repelling angry dogs. Part of the skirt had remained in his grip, but the person had slipped away in an instant and disappeared. It angered him to think a woman could do such a thing. And yet, if it were a woman watching him, there was sure to be more than a woman connected with it. No woman, he reasoned, could have tried his safe. No woman would have taken his revolver and carried it, along with a deadly knife. There must have been a well-organized party to the affair, and they had watched him, after taking the papers, to see just what he would do. Of course, he knew they would not toss such a valuable document overboard in the night time without a boat being close at hand to pick it up. The ocean is a hard place to find anything at night. He knew now that they were aware of his watchfulness and would not attempt to get rid of the papers except under the most favorable conditions. To throw them overboard attached to anything small enough not to attract attention would be to invite sure loss. He reasoned this out as he stood out the rest of Mr. Dunn's watch, and at eight bells—four o'clock in the morning—the mate came again on the bridge without anything happening to excite him.

"I've been on deck for a short time, Mr. Jameson," said Junard; "but I'm going to turn in for a little while. Call me when we get well up to Castle Rock—we'll raise it before morning, before daylight with the weather clear like this."

"Aye, aye, sir; I will, sir—she's doing fine now," said Jameson, as he signed the order book for his course during his watch.

At two bells—five o'clock—the mate called the captain by going to his port door and knocking. He was amazed at the sight of a young woman who came forth from the room and whisked herself quickly down the deck and out of sight. Such a thing as a woman in the master's room at that hour was enough to excite Mr. Jameson. He had not been on the ship long, and the captain was new to him. Masters naturally had love affairs as well as sailors, but they were generally careful about being caught. Here Junard had asked him to call him when they sighted Castle Rock, and, as he knew they must do this by five, at least, the mate was puzzled to see a woman leaving the captain's room when he knocked. Why hadn't she left sooner? It was a joke he would be bound to retail to the rest sooner or later, and he smiled at the thought. He tried to get a glimpse of her face, but failed. Then he waited a decent length of time, and knocked again, louder, announcing the light ahead on the starboard bow.

Junard came on deck instantly. He had been dressed and dozing.

The gray light of the morning, which was now beginning to show things a little, enabled Junard to note the smile upon the face of his chief mate.

"Anything funny doing?" he asked.

"No, sir; but I seen her—I couldn't help it."

"Seen who?"

"I beg your pardon, sir; but she was just going out when I came to call you when I raised the light—your orders, sir, you know. I wouldn't——"

"Out with it! Whom did you see?" snapped the captain sharply, and his tone told plainly that he was in no mood for a joke. The mate sobered at once.

"There was a lady leaving your room as I came to knock—that's all, sir," he said sullenly. The captain had a poor appreciation of humor, he thought.

"What kind of looking woman was she?"

"Medium-sized, very well built—I might say stocky, sir—dressed in a dark cloth dress; she didn't have on a hat." This last was with almost a sneer. It brought Junard around with a jerk.

"I don't wish to seem foolish, Mr. Jameson, but you appear to presume too much. I might insinuate gently that you are a damn fool—but I won't, not until you tell me what is amusing you, and what you saw. I will say there was no woman in my room. If there was, I'd not be troubled to confess it."

"That's all I seen, sir," said Jameson sourly.

"Which way did she go?"

"She went aft," said the mate, wondering at the captain trying to hide the obvious. It irked him to

think his master a fool. "She went aft, and that's all I seen."

"Mr. Jameson, there's a few things you don't know," said Junard. "When we get abreast of Castle Rock, I want you to go aft and watch both sides of the ship carefully, you understand? I want you to see that not a thing is thrown overboard—not a single thing—and if there is anything showing in the wake, come to me at once—or, better still, ring off the engines and mark it to pick up. This is very important. I can't tell you right now just how important it is, but I will say your berth depends upon it. Do not let anything leave the ship without notice—not a thing."

"Aye, aye, sir," said Jameson; and he went aft amazed at the outcome of his deductions. He wondered what was up. Some affair of the captain's, he was sure. But the severity of the master's tone, the earnestness of the captain's manner, disturbed him greatly. There was something peculiar about it that made him, forced him, to give his attention to it. And there was the threat of his own berth, his position, being in forfeit. He did not like that kind of talk from a captain. It savored of undue severity. He took his station aft of the superstructure with some misgivings. In the gray light of dawn, he watched both gangways, first one side and then the other, keeping well back of the house.

Castle Rock light drew well upon the bow. It was now within a mile, and Junard noticed a small fishing boat riding in the fairway just ahead of the ship. As the water was very deep here, he knew

she was not anchored, but must be waiting and under way; yet no sail showed upon her. Perhaps a powerful motor lay within her. He watched her carefully, and walked from side to side of the bridge, waiting for some sign from those aboard. The wake was now showing white in the gray of morning, and a small object could soon be distinguished in the smooth sea to leeward of the lighthouse, where the heavy swell of the Atlantic was cut off.

Jameson, who stood at the taffrail, saw a figure of a man peer from the window of a stateroom nearly amidships. The head was quickly withdrawn. The mate watched, and then walked quickly across the stern and watched the wake, wondering what might be taking place. The form of a woman flitted down the gangway from forward, showing dimly in the gloom. She came from the opposite side of the ship from where he had seen the head peer forth. Hiding behind the house, he watched her come quickly aft. She was carrying something in her hand that looked like a life buoy. Instinctively the mate made ready to catch her. He saw that life belt, and to his imagination it spelled something like a person going overboard. The form of a man came quickly behind her, and Jameson recognized one of the under stewards, who had been watching for trouble at the purser's orders.

The woman ran at the sound of footsteps behind her. She came with amazing swiftness to the taffrail, near where Jameson stood. He gathered him-

self, and sprang forth, clasping her in his arms just as she hurled the life belt over the side into the sea.

The girl screamed shrilly, struggled frantically in the embrace of the officer. Jameson wondered what he was about—began to think he had captured a lunatic—when the rush of feet above caused him to loosen his grip. He turned in time to see Captain Junard take a header from the rail of the deck above and plunge headlong into the sea where it boiled and swirled from the thrust of the screw.

Jameson was paralyzed for an instant. He distinctly saw his commander go overboard. It gave him a shock. He let go the girl and stood motionless for a second. Then, as the head of Junard arose in the white waste astern and struck out for an object, the life belt the girl had thrown over, he gathered his wits again, and dashed for the quarter bell pull, or telegraph, to the engine room.

Full speed astern he threw it, and the astonished engineer on watch nearly fainted under the sudden warning. Thinking that a collision was at hand, he shut down and reversed under full power, opening the throttle wide, and giving her every ounce of steam in her boilers as she took the strain. The sudden take-up, the tremendous vibrations, and the slowing speed awoke many passengers. Not a sound of action had gone forth save the screams of the girl, and these were now silent as she had quickly flitted out of sight when the mate released her. Jameson rushed to the bridge and called his watch as he ran. Then he set the siren cord down

hard, and the unearthly roar awoke the quiet tropical morning. Men rushed about. The watch hurried aft.

“Stop her!” yelled Jameson to the quartermaster. “Stop her—don’t go astern!”

“Stop her, sir!” came the answering cry from the wheel. Jameson rushed to the rail again, and cut loose a life buoy from its lashings. He ran aft with it, intending to throw it out to his captain. Junard, however, was but a speck, far astern, his head showing like a black dot in the white water of the wake. The mate noticed for the first time that the small fishing boat ahead was now standing down toward the ship under rapid headway, the exhaust from her motor sounding loud and sharp over the sea.

“Get the quarter boat down—quick!” came his order.

Then he hesitated a moment. The small fishing boat was nearing them with rapidity. She headed straight for Junard, and would reach him long before any rowboat from the ship could get there.

“Hold on! Avast the boat there!” he ordered. “That motor boat will pick him up, all right.” Then the thought that he was not quite right in not lowering down a boat for his commander, that it might look queer, waiting for a stranger to do his evident duty, came over him, and he gave the order to lower away. The small boat dropped into the sea. The steamer was now motionless, lying in the calm sea behind the rock, with her engines stopped. Men crowded the rail aft to watch.

“What’s the matter? What made him jump over-

board?" came the question from all sides. "It's the captain! What's up?"

Jameson could not quite tell. He was vaguely aware that his commander sprang over for some object. That he took a desperate chance, with the ship going ahead, was certain. Had he not been seen, the vessel would have been miles away before missing him, for there had been no warning from the bridge. The mate slid down the falls, wondering what he was doing.

"Cast off—give way, port; back, starboard!" came his order. He stood up, to see better, and gazed at the fishing boat, that now approached the speck he knew to be the head of Captain Junard.

"Give way together!" he said, glad to get away from the ship, with the inquisitive crowd gathering rapidly and increasing in both anxiety and numbers.

He watched the motor boat come quickly to where Junard swam. The captain was not a good swimmer. Few seamen can swim well. Jameson saw the boat approach, men lean out from her side, and grab something, apparently trying to lift the captain aboard. Then there was a tremendous floundering and thrashing about in the sea, distant shouts for help from the captain, and the mate grasped the tiller yoke with a certain grip.

"Give way, bullies! Give way—all that's in you now!" he urged.

Something was taking place that he did not quite understand, but he had heard that call for help.

Junard saw the fishing boat coming toward him before it reached him. He waited, swimming

slowly and reserving his strength, feeling that the occupants were hostile and were waiting for the papers that had been tossed overboard. It was about where he expected something to happen. The lighthouse and the shelter of the island made it a most convenient spot to pull off the finish of the affair. The light-draft fishing boat, with her motor, could easily evade capture from anything the ship could send out after her. The steamer herself could not enter the shoal water, and must allow the smaller boat to get away across the shallow parts of the Great Panama Bank to some distant rendezvous, where the papers could be put aboard a proper ship to take them to the conspirators. He, the commander, had no right to leave the ship in the manner he had done; but necessity called for drastic action, and he had plunged over the side as soon as he had seen the girl fling an object overboard.

Three men in the fishing boat were watching him as she drew up. His own boat was a long distance off, but he hoped the mate would hurry.

A man came forward in the motor boat, and leaned out from her side. He watched him narrowly. The man made a grab for Junard as the boat reached him, and the captain, with a sudden jerk, dragged him overboard. Then he yelled for help.

The man's two companions in the boat sprang to his aid. Junard found himself engaged in a desperate struggle with three men, and shoved himself away from the side of the craft.

He held fast to the package, a metal cylinder,

tightly wrapped in canvas, and at the same time struggled out of reach of the men above him. The man he had pulled overboard regained his strength, and, grasping the life belt with one hand, grabbed at the package with the other. The package tied to the life belt could not be gotten out of his reach, and Junard was struggling with one hand and fighting and grasping alternately at the life belt with the other.

"Give it up, you scoundrel!" hissed the fellow. "What do you know about this package? Give it to me—do you hear?"

"I hear well enough," snarled Junard, struggling farther out of the reach of those in the motor boat. "But I'm the captain of that ship there—and the papers are in my care. Let go, or I'll do you harm!"

The man glared at him savagely. Then he turned to the men above him in the boat, now a dozen feet away.

"Shoot, Jim—shoot quick—kill the fool if he won't let go!" he said.

The man addressed was a tall, dark fellow with a sinister look. That he was Colombian, Junard knew from his accent and appearance. The other, who had stopped the engine, and who seemed to be the engineer, looked askance. He evidently did not like the shooting part. This man was also a Colombian, but his features were those of a man who works outdoors at a simple trade. The other two looked like desperate men, and Junard felt that they would stop at nothing to get the papers from him.

The man who was called Jim hesitated, and then, seeing the small boat approaching from the steamer, reached behind his back and brought forth a long, blue revolver. Junard waited until the barrel came within a line with his eye; then he ducked, and swung the life belt around, coming up with it in front of him, and raising it partly before his face. The pistol cracked sharply, and the bullet tore through the cork. Junard let go the package, and seized the man in the water with both hands, whirling him about and holding him squarely in front of himself.

"Start that engine!" called the man, struggling vainly to get away.

The man who had stopped it whirled the wheel over again, and the rumble of the motor began. The two waited, without throwing on the clutch.

Junard grasped the man firmly, and forced him down under the sea, going under with him, and holding his breath to the limit of his great lungs.

When he came up again the man was choking, gasping for air. Junard only waited long enough to fill his own lungs with a breath, and then ducked again, the crack of the revolver ringing in his ears as he went, pulling his antagonist down with him.

The next time he came up the fellow could not talk, but choked and gasped for air. Junard held him with a giant's grip, his long, powerful arms encircling him like those of a gorilla. The fellow let go the life belt and the package. Junard took in more air, and dropped down again, while a bullet tore through his hair, cutting his scalp.

This time when he came up the fellow was limp. Junard held him before him, and the man with the pistol was afraid to fire, as the captain's eyes just showed above the man's neck. The captain struggled farther and farther away from the boat, getting fully twenty feet distant. The man at the engine threw on the clutch, and the boat shot ahead, swung sharply around, and headed for the floating men.

Junard saw the mate standing up in the stern of the ship's boat, and knew he was doing all he could to reach him. The shots had made him aware of the desperate situation, and the men were bending their backs with a will to the oars. Jameson yelled harshly, the men in the motor craft saw that to remain longer would mean capture. They swung off and headed for the steamer, leaving their companion in Junard's grip. The next moment the mate came tearing up, and, leaning over, grasped his commander and hauled him aboard the boat.

Junard came over the side, and immediately reached for a boat hook. He stabbed at the cork jacket, and hauled it alongside, dragging it aboard before the boat lost her headway. The body of the exhausted man sank before either he or Jameson could get another hold of him.

"To the ship—quick!" gasped the captain.

"What's the matter? What's up?" questioned the mate.

"Never mind—swing her, quick!"

The boat turned around and headed back, the captain urging the men to their utmost. The fish-

ing boat, with her motor going full speed, left them far behind. They were unable to get near the craft.

Junard, watching them, saw the boat come close under the ship's stern. A form of a woman leaped from the rail of the lower deck. The splash threw spray almost into the boat as she went past, and they saw the tall Colombian reach over and drag the girl aboard. The boat shot around the steamer's stern and disappeared for a few moments; and when Junard saw her again she was a quarter of a mile distant, and making rapid headway for the shoal water of the island. He started after her, when the shots from the revolver began to strike about the craft, and Junard ordered his men to stop rowing. He knew he could not capture her, unarmed as he was, and he had his precious papers safe in his mighty hands. To follow was only to invite trouble.

The fishing boat ran quickly out of range, and Junard watched her for a few minutes. Then he headed his boat back to the ship.

The rail was crowded as he came alongside, the purser watching him, and half the passengers were on deck to see what was taking place.

"What was it? What's the matter?" asked a score at once.

"Man overboard—that's all," said Jameson.

"H'ist her up," said Junard, and he clambered up the swinging ladder thrown over to him, taking the life belt and the package under his arm.

Mr. Dunn was on deck, and Junard gave him his orders.

“Full speed ahead—on her course, north to west,” he said, and went into his room. The door closed behind him. Then he switched off the lights, for it was now broad daylight, and then he opened the package. The papers were all there and intact, the water not reaching them at all. The safe was opened, and they were placed within. Then Junard stripped and turned in for a few hours of dreamless, quiet sleep.

He had saved the papers of his company, documents that were valued at more than a million dollars—and not a soul aboard knew what had really happened. Even Jameson was never quite sure.

The purser asked no questions about cholera, the ship headed along upon her course toward New York, and the warm day took its routine without further incident. Junard appeared very happy, and told many interesting stories at the dinner table that day. He answered no questions concerning the affair of the night.

He brought in his papers, delivered them in person, and a great political change took place without any one but a few select souls ever knowing how near the verge of revolution a prominent South American republic had been. Junard was offered a medal for risking his life trying to save that of a man overboard—but he refused it. The shots from the fishing boat were explained as signals for help. That was all.

IN THE WAKE OF THE ENGINE

I HAD been transferred to the old *Prince Albert*, one of the freighters on the Jamaica run, and the skipper was Bill Baldwin—Baldwin who was once in the Amper Line, but who had a monstrous thirst and a reckless disposition—entirely too reckless for first-class passengers. The “old man,” as all captains are called, having these failings, had also a mighty poor education, and his navigation was mostly, “Let her go and trust to the sun.”

“Compasses?” said Bill. “How’d they get along before they had ’em, hey? Steer the course, or thereabouts; you’ll git thar or somewheres nigh to it—if you don’t fetch up.”

“But the company?” I said in amazement.

“The company be blowed! Take life easy—it’s short. Don’t let the company worry you to any great extent. They’ll give you a job as night watchman at twenty per month after they get out of you all there is in you.”

At the same time Bill, who was my “old man,” and who, by the way, was ten years younger than myself, would not stand for any too much carelessness on the part of his first officer. I was his

chief mate. He knew what I had to do, and hated to tell me. I confess I seldom gave him a chance. The second greaser was a little, short squarehead named Andersen; at least we called him that, going on the principle that it was a sure thing that if he was a squarehead he was either named Andersen or Johnson. There are no other names in Sweden, and a man naturally just has to be one or the other. They're good enough.

Andersen knew his business and was an able seaman, learning his little book in the old sailing ships where they teach you something not always taught in steam. He had the bos'n in with him, and what the bos'n didn't know about handling the steam winches would be hard to tell. But that's all the bos'n knew. Not a thing else. If he had he wouldn't have rammed greasy rags in behind the ceiling of the after deck house in a hurry to get his grub at knock-off time.

No, that was the failing of the bos'n; he lacked knowledge, and was as good a navigator as you might find in a young lady's finishing school. He had paws on him like a loggerhead's flippers, nearly a foot across, and each finger was a marline spike, and every thread of his hair, where he wasn't clean bald, was a rope yarn. He knew sailing—nothing else.

He was about as much afraid of anything in this world or the next as a hungry shark is of beef; in fact, he seemed to take to trouble with about the same sort of appetite. In six months I never had a chance to tell him anything except the routine.

The chief engineer was McDougal, and the second was Mac something—all of our engine-room force went under the same name of Mac, just plain "*Mac*," and if they were not Scotchmen, I never saw one in my life. Scotchmen are born engine men, take to a machine like a dago does to a knife. The rest of the fireroom bunch were the old-style Liverpool Irishmen, and I'll tell you something, they were hard ones all right. They were the toughest lot of coal tossers I ever sailed with, and even the donkey man, O'Hare, was a peach of a Donegal Irishman with Galways of reddish hue that stuck out from under his shirt collar, pointing upward as if they were growing some husky on his throat.

That was the principal part of our crew. There were some twenty others, including the cooks, galley boys, seamen, and quartermasters.

We cleared for Antonio, and were soon running out over the Western Ocean in the lazy, tiresome routine of ship's duty. We were licensed to carry passengers and had a few waiters aboard, a steward, and a lady of about thirty signed on as stewardess.

As there were no passengers this voyage out—no one ever went out with us if he could help it, but came back when there were no other ships—the cabin crowd had an easy time, regular yachting trip; and if Miss Lucy Docking had a stupid time, it was because she wouldn't talk to the rest.

"Stuck-up and sassy," they said aft, but I never could tell, never getting a chance to talk with her

without a dozen or more listening. At the same time I didn't like to blame the girl just because she didn't like the set of lovers the ship furnished free of charge. "Let her pick her own," said I, "it's like enough she'll make a mistake, anyways, without your help." I never had a big opinion of women, anyhow, for the only one I ever proposed marriage to fell down and nearly died laughing at me, and that after I had been dreaming of her and thinking her the greatest angel in the world.

Miss Lucy was all right with me, because I let her alone, except in the mid-watch, when I was cold and thirsty. Then she used to get me a cup of cocoa or chocolate or coffee, and I tell you the man who stands the mid-watch on the old freighters is earning all he gets, whether it comes by way of the stewardess or by way of the front office.

We crossed the Western Ocean in the usual manner. I had my order book to sign, and I saw that the second greaser didn't get gay with it. Days and days of the old routine passed, and we were in the edge of the trade when the first thing happened to show what a wild lot of yaps we had in that ship.

The bos'n stuffed his oiled rags in behind the ceiling of the after house, and it was about three days afterward we struck the hot weather. The rags promptly caught fire—they always do when snugged in from the air—and we hove the old hooker to in the teeth of the trade with the after deck a roaring furnace. If you think we didn't have a time of it putting that deck house out,

throwing it overboard in pieces, you should look up Lloyd's. Well, the way I talked to that bos'n would have given heart disease to most men, but the beggar didn't see it at all.

"Rags is rags," he says, "and what for don't I put them behaind something?"

"Because if you do it again we'll toss you overboard with twenty pound of kentledge to your feet," I told him, and it was the only reason he could get through his bullet head. It didn't scare him at all. He only looked upon the matter as closed, for he would not mutiny. He was too good a sailor for any foolishness.

"Rags is rags," he would repeat as we chopped the blackened wreck away the day after, when all hands had been near the port of missing ships and were tired and nervous, having been on duty for fifty hours without a break. "Rags is rags, an' some son of a sea-cook set fire to 'em—no rags I ever seen ever took fire of themselves. Does a ship run herself, hey? Answer me that! Does a ship run her own engines, steer her own course, what? Some one of you sons of Ham did that dirty trick and I'll get you for it yet!"

"But rags do fire themselves, even if a ship don't," said the old man, "and you are the leading bonehead not to know it. You don't rate a brass boy in anything but a coal barge, and if you don't look out I'll have to train you some."

"Rags is——"

Only the size and look of the bos'n's hands prevented the old man from committing murder right

there. But the bos'n took it out on the men. What he didn't do to them that voyage was never logged.

Miss Docking stood the test well. She stayed on deck and watched the fracas and never turned a hair, so to speak, waiting for the word to take to the boats with as cool a nerve as anything I ever saw. She was billeted for my boat, Number One, and I confess I was somewhat disappointed when the blamed deck house burned to the steel and the danger of leaving the ship was past.

Boldwin was always taking it easy, and he never even took that real hard, although it would cost him something to explain how he did the damage when the underwriters asked him.

"Don't do it again," was all he said to me.

"No, not until we get another deck house at least," I said. "Maybe I can see that they don't set fire to the anchor or burn up the windlass, or eat the coir hawser, or——"

"Well, see that you don't. That's your business—you're mate," he snapped back, and started for the chart house.

Andersen came to me. "I tank I sign de order book for sou'west half sou'—here we bane running eastb'no'th. How I tell de truth wid sech a t'ing—hey?" said he.

"If you always tell the truth in this line of packets you'll soon get a job hoeing potatoes in Essex! What's the matter with you? Do you want the company to get wise that we fought a fire set in with oiled rags by a fool of a bos'n and had to run the ship fifty miles off her course? Who'll pay for

the coal? Who'll square the old man? Who'll tell the passengers that we don't always have a bone-head bos'n to wreck us, and that if they'll promise to come again we'll see that it don't happen often—no, not often?"

Andersen went on duty with a queer look in his eyes. He had seen something and it amazed him—just why I never could tell, for he had been in steamers before and ought to have known something of a ship's officers' duties before coming into the Prince Line.

The truth in many lines is sacred. Absolutely sacred. Too sacred entirely to shift about the deck like a bag of dunnage and leave lying around for some fools to play with. No, never play with the truth in some lines of shipping. Do your duty. That's all you've got to do, and if it's so logged, why, then you're all right. If it isn't, why, then you better get to driving a truck or peddling peanuts.

Well, Boldwin was a pretty good sort, as I have said. He mostly saw that all of us did our duty—in the log book, in the order book, and with the company officers. We went along slowly on our course after that, and were in the latitude of Watlings when bad weather came on. It was nothing much, just a cyclone of the usual order, coming as it did in the hurricane season; but we were a full-powered ship of six thousand tons, and it wouldn't have delayed us to any extent—except that we didn't count on the donkey man from Donegal.

You see, the *Albert* had one of those underwater ash-chutes. The pipe came down through the bilge, about fifteen feet below the water line. It was a foot in diameter, and was supposedly bolted to the skin and as solid as the keel or garboards.

The metal of the pipe was half an inch in thickness, and was braced and bolted so that the top which showed above the water line could be hove on and shut off in a seaway. The top had a sliding cover working with a lever, and when the ashes were to be fired out the cover was thrown back, the bucket dumped, and a jet of steam blew the mass out through the ship's bottom, making no dirt or dust at all, and doing away with the everlasting firing over the side.

It was a good invention. It saved the company many dollars in paint, and it kept the ship, which was always short-handed, looking better than most vessels that used the old way over the side.

It would have lasted forever if the man from Donegal hadn't been of an inquisitive turn of mind, and started exploring it with a monkey wrench the week before the storm. As it happened he broke several of the bolts which had rusted in the bottom, and the metal, having been much worn and corroded, the first thing Mac knew was a torrent of sea water pouring into the after compartment, coming as it did through a pipe hole about a foot in diameter and fifteen feet below the sea level.

It caught the firemen unawares. The donkey man was with them and let out a yip that brought

every coal passer, oiler, and fireman to the chute. A wild burst of water tore through that hole, and the compartment was flooded in less time than it takes to tell about it—and that compartment ran the whole length of the engine room and aft of it until it brought up in the wake of the machinery, where the bulkhead of the tail-shaft room shut off the stern.

The donkey man managed to get out with the rest, and the fires in starboard boilers swamped, nearly blowing up the ship as the water flooded them. It was only because there was enough water to prevent the making of steam to any great extent that saved us from having the whole mid-section blown in the air.

And all the time I was holding to the bridge rail with a cyclone snoring down upon us at the rate of seventy miles an hour. Luckily the ash pipe stayed partly bolted to the skin of the bottom. That alone saved us from total loss.

Of course I knew something was wrong the minute the boilers went smothered. The terrific roar of steam and the easing of the engines told me that sure enough trouble was coming, and all the time I had been wondering how we would hold the hooker up to that gale with the full power in her.

“What’s the matter—bottom blow away?” howled Baldwin, coming from the pilot house and yelling in my ear.

“God knows—anything might happen to us after last week,” I howled in return, but the force of the hurricane blew the words away, and the old man

went staggering and pulling himself along the rail until he managed to get below. For the next fifteen minutes on that bridge I did some small bit of thinking. Looked like all day with us. Not a sign could I get from anywhere, and of course I dared not leave the bridge. Once I thought she had blown up with powder. Next I thought the engines had gone through the bottom. And all the time I could feel her settling in that whirlwind sea—a sea torn white with the blast of the squalls that were now coming faster and faster each minute.

“Well, I’m mighty glad I’m not married, anyway,” I said to myself, for it looked like the long sleep coming fast. And then I somehow thought of that Miss Docking below there in the comfortable cabin waiting for the finish. It gave me a bit of a turn, and I tried to imagine what that cabin would look like in a few minutes when the sea water swept through it with all its transoms and cushions, piano and carpet——

“Hard a starboard, sir,” came the cry.

It was most welcome. Anything but that standing there waiting for the next minute to follow the last. I saw that the quartermaster swung the wheel over quickly. It was steam steering, and the ship fell off in the trough of the sea in a few minutes, the weight of the gale driving her bodily to leeward and heeling her over to quite a list.

“Heave her to,” came the order passed up from the old man, and I put the wheel hard down and waited to see if she would stay without coming up.

She lay easily drifting off, and while I watched her for trouble the old man sent for me. Andersen came up and took my place, and I ran down, half blown, half crawling to the shelter of the deck house, and from there below to see what had happened.

Bill Boldwin was standing at the ash chute swearing at the man from Donegal. The donkey man was trying to tell what he didn't know about his business, and all the time the water flowed freely through the one-foot pipe until it so filled the compartment that nothing more could come up through it. It was a good thing! If the whole Atlantic Ocean had been delegated to flow through that pipe, nobody was there to stop it, not a soul to say why not. And then I was aware of the stewardess standing in the press of faces, looking scared but cool.

"Why don't you ram something in it?" she asked.

Simple? Sure it was simple. No one had tried to do such a thing, but there she was asking why.

"The pipe'll break away—you can't shove anything down it," said Boldwin.

"No? But why don't you shove something from the outside?" said Miss Docking.

"Go to your room," snarled the old man.

"She's right—we'll stop it in a jiffy—from the outside," I yelled.

The skipper thought I was crazy. He looked at me.

“How’ll you get anything over the outside in this seaway, you bonehead?” he asked.

“Get me the hand lead,” I yelled to the bos’n, “and a stick of light wood—big piece, big enough to float a man.”

The bos’n ran for the stuff. That was one good point in that bos’n. He’d do what he was told even when he hadn’t the slightest idea what he was doing. He came back in a few minutes with a long piece of white pine and the hand lead. I looked them over for a moment to judge the weight and floating power of the tools. Then I quickly hitched the lead to the piece of pine and left the bight of the line so that as soon as I jerked it hard the lead would free itself and go hell bent for Davy Jones, leaving the Pine line fast to the lead line to float up and away.

To the end of the chute I now quickly made my way. The Donegal man wanted to help, and faith! he was a good man when it came to doing things he understood. He showed me where the upper end of that chute was in that roaring surge of filthy water, and the beggar actually got a hold of the lever that worked the cover and jammed it open.

I instantly dropped the lead, the wood, and the line through, and had the satisfaction of feeling the line going fast to the bottom out through the hole in the bilge. When the line had gone about ten fathoms I gave the sudden jerk. Off comes the lead and the line stops running out.

“Get to windward and grab that plank,” I yelled, and even the old man followed the bunch that strug-

gled to the rail and watched the sea where we drifted bodily off. In a minute the bos'n saw it. In five more he had the plank back aboard and a three-inch line fast to the lead line. This I hauled quickly but cautiously back through the ash pipe until I got a good hold of the end.

"Now," I yelled, "give me mattresses, beds, canvas, fernaught, or oakum—anything so long as you get it here quick."

The stewardess had already anticipated my work. I caught her eye back of the line of men.

"Here they are," she said quietly.

The bos'n got a Number Double O hatch cover. I wrapped the mattresses in it, and then quickly hitched the three-inch line carefully about the middle.

"Over the side with it," I shouted. Over it went, and as it did so I got the line hauling through the pipe. Two men helped me. We hauled the plug jam up tight against the ship's bilge, and then surged upon the line and made it fast.

"Now go ahead and pump her clear, Mac, pump her out—she's tight as a drum," I said; and the old man looked at me with a peculiar smile.

An hour later that compartment was clear of water, and she leaked only a little around the stuffing, which was not enough to wet a man's feet. Another day and the starboard boilers were doing duty with a smoothing sea and a sun peeping out through the banks of trade clouds. The storm had long passed; the *Prince Albert* was on her way under full power, with nothing at all to disturb the

serenity of the passage, save the knowledge that we had a masterly crew aboard and some excellent specimens for manning passenger ships.

Down the Western Ocean we ran without further incident, and hove to off the entrance of Antonio, burning flares for the pilot. You know the place. Narrow cut in through the reef, with the harbor lying like a pool of blue water in the surrounding hills. Not a breath of air in the place even when, half a mile distant, just outside, the trade might be blowing a twenty-knot breeze.

The pilot came out at daybreak, and we ran in, tied up to the wharf, and began discharging. My duties were ended for the time, as I thought, and I took a stroll up to the hotel upon the hill. There was no use trying to get any sleep in the watch below while at the dock, for two hundred howling Jamaica blacks roared and surged along the gangways and crowded the winches, handling the cargo ably, while the women came down in swarms to chat with the crew and sell a few grapefruit and oranges. Boldwin let any one come aboard, and as the men were not supposed to handle cargo, they had plenty of time in spite of all we could do to keep them busy.

The skipper reported the damage to the agents, and told of the disaster below. He was honest. He might have saved that bit of knowledge until we reached England again, but he told his tale, and the agents refused to allow him to sail until the pipe was repaired and properly bolted down into the bilge plates as it should be. In the smooth

water of that mirror-like harbor it seemed an easy thing to do. All that was necessary was to get a diver to go under the fifteen feet to the outside end and pass up the bolts through the flange.

Mr. Man from Donegal could then get at them with his monkey wrench and screw down the nuts upon them, clamping the pipe as fast as the keel itself.

"You take a look around uptown and try to get hold of a diver," said the old man. "Mr. Sacks, the agent, says he don't know of any nearer than Kingston, and it'll take two days to get the one over there, as he's out on a wreck off the harbor. We can't wait two days. Got to get to Montego Bay and take on a lot of stuff, then get to Kingston for clearing and off we go."

"Why not wait until we get to Kingston to do the trick?" I asked.

Bill Boldwin gazed at me in contempt.

"Say, do you want to advertise the fact that we are on the bum to all the passengers the line'll carry? Think a minute, man, and don't ask fool questions. We got to get that job done right here—see? We don't go outside until there's something more'n a mattress and a bit of fearnaught between us and the bottom of the Caribbean."

"But we carried it the last thousand miles all right," I said.

Bill turned away in disgust.

As a matter of fact, I didn't like the idea of trying to get hold of a diver in Antonio. There were not enough divers to go down to find the bottoms

of the rum bottles ashore, let alone a ship's bilge. It's true, a man might do the thing naked in that clear water. I've seen men in the East copper a ship twice as deep with nothing on them but a hammer and a mouthful of nails.

After a day's search I gave it up. Not a man knew anything about submarine work, and at the hotel they laughed at me when I inquired for a diver. I also noticed that Miss Lucy Docking looked well sitting upon the veranda of the joint, togged out as she was in white linen. She gave me a nod, but wasn't keen on talking when I tried to find out if she had made arrangements for lady passengers that voyage.

"There's two on the books—that's all," she said, and gazed placidly out over the tops of the coconuts growing upon the beach below.

"Your advice last Friday helped me a lot," I said, "and I appreciate it and would——"

"Would you like some more?" she interrupted suddenly.

"Anything you might suggest," I said.

"Beat it back to the ship, then," she answered without a smile.

"Sure—if that's your advice," I snarled; "the hot weather has evidently soured your——"

"Cut it out—I'm not a guest here, and what do you think the agents would say if they saw the chief officer of their 'crack' liner talking to their stewardess sitting on the hotel piazza? I thought you had more sense."

"I ain't the only fool aboard—that's straight," I said.

"No; nor ashore, either—why don't you stop that hole yourself? You're big enough and ugly enough to stop a clock," she snapped.

"Thanks!" I answered, and strode away with the kindest feelings imaginable for our stewardess.

But strange as it may seem, that remark was what did the business. I would stop that hole if I had to be keelhailed myself to do it. What! Lay the ship up a day or two while that lady sat around in white duck and looked out dreamily over that beautiful harbor? Not if I knew myself. I'd see that the ship got away and hoped she would carry at least two ugly and indignant aged ladies who could and would make life a happy dream for that stewardess.

I went back aboard with the report that there was not a diver this side of hell, and that if the ship would stand the expense of my funeral I would at least try to pass the bolts for the man from Donegal to screw fast.

"Sink a donkey man, anyhow!" I swore, "why don't the company get engineers enough to run a ship properly?"

"Why, indeed?" smiled Bill Boldwin.

I turned to the men I needed, and with that bos'n to give them advice with those flippers of his, I peeled off and made ready for the work. The engine-room force had taken off the pipe and bolted a new flange to it, a strong job and proper. The affair was all ready to ship just as soon as we dared

pull the wad of stuffing away and set it up. A frame had been rigged in the room to steady the affair, and the bolt holes had been reamed out as much as they would stand. A deck pump kept the water from the vicinity, the water that still leaked in around the bolt holes.

It was necessary to get the wad of stuff away from the bolt holes in the flanges, for it spread out so that it made passing of bolts from the outside impossible. The pressure upon it from the water under the ship at the depth of fifteen feet was great, and I was supposed to get a line to it so that it might be pulled away by the men on deck after we slacked away the three-inch line by which we had hauled it into the breach. The pipe was set up true over the opening, the holes lined up, a few bolts inserted point downward to steady it, and all was ready for the man outside to get the blamed wad away and pass the bolts upward so that their threads would appear through the flange. I went on deck and gazed down over the side at the warm blue depths.

"Strange that the mate has to do the dog's work," I said to Mac, who was waiting and watching.

I had a line rigged under the bilge by passing it under the bows and drifting it aft until it came right on the line of the hole. It was slack enough to allow a handhold, so that I could pull myself down quickly and then let go as I pushed in a bolt.

I took a light line and over I went.

The water was fine. The light filtered down under the ship's bilge, and it was only dark after I

swept well under the curve of the side. Still, I could see a little, and soon made out a mass which I rightly took to be the mattress and stuff filling the hole.

I tried to get the line fast to the thing, feeling quickly, but I lost my breath before I got it fast and, letting go, struggled to the surface again.

"What luck?" asked Mac, grinning over at me.

I wasted no time in idle words. I recovered and grasped the line again and hauled myself furiously toward the opening underneath. I could not get the line fast, and had to come up and confess that I had failed so far.

"Look out a shark don't get you," said some one with an idea of wit.

"Give me a marline spike," I ordered that bos'n, and the beggar got one, handing it to me by a line. I dove again, and this time managed to drive the spike in between the turns of the line holding the mattress. The next dive I got the small line fast to it, and, coming up, told them to slack away on the big line inside and haul the small one outside and get the stuffing away. It came easy enough, and the line of interested faces peering over the rail above bore a different look as I hung with one hand and rested from the exertion.

"Now for the bolts," I said, and one was handed down. I hauled under again and inserted it, feeling with some satisfaction the other end being grasped by some one inboard. Mr. Donkey Man had hold of it all right, and, putting on a nut, set it up without delay. This much of the job was not so hard,

but I was now getting tired, and found that I could hardly get below before I wanted to get my breath again. I was no diver—no, not to speak of, but I thought of that woman sitting up there waiting, taking it easy with her insolence and white dress

Seven other inch bolts were to be inserted before the job could be finished inside, and the water was pouring through the bolt holes in streams that kept the pumps working full stroke and made working about the opening difficult. I came on deck, and Bill Baldwin gave me a noggin of rum, grinning at me all the time.

“You ain’t so bad for a mate—I’ve sailed with worse,” said he.

“The next time I sign on it’ll be as a master submarine,” I said, with some feeling. “Now, if I didn’t have to wear these breeches I could do better and faster work.”

“Why don’t you take ’em off?” he said.

“But the ladies—I must wear something——”

“Oh, what do you care for a lot of niggers? Strip if it does you any good.”

I was just about to take his advice when I noticed the face of Miss Docking passing the port along the gangway. She had been attracted by the crowd aboard, and had come, woman-like, out of pure curiosity, to see what was on.

“No,” I said; “I’ll fix the rest, all right—gimme another noggin.”

I got seven of the eight bolts in place; and the donkey man, assisted by Mac and the entire en-

gine-room force, set them up one at a time after packing the joint properly. Only one wooden plug remained inboard, and the water squirted straight up nearly fifteen feet with the pressure when that was pulled out for my last attempt. If I could get that bolt in, there was a job done that would save the company perhaps a few hundred dollars, and I would get—well, I might get mentioned as something better than the ordinary mate when Bill made his report. But that wasn't what made me do the thing; it was the confounded spirit that Lucy Docking stirred up within me. Oh, yes, I was a fool, all right. I don't deny it.

The affair was getting to be something of a circus by this time, and the coons who were looking on were making remarks. I was about to clear the gangway when I thought that here was the last plug, the last bolt, and then for a nip and a sleep before clearing. I went over with that last bolt, and, as I did so, I saw Miss Lucy gazing out of a cabin port at me. Before I went under her face appeared above the rail and watched. I was so tired by this time that I had the small line, which was hambroline, fast about my armpits, so that Mac and his crew could haul me up if I gave out entirely. This was my mistake.

Down I went, and as I went under I thought I heard the word "Shark!" muttered by some of the colored folk above. I had just shoved in the last bolt when a shadow passed. At the same instant there was a mighty pull upon the line. I was jerked bodily away, and my back scraped the huge

barnacles which covered the ship all along in the wake of her engines clear to her sternpost. The razor-like edges cut and stung me. I felt a mighty desire to breathe, and tried to get upward. Then my head struck the bottom of the ship with great violence, and I was partly stunned. This was what probably saved my life, for I ceased to breathe, and the spasm passed.

What really happened was this:

A huge sawfish was swimming about the harbor, having just come inside the reef. Tropical seas are infested by many of these fish, which "fin out" like a shark, and which are probably of the shark species. The long snout, unlike the swordfish, which is a giant mackerel, is studded with rows of sharp teeth, put there for the Lord knows what purpose. This monster had come close to the ship, and the negroes had spotted him, and thought him a shark at a distance where his snout could not be seen.

Some one shouted, "Shark!" and the intelligent bos'n hauled line with those finlike flippers of his after the manner of a sperm-whaler coming upon a three hundred-barrel whale. My head had struck the ship's bilge, and my back had been cut open with the razor-like barnacles—and then the fish, getting frightened at the uproar, dove below, and his teeth on his saw snout fouled the line.

It parted, but it parted between him and the ship, and away I went in tow of a flying sawfish.

I knew nothing about it for some time, luckily; it would have affected my nerves.

Luckily the negroes were active in spite of their laziness. A small boat, lying alongside the ship, was instantly manned, and within a minute it was after me, with four stout blacks pulling for all they were worth. A man in the bow reached over and jabbed at the line with his boat hook and jerked it aboard. Then he lifted me in and turned me over to the rest in the boat, while he held on to the line and played the fish gamely for all the sport there was in it.

I came to in that boat towing behind a sawfish, which the natives seemed to think was more important to catch than me getting back aboard and receiving proper treatment for being nearly cut in two and drowned.

The line finally broke, and they rowed me sorrowfully back alongside. I looked up, and saw Miss Lucy Docking gazing over the side with some show of anxiety expressed upon her face. Also I noted Bill Boldwin, skipper of the *Prince Albert*, showing some interest in the proceedings.

"Send him aboard, you black scoundrels!" screamed Miss Lucy. "How dare you keep that man in the boat chasing a good-for-nothing fish?"

"Bring him alongside, or I'll be in there after you," roared Bill.

My bos'n passed a line down, and I was quickly hoisted aboard, where I was laid out flat on my back, as I was still too weak to stand. Miss Lucy herself poured whisky down my throat and smoothed my wet hair back from my bleeding head.

"Arnica, you lazy rascals!" she hissed, and some

one went for it. My cuts were soaked in it, and it stung furiously, but the cuts of barnacles are poisonous, and I rather preferred arnica to friar's balsam, which I knew Bill would rub me with. Then the bos'n helped me to my bunk, and Miss Lucy Docking was left alone with me to attend to my wants.

"I suppose my advice and counsel was not so good this time?" she said as Bill left us.

"Well, it taught me one thing, all right enough," I said, "and that may do me some good in the future."

"And how is that?" asked the lady, looking at me with some show of concern. She had wonderful eyes, and her hair was noticeably curly at the temples—and her mouth——

"Well, it will teach me never, no, never, under any circumstances whatever, do you understand?—never to take it again," I said, taking her hand.

"We'll see about that later on," she said, and her mouth had a peculiar droop at the corners that has been a constant source of dread to me ever since—that is, whenever I see it.

IN THE HULL OF THE "HER- ALDINE"

I UNDERSTAND that you did good work in the *Prince Alfred* in time of trouble," said Lord Hawkes, looking at me with approval. He was manager of the Prince Line, and, when he sent for any of us to tell us that we had done well, it was time to—well, he didn't often do that, and I must have shown some embarrassment.

I remained silent, holding my cap in my hands and looking at Boldwin, my skipper, who had done me the honor to report me favorably in the log book.

"I hear, also," continued Lord Hawkes, "that you are a good diver, a master workman under water——"

"Pardon me, your lordship," I interrupted, "I'm but a licensed ship's officer, and what I don't know about diving would fill a dozen empty log books."

"Well, at all events, you showed resource. Yes, my good Garnett, you are a man of infinite resource. There's no doubt about that, and that's what I'm coming to. You are also resolute in time of trouble, and the two qualities are what I need in the work I am going to send you to do."

Bill Baldwin looked scared. He didn't want to lose his mate. He had simply spoken for me that I might get in the good books of the company, not get away from his ship.

The manager of the Bay Line seemed to be studying some papers upon the desk before him while we two stood respectfully in front as became seamen in the presence of our mighty ruler. Baldwin was keen on lords. I hadn't associated with them to any great extent myself, but I was willing—no matter what might be said about them.

"The *Princess Heraldine*, our Cape liner, left port August the fifth," said Lord Hawkes. "She had aboard in her safe the famous Solander diamond, a stone nearly as large as the Cullinan and worth something like a round half-million dollars. Also she had about three million more in various stones uncut and consigned to the firm here. In running up the West African coast, she broke her crank shaft and drove it through her bottom, tearing the compartment to pieces, and forcing Captain Sumner to head for Lagos in the hope of beaching her before she sank. He managed to get her into ten fathoms on that low, sandy coast, and she went down about a mile or two offshore.

"All the passengers were saved, but by some oversight the combination of the safe was lost at the time they needed it, owing to the agent, Grimes, being either too frightened or too ill to remember it.

"Captain Sumner—the only other man aboard who knew the combination—was unable to either

leave the bridge at the critical moment of her sinking, owing to the necessity of saving the passengers in the small boats, or tell any one before the *Heraldine* suddenly settled and went down, carrying five of the crew and the entire contents of the safe along with her."

Lord Hawkes looked up at me shrewdly as he finished and gazed into my eyes.

I saw no necessity for a reply. There was a few minutes' silence, then he went on:

"The wrecking company is now on the way there, but there has been some trouble experienced with them and with the underwriters. Therefore we've deemed it worth while to send a ship—one of our regular Cape boats on her lay-up voyage—to Lagos, and try for the safe.

"The ship is a total loss, and will be covered all right, but the diamonds are not insured, owing, as I have said, to some disagreement with the underwriters lately, and it has been just our luck to lose them this voyage.

"You are to take the *Prince John*, and go to Lagos. There you will find the wrecking crew waiting orders. You are to see that we get that safe intact—you understand? We want that safe *just as it was before it went to the bottom*. Your orders are here." And he handed me a folded document. "You will leave at once."

"Aye, aye, sir," I said, somewhat bewildered, but getting the lay of the thing straight enough. "Is that all, sir?"

"That's all. If you wish anything regarding de-

tails, you will see Mr. Smith of the main office. I wish again to impress you that this mission is important."

It struck me so at once. A few millions in diamonds in ten fathoms—in a ten-ton safe! Yes, that was something worth looking after. It was important, all right. Seemed easy enough. Any one who knows anything about wrecking, knows that ten fathoms isn't too deep to work, although it's some little ways down. It depends also upon other conditions, which might or might not prevail. I'd get that safe easy enough—yank it aboard all standing, as we say at sea.

Well, within two days I was standing on the bridge of the *Prince John*, and wondering how the poor fellows in Africa managed to keep a ship of her class afloat long enough to lay her up.

It was the company's policy to have their African steamers laid up at Cape Town—helped labor, local progress, and all that sort of thing. In reality they got the work done for about half what it would cost them in England.

The *Prince John* could make ten knots under most favorable circumstances, but as this was her lay-up voyage, she, as might be imagined, was not doing her best. I think she rammed along about eight, most of the way down; and McDougal, the chief engineer, was working like a machinist from daylight till dark to get her to do that.

We carried only the crew of six seamen and ten firemen, with two engineers, a donkeyman, a pair of mates, a cook, and galley boy. Just two dozen of

us all told; and, while I had never commanded a ship of any size before, I was not suffering much from swelled cranium as I stood upon the bridge and gave orders.

Low-powered, black-sided, with the regulation Clyde bow and round stern, she was no better than a tramp. We carried extra diving and hoisting gear for the wrecking crew that had preceded us. Our winches were heavy, and built for working in the African trade where a ship must handle her own cargo. They would be useful in the work ahead.

My mates, Simpson and Dennison, were good men, and knew their little book all right. Simpson had a very red nose, and looked as if he liquored on the sly, but he never showed groggy on duty, so I had no chance to call him down. He would continue the voyage as captain after I got that safe up and on its way to England. Dennison was young and boyish. He was a good lad, and never slept in his watch on deck—at least I never caught him.

The run was uneventful, and we were sooner or later close to the West African coast, running through an oily sea, and pointing for Lagos.

One hot and stifling morning after I had worked the sight, I was sitting in a deck chair at the pilot-house door, thinking of Lucy Docking, and how I might make a saving of fifteen pounds a month out of a salary fixed at twelve. This mathematical problem was unfinished when Dennison hailed me from the bridge.

"Vessel right ahead, sir, anchored about a mile and a half offshore," he said.

It was our friends, the wrecking crew, and we had arrived.

The topmasts of the *Heraldine* stuck clear of the oily sea. She had been a three-masted ship with square rig forward and fore and aft upon the main and mizzen. She had sails upon her spars already bent after the old-time style of low-powered ships. She lay easily in about ten or twelve fathoms, and had a slight list to port owing to her settling a bit upon her bilge.

Being very flat and wide-bottomed, she looked almost ready to rise and continue her voyage lying as she did in that smooth sea, and being unhurt save for that gash in her bilge where the broken crank tore through, thrashing her life out before the engineer could shut off steam.

I pictured for a moment the huge flail, the piston with the broken crank attached, the pieces not less than half a ton, whirling up and down under the full pressure of her cylinders with nothing to stop it. There must have been a wild mess in that engine room with a crazy hammer going full tilt like that.

As in most single-screw ships, her crank must have thrown down when connected but a foot or two above her bilge, and when it tore loose it must have struck full power at each and every wild throw of the piston.

My business was not to raise her, however. She was not worth it, having insurance, and being bet-

ter as a total loss. I was after getting into the treasure room situated just beneath the main deck forward of the boilers.

The room, from the drawings furnished by her builders, was an iron compartment ten by fifteen feet. At one end of it—the forward one—was built the huge safe. This was bolted down, and to the beams.

It was not a new affair, having done duty for years in the African trade, but it had a very effective combination lock of the usual kind, and, as one would have to open the strong-room door before being able to get to the combination of the safe, it was considered perfectly competent to carry any amount of treasure.

Mr. Haswell, of Haswell & Jones, submarine experts, came aboard from the powerful wrecking tug, which lay near us. He was a little man, but quite fat. Red hair and whiskers gave his pale face a peculiar sickly tint, but he was not a sickly man. He was reckoned one of the best deep-water workers in England, and could stand a very high pressure for a long time. Little pale eyes looked shrewdly at me as he presented his card, coming aboard as he did from a boat rowed by six sturdy blacks—"kroo boys," he called them. I met him at the side, and shook hands.

"We're ready to begin whenever you say," he said. "I got the firm's letter, and have only just arrived myself. They told me you had the gear aboard with you."

"Yes, I have plenty of gear, all right," I an-

swered, "and you can commence work to-day if you want to. This place is too cold for me, and I'd just as soon get away from here the next day, if possible."

"It's some hot, all right, but one don't notice it below so much. I suppose those derricks you've got will hold all right—what?" And he gazed at our hoisting gear.

The thermometer was one hundred and six under the after awning, and not a breath of air stirring. The hot, sandy coast shone like a white band, fringing the blue water, and I wondered what kind of weather it was on that white, sandy shore.

We went over the gear together, and then sat sweating and panting for air, while the steward brought us something cool to drink—that is, as cool as could be procured. Then I went with Mr. Haswell aboard the wrecking tug, and was introduced to the working force.

Ten white men and twenty blacks were the outfit. This with what I had was enough to raise the ship had we so wished. Only two of the white men were divers—Williams, a sturdy fellow weighing nearly three hundred; and Mitchell, a short, powerful man, about two hundred and fifty. Both were under forty, and had done plenty of deep-water work. They looked upon the job as trifling.

"We'll blow the deck off to-morrow, and then tear out a side of the room," said Haswell. "After that we can disconnect the safe, and you can get your winches to do the rest. In three days we ought to cover the job."

The hot, oily calm continued. The night was something fierce to contemplate. The sun came out again like a molten ball of metal, and Haswell donned his suit lazily, while the air pumps, manned by four blacks, were started.

A ladder reaching a fathom down under the sea was fastened to the tug's side, and Haswell lowered himself over upon it, and waited for his helmet. This was fastened by Williams, and then the air was started.

As it whistled into the dome, the front glass was screwed on, and the little man was shut off from us. Slowly he went down and swung clear, dropping out of sight in a storm of bubbles which rose from his helmet.

I took out the water glass. This was a cylindrical bucket with a glass bottom. By jamming one's head into the bucket and sinking the bottom of the affair under the sea to a depth of three or four inches, objects could be seen about twice as distinctly as without it—this owing to the fact that in the open the reflection and motion of the light upon the always moving sea surface, prevent the gaze from following objects distinctly.

In order to use the water glass it was, of course, necessary to get close to the sea.

I dropped into the small boat lying alongside the wrecking tug, and leaned far over the gunwale, peering down. The long, easy swell, the sure sign of an immense calm area of sea, came slowly from the westward and rolled the boat gently but enough to keep me from getting a good look until I caught

my balance. Then I managed to get the glass down firmly, and hold it about four inches under with my head in the bucket.

At first I could make out little or nothing. The sea was not very clear at the spot, owing to the close proximity of the low, sandy shore where the surf rolled incessantly, stirring up the bottom. Soon I could make out the outline of the deck below where the flying bridge rose within three fathoms of the surface.

The *Heraldine* was drawing about twenty-two feet when she sank, and her flying bridge was fully twenty-five to thirty above the sea. I tried to see farther, but could make out nothing at all.

The lines of the diver led toward the fore part of the ship, and moved slightly. Williams, who tended them, sat listlessly upon the rail of the tug, and gave or drew in as the occasion called. I kept looking to see things, but could make out nothing further in the way of the wreck.

A huge shadow passed under me—a long, dark shape. It was a gigantic shark nosing about the wreck.

I called out to Williams.

"No fear," he replied lazily; "they won't hurt him in that dress—might if he was naked."

The shark passed along forward, and sank down out of sight. Then Haswell signaled that he was coming up.

He came slowly, and I watched the lines coming in. Soon the metal helmet appeared, and then he climbed with seeming difficulty up the ladder,

helped by Williams. When he came above the rail, he hung over it, and his front glass was unscrewed, the pumps stopped working, and we came close to hear the news.

"Located her all right," he said. "You can fix up about twenty pounds of number two gelatine—better put it in a tube, and be sure to make the wires fast—have to pull it through some wreckage down there."

"See anything of a big shark?" I asked.

"Oh, yes, I gave him a poke in the stomach with a stick—he won't bother me in this dress—but I did get nipped by one of those poisonous snakes—see?" And he held out his hand, where a small trickle of blood ran down from the second joint of his forefinger.

Williams gave an exclamation. The natives looked at him anxiously.

"I'll come aboard and rest a while before going down again," said Haswell. And he was helped aboard, and undressed.

His finger swelled while this was being done, and, by the time he stood in his flannels, he had a hand that was fast turning black. Williams said little. The poisonous water snakes that infest certain tropical seas close to the river mouths were known to him. Those in the Indian Ocean are especially dangerous.

Haswell gazed at the blackening finger, and shook his head.

"Better give me some whisky," he said. He

drank, and sat down. Williams stood near, and Mitchell came up.

"That's a bad bite," said Mitchell.

"Well, I suppose there's no use waiting any longer—cut it off, and be quick," said Haswell.

Mitchell, iron-nerved and steady, cut the finger off close to the hand, and stopped the flow of blood with a strong bandage. The swelling continued, and the arm began to pain greatly.

"Cut away the hand," said Haswell, white and shaky, but showing an amazing coolness. He realized his danger. Mitchell performed another amputation.

Within an hour they had his arm off at the elbow, and Haswell was turning blue all over.

It was an uncanny thing—right there in that bright sunshine, a man done a mortal injury by some foul sea vermin that had attacked him in the depths. I had heard of the sea snakes that come down the African rivers and go well offshore, but had never seen one. Those in the Indian Ocean I had seen often, and remembered that they were about four or five feet long and a few inches in circumference.

Haswell, with remarkable nerve, faced his end unflinchingly. It was wonderful to see him sitting there, unafraid, with his arm three times its natural size at the shoulder where the last bandage of Mitchell had been fastened.

"I reckon I'll last about an hour longer," he finally said. "It's—no—use." His strength was

leaving him, and he spoke haltingly, in hardly more than a whisper.

They gave him more whisky, and waited. Then Williams took down his last words in reference to his family affairs, and Haswell laid himself down on a transom. Two hours later he was stone dead.

That was a beginning that would have shaken the nerve of many men. Mitchell had his partner sewn up in canvas, and they buried him far out at sea, rowing off in the small boat.

The next day Williams started down. He found the location of the strong room, and was careful to wear heavy gloves while working. Then he placed the charge.

The crack that followed was not loud—deep down as it was. A storm of bubbles arose to the surface, and the sea lifted a few inches just over the place where the gelatine exploded. Then Mitchell prepared to go down and examine the result.

The oily sea heaved and sank with the long swell, and there was nothing to indicate that there would be any trouble. Nothing could move the wreck. Mitchell went under at eleven that morning, and, after he had been down half an hour, Williams signaled him. He received no answer. With some anxiety, the big man started to haul line, when, to the horror of all, the two lines—hose and life line—came in easily without anything at their end.

The hose showed a clean cut well down near the helmet, and the life line showed a ragged cut or break which stranded it out a full foot. Mitchell

was left below, cut off from us as clean as if he had been left upon the moon.

Williams strove with all haste to get into another suit, but it was a good ten minutes before he did so. He went down with a man of his outfit holding line for him, and came back in ten minutes with a white face and staring eyes.

"Whole side of the room fell on him," he said; "cut his hose and—and left him there. Give me a line, I'll get him out."

"Dead?" I whispered.

He looked up at me from the circular hole in the helmet, and seemed to think me mad.

"Dead? Of course, he's dead—a ton or two of iron on top of him, and no air—sure he's dead. We'll have to put the line to the winch to haul him out from under it."

We buried Mitchell as we had Haswell, hauling him from under the wreckage by a line to our steam winch, and afterward carrying him well out to sea, where he was weighted and sunk. It was bitter work, and all the time that hot sun shone down upon us until the seams of the decks warped and the tar ran out of the lanyards.

Williams was shaken. The next day he refused to go down, and pleaded a rest necessary. His men were silent and awed. I could say nothing to urge them on, as I felt that they had endured enough for a few days, at least.

Then Williams was taken with the African fever, and there was no one left who would go below for any amount of money offered. The horror of the

thing had shaken the nerves of the entire outfit. There might be millions below there, but no man of that crew would touch them just at present, and we were lying there in that oily sea, eating up the company's money and cursing at the strange chance that had made our expedition so fatal.

At the end of a week Williams was so bad that I gave him up as a factor to help us. At times he was delirious, and raved horribly. His men were for abandoning the work, and putting into Lagos, and from there clearing for home.

I refused to hear of such a thing, although I was a bit worked up at the outcome of what had at first appeared to be an easy job. To send North for more divers was to delay the work months. To await the coming of the next coast steamer meant delay of at least three weeks—and even then there was no certainty of help from her. She didn't carry divers, and, although she would naturally give me any aid in her power, belonging to our company as she did, I felt that I would rather not ask anything from her skipper until the last act.

A man named Rokeby of the tug's working crew offered to tend line for me if I chose to go down. He assured me that the pressure at fifty or even sixty feet would not injure me. I might suffer some from the splitting headache natural to the pressure, but that was all. I could blow open the safe or get chains fast to it, or cut it adrift somehow.

I thought over the matter while Williams raved

and rolled in his sweltering bunk, and the sun shone down upon that dead ocean full of crawling life and hidden treasure.

"Gimme the gloves and plenty of air," I finally said, after waiting three days, hoping that some of the wrecking crew would get their nerve back.

They all showed willingness to work if I went down, and I was soon incased in the suit of Williams.

If you think I was not nervous, you should have had an inside photo of my mind as I stood there upon the rounds of the ladder waiting for Rokeby to screw fast the front glass. I would have given it up but for the looks of the men. They seemed to gaze upon me with a sort of awe and amazement, but they made no comment whatever.

The kroo boys swung the pump handles with a will, and when I heard the hiss of the air I must say my heart gave two jumps and came near landing overboard—at least, it felt that way; but I would have died rather than let those men see that I was afraid. Such is the ego, the vanity of us all.

"Shall I screw her on, sir?"

The voice was Rokeby's, and it aroused me from the contemplation of the thing to do. I tried to look bored and annoyed.

"Yes, screw it down—mind the lines tenderly, and pull me right up if I give the signal," I said.

"Aye, aye, sir," he answered, and he screwed in the front glass.

The air whistled into the helmet back of my head, and the noise aroused me to a sense of the danger

should it suddenly cease. I put one foot and then another upon the ladder rungs, and went down until I swung off.

It seemed as if I was about to fly off into space, and for a few moments I almost lost my balance. Then my heavy leaden shoes sank me straight down, and I dropped slowly until my feet touched something.

The light had gradually faded as I left the surface, and where I now stood it seemed to be pitch dark. The pressure of the air appeared to swell my head, and a roaring was in my ears. Then I determined to do something, and bent forward to see if I could.

Gradually the dim outline of the ship's deck took form before the glass—that is, the deck in my immediate vicinity. I could make out the rail, and began pulling myself along by it. Soon I came to the pilot house forward, and recognized it by feeling the panels of the glass front with my hands.

I knew that I was just about right in regard to position, and started for the rail to get over the side and down to the place where the blow-out had been made. I carefully swung one leg over and then another, amazed at the ease with which I lifted the immense leaden shoes. Then guiding my air hose and line clear of the rail, I slipped off, and dropped down to the bottom far below.

In spite of the fact that I had now been under several minutes, I could not make out objects well enough to do anything; but determined to try to feel for the opening to the safe. After ten min-

utes spent groping about, I felt an immense hole in the ship's side, my fingers going carefully around the edges where the torn plates told of the force of the blast.

I entered and felt for the sides of the room within where the blast had torn out the iron and held it hanging to drop upon the unfortunate Mitchell. I now saw I could do nothing without more light, and carefully made my way out to the sea floor, where I signaled to haul me up.

I came slowly, and as I did so my brain appeared swelling until it seemed no longer possible to hold it within my skull. The pain was intense, and I hardly noticed the growing light until I was at the foot of the ladder. Then I climbed up, being dragged bodily by my life line. The front was taken off my helmet, and I spoke.

"It's all right," I panted, "get the lamp out, and stand by to send me down the tools I'll need."

Rokeby gave me a small drink of whisky, and the rest soon had the electric lamp ready. I went below again. This time I had no trouble in finding my way, for the light from the spark penetrated the sea for several feet about me.

In the watery darkness I made out the hole, and saw the damage done by the charge. The entire wall of the compartment had been blown in, and, in going into the room, Mitchell had gotten under it so that he had dislodged an immense piece of plate which had fallen upon him, and cut off his air and line.

I went forward cautiously, and poked the lamp

ahead of me. It seemed a long way to the safe, but I finally came up against it, and made out its outline in the lamplight. Its edge stood out sharply. Beyond was the inky blackness of a tomb.

I saw that it would be necessary for me to blow it loose from the beams, as I was not good enough workman to cut or loosen the bolts. Making a hasty but pretty good examination of the bottom and sides, I determined to go back aboard and study it out. A little powder underneath would loosen the floor bolts, and then, with a stout chain about it, we might start the winches to haul it through the opening, which I saw would have to be enlarged at the bottom. I came up, and was satisfied for the day.

The next morning I had recovered my nerve to a great extent, and was eager to get to work. The men were also better pleased at the prospect. My head had bothered me all night, but now eased up, as I donned the rubber.

So far I had seen neither fish nor crawling reptile. The bottom was not very soft, however, and was so covered with weed and sea growths that it may have harbored many things not visible to the eye at that depth. I kept to the gloves, not daring to risk my hands after Haswell's fatal ending.

The first shot tore the bottom off the compartment, and left the safe hanging by the bolts against the bulkhead. The second shot broke away these, and, when I went down again, I found the safe had dropped down to the deck below, the powder, or rather nitrogelatine, having torn the deck away

for the space of fifteen feet or more, leaving ragged splinters of deck planking sticking forth.

The electric lamp showed the mass below me as I stood at the edge of the hole, and I very carefully drew my line and air so that they would not foul when I dropped over. Then I went down and found the safe intact, but in a very difficult position to handle.

The next blast required a large charge, in order to blow the side out down to the lower deck, as it was impossible to drag that safe up through the hole. I placed fifty pounds of gelatine in two charges just abreast the safe on the outside of the hull, and blew away the plates until a trolley car could almost have entered the hole in the ship's side.

I was all ready now for getting slings upon the treasure, and I could hardly wait until the next day.

The wreck was in very bad shape below from the effects of the blasts, but I was nearly done now. Another day might find the diamonds upon the deck of the old ship above me. I managed to pass turns of a heavy chain around the safe, and stop them up so that they could be hocked to the fall. Then I got the tackle down, and by means of a whip to the tug started the mass of metal outboard.

It came along all right, and I thought it would go clear. Then something suddenly stopped it below, and I had to go down again to clear it. It was fast in the hole, having jammed against the

edge so that no amount of pulling would break it clear.

I lost no time getting another tackle to it, and rigged it to lift it end up, and turn it over, then the first fall would pull it out and clear. I was getting pretty well used to being below by this time, and the headache was lessening. I found that I could remain under fully half an hour now, and work most of that time.

The last time I went below I had a premonition that all was not as it should be down there, and I went along very carefully. I made my way into the ship's hull, and was just getting the new tackle set up taut and ready, when the whole ship heeled suddenly to port. The safe slewed sideways and slid down the now slanting deck, blocking the hole entirely across, but leaving my lines and tackle clear.

I signaled to come up at once. Then my line jerked, hauled me close up to the opening, and there I jammed, stuck so I could not get back. I signaled frantically for help, and they pulled me with all their might. But they might as well have tried to lift the wreck itself. I was caught.

During the next few minutes I thought a great deal. The horror of my situation dawned upon me. I was fast below there—not a chance for getting out. There seemed nothing to do, but wait placidly for the end.

The next few minutes were hours to me. I could signal with the line, but that was all. They knew I was alive, and they knew something must have happened by the heeling of the sunken wreck.

The blasting had probably blown away the sandy bottom under her, and she had simply cast over and slid the stuff to leeward.

There was plenty of room to take that safe out endways, but it was now so fixed that some one would have to slew it around before that could be done. My lamp was still burning, and the blackness lost some of its terrors in that pitiful light.

I was in the hull of a lost ship, and I felt that I was indeed a lost man. Memories came and went with lightning-like rapidity. I thought of Lucy Docking, and wondered how she would take my death. Then I began to feel the effects of the pressure, and my head grew flighty.

I dreamed of beautiful blue skies and green fields, the shore, the mountains; and all the time Lucy was with me, going from place to place. I was not unhappy. There was a feeling of contentment with the woman I had chosen, and it was all real, so real that I only awoke under the vicious pulling upon my life line by the men above.

Then the horror of my situation came back to me, and the roaring in my ears told me of my predicament. I gazed out of the front glass into the dark medium about me, the rays of the lamp making sharp outlines and shadows.

I remembered the safe. It lay jammed across the hole, and, while I was too feeble to take great interest, I recall watching it with a sort of fascination. I felt its sides, its edges. Then the combination attracted me, shining as it did in the dim light, like a bit of white in the surrounding black-

ness. I lazily turned the knob, whirled it about. And all the time they were pumping air to me under the pressure of fifty feet of water.

I felt at the aperture above where the edge of the safe shut off the opening. There was nearly a foot of clear room, but this was not enough for my figure, incased as it was in the suit. It was ample for the life line and hose to pass through without any interruption at all, and all I had to do was to live long enough for them to get that safe away. Surely some one would come down, and try to sling it again properly.

I lay with my front glass to the opening, and held the lamp so that the rays would shine outside. There I watched and tried to control the thoughts that kept coming with a surging feeling of dread that made my heart thump all the harder. Drowsiness would come, and the whirling in my brain would get me back again to the land and beautiful dreams. Then the jerking and hauling, and trying to dislodge me would arouse me again, and I would come back to the present.

I remember watching through the opening, and seeing forms passing. These must have been fish, or denizens of the sea. They flitted through the range of the lamp like sudden ghosts, the light striking their bodies, and then disappearing into the blackness without.

The lamp suddenly went out.

I was seized with the wildest terror at the inky blackness about me. The full horror of it all now came with greater force. That tiny spark had kept

me up wonderfully. It had seemed like a ray of hope. I put out my hands with muscles shaking and trembling, feeling that inexorable edge of iron that shut me off from life.

Would Rokeby try it? Would he try to save me?

That was the final thought. I tried to put myself in his place. I would do much for a man dying by inches—dying where he might be saved if one would take a little risk. He might get below in time yet. He might get a whip upon that safe, and, with the powerful wrecking tug working her winches, upset the huge square of steel, and drag it out of the way.

But if he was coming down, he should have come hours ago. As a matter of fact, I had already been down half an hour, and I could stand it for at least twice that long yet. But it seemed to me that I had been abandoned, that they were too cowardly to try to save me. My whirling brain and roaring ears told me a story of days of suffering, of interminable torture.

Would Rokeby try it?

I remembered how it struck me when Mitchell's line came up cut off from him. I knew what that poor fellow had gone through; what he had suffered, at least, for a few moments down there.

No, I would hardly blame Rokeby for not trying it. It was too dangerous for any one to try. And yet——

That latent hope, that feeling that there would be something at last, kept me from dying. The air

was still coming down, and I was in no immediate danger.

I tried to make myself think that I was in no danger at all; that all would be well when Rokeby came down, and got a hold of the safe. But I knew in my heart that the men above, the whole general crew, were not the men to help.

As a record of fact, the men above were awed at the disaster, and only Rokeby's steadiness saved my life. He had the pumps kept going, and finally decided that he would have to take a chance down there, or let me die like a hooked fish. He was man enough to overcome the nerve-shaking dangers that had beset us, and he put on another suit. Then, with his breath fairly gone from fright, he went down to help me.

He had never gone below before, except under most favorable conditions and in very shallow water. Still, he knew what to do, and he managed to get a good man above to tend line for him. He found things in bad shape at the opening, but lost no more time than he could help getting a purchase to the end of that safe, and the winches started. In half an hour they had dragged it clear of the ship, and I was hauled aboard insensible, but still alive.

Before I had regained my senses, they had the safe fast aboard the old hooker, and I had the satisfaction of staggering on deck to view it.

There it was, all right, perfectly intact. I had saved the company several millions, and it had cost the lives of two men, and nearly my own.

There was not a moment lost in getting away

from that hot, unhealthy coast. We got under way that very evening with Williams still stricken with the fever, and myself too weak to sit up, but I would not stop a minute.

"Get her under way at once," I said, and the mates needed no urging.

The wrecking tug, under full steam, came alongside, and the safe was slung carefully over to her deck, where it was bolted down and made as fast as a sailor could make it. I put a metal line about it, and sealed it up, not even willing to trust to the safe combination that had withstood the blasts and the sea.

"Good-by, and a pleasant voyage to the Cape for you," I said to my former shipmates. They steamed away to the southward to lay the old ship up for repairs, and we, in the mighty wrecker, *Viking*, under full power and making fifteen knots the hour, stood back for old England, where we arrived safe enough a short time later.

A TWO-STRANDED YARN

PART I.

CAPTAIN GANTLINE?" The words escaped me like a shot from a gun.

"Sure as eggs—'n where did you come from?" said that stout seaman. He stood at the bar of Bill's place on Telegraph Hill, drinking rum. His eyes, crinkled up at the corners like the ripples of a ship's cutwater in a smooth sea, were blood-shot and liquor-soaked. Old man Gantline was broad of beam and shorter than myself—no real good seaman is tall—and he raised his empty glass and hammered upon the bar with it.

"Gimme another drink," said he to the barkeeper. Then he turned to me. "So it's you fer sure, old man—well, well, what a small world it is, after all! Take a nip—I'm sure glad to see you—an' how'd it happen?"

I saw that old Gantline was getting drunk. It was a shame. The old skipper was a crack packet skipper. I was amazed at him, for he was not a drinking man. I wondered what made him do it. The barkeeper was now opening another bottle, and I knew the old sailor had drunk much.

"I blew in from New York around the Cape last week," I said.

"Must 'a' been blowin' some, hey, then—kinder quick passage—what?"

"Oh, I don't mean I made the run in a week—we were one hundred and sixty days—but I've been here in Frisco a week. And I've spent all the money I saved from the munificent owners of the British ship *Glenmar*, who rated me as second mate at thirty per—or, rather, five pun ten a month. I tried to eat something since I came in to make up for what I didn't get at sea. Those Englishmen are sure on short commons, all right—but I haven't been drinking. I don't drink."

"I do," said Gantline.

"I see it," I answered; "but it don't seem to do you any good, though it isn't for me to tell you so, I know. A drink or two don't hurt any one much, but pour it in, and come with me, and listen to my tale of woe. I need some one who knows something to listen to me—I'm broke."

"Well, I dunno as I might jest as well," sighed Gantline. "I'll take a couple more noggins—then you can come down to the ship with me."

"Sure, that's just what we'll do—go down aboard—hurry up and poison yourself sufficiently," I said, and waited until he had soaked down a few more drafts of liquid fire. Then, as he was growing unsteady, I linked his arm in my own, and we went slowly down Market Street until we came to the water front.

"That's her layin' out there—*Silas Tanner*—four

masts—or are they five? Sink me if I kin count 'em, Clew! You count 'em for me—seems like there's more'n half a dozen sticks risin' outen her—hey? Maybe Slade's stuck more in her, thinkin' four ain't enough——”

“What? A schooner? You in a schooner—how'd you come to go in a fore-and-after, Gantline? You, an old square-rigger!”

“That's hit, thash hit, Clew—me, an old seaman, in a coaster—for'n aft—Chinks for passengers—cabin, too—ladies aft—I'm clear drunk, Clew—an' I don't care 'f 'am—nuff to make a man drunk,” mumbled Gantline.

It was high time to get him to his ship. I hailed a small boat, and got him aboard, and then we went out to the *Tanner*—four-masted schooner, now riding at anchor off Market Street, San Francisco, waiting for a tide and something I could not guess as yet.

She was heavily loaded, all right, and I wondered at the old man's conduct the more. The idea of him forgetting himself at the last minute! It was too much. And with a mate like Slade—Slade, who had sailed in several ships with me, the best mate I had known for many a year. We drew alongside.

“Lower down the side ladder—the skipper's coming up,” I sang out, and a head came to the high rail. It was the mate's.

“Christopher Columbus! How'd this happen?” asked Slade. “And how—how'd you turn up? I'm

glad to see you, old man—pass him up—look out he don't fall overboard."

We managed to get the skipper on deck, and then below to his bunk, Slade questioning me all the time, and asking about times gone by. Then, after we had the old man safely stowed, we came on deck together, and Slade told me the trouble.

"Bound out for Guam with cargo and fifty coolies—Chinks—for labor there. We got a passenger's license, and take out several first class to Manila, besides. Loaded down with general cargo, and two safes full of silver for circulation at Agaña—about ten thousand dollars."

"Well, what's the trouble?" I asked.

"The old man don't like the coolie idea," Slade went on. "He hates Chinks. We got all loaded up, and then the owners sent word that we must provide quarters for fifty men—Chinamen, too, at that—and the old man threw a fit. He'd have quit the ship, but he's bought into her, and can't do it. We had to clear out the alleyways under the poop, knock ports in the sides, and build up a line of shelves for 'em to sleep on—twenty-five on a side, and right next the after saloon—couldn't get them below—see the doors we cut in the bulkhead? Lets 'em out on deck. It's a government contract, and it's good pay, all right—but them dirty coolies! It's a shame to make an old fellow like Gantline carry them—he hates 'em so."

"Who's second under you?" I asked.

"Nobody—thought you'd come for it. Isn't that what you're here for?"

"Not that I know of," I answered. "But I'll take it if the old man says so, all right, all right. I've been ashore long enough—broke, too."

"Sure thing," said Slade. "You're as good as signed on right now—soon as he gets over it he'll ask you to go—never saw the old man like that before, and it's a pity, too. 'Never thought I'd run a slaver,' says he—and I don't much blame him, either."

"I'll send down my dunnage in the morning," I said. "How about the crew?"

"Well, we'll get them, all right. Whisky Bill's attended to it—we'll get ten men—all we need with the engine for handling line."

I hastened ashore to settle my affairs and get my dunnage down to the ship.

In payment for my last week's board I gave my landlord a whale's tooth, carved prettily—or, rather, I left it behind for him to accept gracefully, and before daylight in the morning I was aboard the *Tanner*. Gantline was so glad to see me come that he almost forgot his headache. I signed for the voyage and went on duty.

The decks of the schooner were somewhat disordered that morning she was to leave. Honolulu was her first stop, and there was much to go on deck for that shorter run. The crimp had just brought down the men, and we mates upset each seaman's bag of dunnage, and scattered the contents about the gangway. We searched for hidden liquor and firearms, well knowing a sailor's habits, and we knocked things about a little hunting for

them. The poor, half-sober devils could separate their belongings afterward as best they might.

The result of the search was that, after the mate had confiscated a few bottles of stuff and a couple of out-of-date revolvers and ammunition, the general pile divided up among the men was enough to refill each bag again, the effort of sorting personal belongings at that moment being entirely too laborious to entertain.

Slade took two bottles, and managed to secrete them upon his person while the eye of the skipper was diverted to a passenger who had just appeared. Slade was slanting toward the forward cabin with the goods, closely followed by his emulating second officer, when the voice of the old man roared out orders for me to see to getting the baggage of the passengers below without delay. I turned, somewhat disappointed, just as Slade entered the door of the saloon and winked slowly and meaningly at me.

With some small encomiums pronounced upon the untimely work cut out for me, I turned to the gangway, and ordered up a few men in tones and language I should hate to repeat.

As I did so I suddenly came face to face with the passenger who had come from behind a cab and started down the gangway plank to the ship's deck. She put her lorgnette up to her eyes and gazed smilingly at me. Then she was joined by a younger woman, a girl about twenty, who took the older woman's arm, led her down the plank to the deck,

and went right into the door of the forward cabin, leaving me staring as though I had seen a ghost.

"I don't got no good eyes, den, if dat ain't de purtiest gal I ever see," said a Dutchman who was waiting to hear further orders from me. Another man, with a loose lip, looked up and scratched his head.

"Get, you squareheads—get a move on before something happens to you," I growled.

"I do love to hear them swear so," said the elder lady, as she reached the door. "They're such romantic fellows—so bold—oh, dear, just hear what that man——"

"Come along, auntie, come back where the captain is. I never heard such language before, and I don't think it a bit romantic—no, not at all. It's all dreadfully vulgar, and all that—but that man—well, well, he does say some amusing things, even if they are not what they should be."

Miss Aline MacDonald led her aunt aft, and I breathed easier. That she had flung me a sort of compliment was certain. I knew it. I had more queer ways of cussing out a Dutchman than any Yankee mate afloat—I knew that—but——

Gantline met them as they entered, and extended his hand.

"Come aft, ladies, come aft, and I'll have the stewardess show you your rooms at once—hope they'll suit you—best in the ship. Of course, we don't compete with the steamers, but a voyage in this schooner will be worth two in a steamer as a health restorer. If things ain't the way you like

them, sing out—I'll do the best I can." And he led the way aft to where a Kanaka woman took them in charge. Then I ducked into the mate's room, and joined Slade for a few minutes. He had already pulled a cork.

"Ain't adverse none to passengers," said he, pouring out the liquor, "but you may sink me if that old un don't come near the limit—you hear me?"

"Give me a drink and shut up about passengers," I grinned. "The old one's all right. She appreciated my education—sort of goo-gooed at me while I was laying out some language—quick with the booze, before the old man gets wise to it."

We hurried back on deck in time to take charge of things, and we were soon ready and waiting for the coolies, who were to come aboard from the tug that would tow us out to sea.

The tug *Raven* took our towline and we warped out, swung around, and were headed for the open sea within a few minutes. The engineer had steam up in the donkey, and the winches turned. Our crew were used to fore-and-aft canvas, and Slade took the turns as the halyards came to the revolving drums, being helped, as I may say, by his second mate, who held the peak as he held the throat.

We snatched stoppers upon them as the sails came to the mastheads, and in less time than it takes to tell we had all save the headsails on the *Tanner*, and were standing out. The tug dropped back, and came alongside, taking her lines.

"Stand by fer yore passengers," bawled a red-headed fellow, grinning from the pilot house.

I now saw a crowd of yellow-tails gathering on the tug's deck. Fifty-seven of them, all told, led by a giant yellow man in a skullcap and long, braided cue. A chattering babble of Chink talk, and the big fellow hustled the crowd to the rail, up the schooner's side, and on deck in less than a minute.

Bundles, packages, clothes, came with them, and Slade gave up the premeditated job of searching them in a few moments as he saw the yellow men gather up their belongings and crowd about the break of the poop, jamming in a mass right under the edge from where Gantline leaned over and gazed down at them in sour amazement and distrust.

"Me makee dem tlake-a down, down," cooed the giant leader in a sing-song voice, pointing with his hand at the crowd of Chinamen.

"Yes, git below—git out an' be quick about it," snarled the old man from above him. "You're blockin' the decks—slam 'em in the alleyways, git 'em out the way," he continued to Slade and myself.

"No lika men high, a-a-h, aye, makee down, down," sang the giant, with a glint in his little slits of eyes.

He was an ugly animal. Talk about your Oriental being a degenerate! Well, that fellow was nothing degenerate physically. He was six feet four, and about half as wide across the hulking shoulders. A thin-lipped mouth ran clear across his face; his nose was flat, like an African's. A whitish-blue scar had ripped his pleasing features from eye

to chin on the starboard side, and his head was enormous.

The hair was shaved close up to the limits of that skullcap of black silk, and from under its lower end there dropped a cue about a fathom long, all done up with silk cords and stuff, until a pretty little black tassel was plaited into the end, surmounted by a Matthew Walker knot and a couple of Turks' heads.

He was something to notice, all right, and his voice was grand. Nothing of the nervous squeak of the coolie about it. It sang along with flutelike notes that bristled full of "I's" and "Ah's," until you thought he was singing it to his men in a sort of deep bass or baritone.

Understand him? Did you ever know any white man who could understand a Chink if that fellow didn't talk for him to understand it? No, we took it for granted that the "boss" coolie was on the level, and was arguing with the herd to corral them into the alleyways where they belonged. He understood the skipper right enough.

A stout yellow man edged from the press about the door of the forward house, and came to the big man's side. A soft gabble, then a yell, then the herd took the alleyways on the jump, and inside of ten seconds there was not a yellowskin on deck.

"Got 'em trained, all right enough," said Slade, with a grin. "The old man needn't worry about 'em if the big one goes at it that way."

"Fifty-seven Chinks on a dead man's chest—and I'll bet my month's pay they've a bottle of rum—

maybe a hundred," I ventured. "What's the big cheese's name?"

"Sink me, if I know! The old man called him 'Yaller Dog,' and he's that, all solid. Let it go at that. I'd sure like to have him in my watch. What a man he'd make on a earing in a blow!"

"Shall we deal them their rice raw or cooked?" I asked. "I suppose they won't eat it if it's cooked in the galley, and then they'd be trying to build fires under the cabin or in the lazaret to boil it."

"No; let 'em eat it or throw it overboard. What do you care? Turn the men to, and choose the watch, and then I'll go below for a rest."

I did so, and soon the Farallones were disappearing in the east astern.

The first two days out there was so much to do aboard that I hardly had time to observe things. The decks were lumbered up with all kinds of gear, and a load of stuff for Honolulu, which took all our time to secure. The men were under the union scale of the West Coast—that is, thirty dollars per month—and there was nothing off on account of our going deep-water in her, for we were not by any means coasting at all, as our course lay directly across the Pacific Ocean, and the itinerary took in a voyage of seven thousand miles.

I hated the fore-and-aft canvas. I knew its value on short runs and in smooth seas, but when it comes to deep water and a rough old ocean, with a twenty-five-knot wind increasing to fifty, give me the square canvas with double topsails, that men can handle.

However, we were very fast. The *Tanner* could

do fifteen knots free on a wind that would jam a square-rigger close and by. Her four masts were of the usual type, all the same, and her gaff-topsails were high on the hoist, giving her a tall appearance.

The first day under all sail, with the wind abeam, she rolled off thirteen and fourteen knots an hour, and kept her decks awash under a perfect torrent of foam, dragging her rail through a solid mass of suds. She simply ran, shoved her sharp nose out through it, and slipped over the long, smooth, rolling swell with a plunging lift that felt good.

The steam winches for handling line were good. With drums turning, all one had to do was to snatch the halyard in the deck block, grab a turn on the drum, and up went anything that could go. Then a stopper on the line, and to the belaying pin—and all was done. There was no hee-hawing, no singing of sailor's chanteys, no sailing of the type we had known in our earlier days; but I am free to admit that I would rather have had the steam winches—especially when it came on to blow and we had to reef her down.

The Chinks were allowed on deck from eight bells in the morning until eight at night; and they were always getting in the way.

Miss MacDonald and her aunt came on deck most of the time, and sat wrapped in rugs near the wheel, where the old man entertained them with tales of the sea. They were greatly interested in the Chinamen.

I found my watch on the poop not at all disagreeable during daylight, for Miss Aline was good

to look at. She was of medium height, with brown hair that curled in spite of the sea wind, and she was solidly and strongly built, her figure having lines that told of sturdiness rather than delicate beauty. But although she was not what one would call fat, or even stout, she was certainly not thin, and her rounded face was rosy with health.

Her mouth had a peculiar gentleness of expression, and when she showed her white teeth to me and flushed a bit upon recognizing the master handler of fluent oaths, I thought her about as good as they come. I was a bit embarrassed, but I was only second greaser, and as such could not sit at the table with her, so I said little.

I told Slade, however, that his hands were unfit to pass salt junk to a lady—and, for a wonder, he washed them in fresh water before going below! He was mate, and could sit in with the skipper, while I walked the deck above and made mental comments upon the irony of fate that shoved in a fellow like him to entertain a girl that he could not speak to without stammering like a drunken man, while I——

It was in my watch during dinner that I had the first real chance to see our coolie boss. The second week, after things had settled themselves, and the routine of the ship took the place of the frantic scramble to get things shipshape, I stood at the break of the poop, which in the *Tanner* was very low—not more than four feet above the deck, as is the case in many schooners—and as I stood there up popped Yellow Dog, the giant Chink, from the

door of the alleyway to starboard. The beggar was so tall that he was almost on a level with myself, in spite of the difference in the decks, and I found his eyes close to mine as he turned and saw me.

“Have any trouble in the passageway?” I asked him, thinking he might have been a bit mixed in straightening out that gang below in the narrow space.

He gave me a look, a slanting glance from the corners of his little, screwed-up eyes, and then he turned his back upon me as if I had been bilge water, and offended his senses.

“Hey, Yellow Dog! What’s the matter with you? Are you tongue-tied? Don’t you know enough of ship’s etiquette to answer an officer when he speaks?” I spat at him.

“I tlakee captain man—not you,” he sang, in his musical voice, and he forthwith strode to the galley, where a Kanaka cook was busy with the dinner.

“You great big Yellow——” But there is no use of telling what I remarked to him as he went along that deck. As the officer in command at the moment, I was not a little offended by this high-handed way of a common Chink, more especially as I was inquiring for the welfare of his men.

The cook heard my note of temper, and refused the giant admittance to his galley’s sacred precincts, whereupon Yellow Dog seized him by the scruff of the neck, and tossed him into the lee scuppers. He was about to pitch a pot of hot water on top of him, but I interposed an objection to this action in the shape of a belaying pin which, flung by my right

arm under full swing, struck Yellow Dog fairly upon the skull-cap, and, bounding off, flew overboard.

The giant staggered, caught himself from falling, then he stood very straight, and gave me a look that for cold fury expressed more than I had ever dreamed possible in a Chink.

“Killee you fo’ that,” he hissed.

“Go on, do your killing, Yellow Dog,” I snapped. “But take care you don’t get something yourself—and the next time I speak to you aboard here, if you don’t answer at once you’ll find something else bounding off your dome that you’ll remember for a long time. Now send your mess kids to that galley, and the cook will hand you out your rice and long-lick.”

The men of my watch stopped work where they were, and grinned at the big Chinaman. Their contempt for the race was more than my own, and I knew I had the hearty approval of the sailors. At the same time I was sorry that the thing had happened, for the Chinamen who were already on deck passed the word along, and by the time I had finished talking the whole gang of them were standing about, with looks upon their faces that told of trouble.

It was a bad beginning for a long voyage.

Gantline came on deck as soon as he could finish his dinner, and wanted to know what the trouble was about, but that was all he said. He found no fault with my remarks nor with my actions. A

ship's officer must maintain discipline, and discipline cannot be maintained without respect.

Miss MacDonald came up with her aunt, and I went below to my dinner. As I passed the door of the forward house leading into the cabin, the stout Chink who seemed to be a close chum of the big leader glared at me. He had a sinister face, with little slits of eyes that looked slantwise, like the eyes of a wolf.

His moustaches were thin and straight along his lip, until they reached the corners of his wide mouth, then they suddenly dropped straight down, and hung like the tusks of a walrus, two thin, black points of hair about six inches long. They gave him the appearance of some carnivorous animal, fierce, saturnine and dangerous.

Instead of slamming him for his insolence, I pretended not to see him, and passed in, yet the look stayed with me, and I remembered it at intervals. He was a wolf, all right, a human wolf—but I was to find that out later.

“What do you think of our passengers—the coolies?” I asked Jack, the steward, who sat at my mess next the carpenter, Oleson.

“Watch them, Mr. Garnett, watch them,” he warned. “I’ve seen some mighty bad Chinks leaving the coast lately. These men belong to tongs—hatchet men—and if you’ll take my word for it you will find plenty of long, black-barreled guns tucked somewhere in their dunnage. But the hatchet is their game for those they have a grudge against—hatchets don’t make a noise at night.”

“They won’t get about the decks in my watch, to use any hatchets, or guns, either, for that matter,” I answered. “I’ll tuck them in snug to bed at eight bells.”

“Hatchet’s a bad thing at night,” put in Oleson. “I’ll put a heavy staple on their door after they turn in.”

In my watch below I read ancient magazines until I fell asleep. In my dreams I saw that stout Chinaman’s face with the pointed whiskers and slant eyes peering down over me. In his hand was a little, thin-bladed hatchet, like a tomahawk, and as I reached up for him I awoke with a start, shivering in spite of the heat.

The door of my cabin was closed, and my window, or port, was but half open, sliding as it did upon sills about five feet above the main deck.

A shadow passed even as I looked up, but when I sprang out of my bunk and slammed the glass open, there was nothing near the opening.

Just twenty or thirty feet distant forward two of the crew were working on some gear, and the light was still strong enough to recognize them as Jim and Bill, of Slade’s watch. Then the bells of the dogwatch struck, and I went on deck, swearing at myself for a nervous fool.

I refused to take a gun which hung over my bunk, hating the idea of doing such a thing, for guns always spelled trouble in all ships I had ever been in, and I hated the idea of using one. I went on the poop, and Miss MacDonald was sitting there with her aunt, chatting with the old man.

“Keep her steady as she goes—sou’west half west,” said Gantline, as I came up.

“Aye, aye, sir,” I answered, and was about to go aft to the wheel, when the young lady spoke to me.

“I have just asked the captain to allow me to read a chapter from the Bible to those Chinamen,” she said, “and, if you will assist me, we will gather them close together on the deck there”—pointing to the main deck. “I can stand upon the edge and see them better. You don’t know whether they can speak or understand English, do you?”

“I think they understand me at times,” I ventured, “but I’m a bit doubtful about the kind of talk you will toss them.”

“Toss them? What do you mean?” she asked.

“Why, I mean—well, they understand the kind of English we use at times—I don’t know how to explain—it isn’t a written language——”

“I should sincerely hope not,” said Miss MacDonald meaningly.

“Yes, but, my dear, it is so expressive—I heard you talking to them during dinner to-day,” interrupted her aunt.

I blushed a little. “Well, then, that’s what I mean,” I said. “I don’t want to say that I think you are wasting time reading to them—you know they have a religion of their own—one that antedates ours—they won’t take it right.”

“That’s a question we won’t discuss at present,” said Miss MacDonald. “There are many Christianized Chinamen at home, and they seem to appreciate it very much.”

"Always, if there's a pretty woman to teach them," I snapped.

There was a silence after this. I had been rude, I suppose, but I was only telling the truth. I went to the break, or edge, of the schooner's poop, and called the watch, which had been mustering on deck.

"Get the coolies aft to the mast," I ordered.

The men passed the word along, and two or three Chinks who understood English as well as I did came slouching aft. Gradually about two dozen stood or congregated near enough to hear, but Yellow Dog and his slant-eyed chum of the walrus mustaches seemed to decline the invitation.

"Couldn't you get the large man, their leader, to come also?" asked the lady.

"Not without dragging him lashed fast," I protested.

"Very well," she said, with just a bit of temper in her voice.

Gantline had gone below, and I was in charge of the deck until supper was over. The reading would not take long, and the steward was already bringing the cabin mess aft along the gangway. The young lady read calmly, and with a peculiarly sweet voice, that attracted the attention of the men, but not of the coolies.

The Chinks stood about, and some gazed out over the sea, some grinned openly up at her, with a smile that told of tolerance for an imbecile. Miss MacDonald, senior, went below to prepare for supper.

Before the girl had finished, Yellow Dog came aft, and gazed at her in open admiration. He made

some remark to his stout friend, and they both smiled sardonically, but their attitude was not particularly offensive.

I found some business at the spanker sheet, and when I came forward to where the girl stood, she was finishing.

“There is only one way to treat heathen, Mr. Garnett,” she said, “and that is to be always kind, universally even-tempered, and gentle with them. They have had a hard road for many generations, and take to kindness, as all lower creatures do. They will only get stubborn if you use hard words and roughness. I know something about their habits, for I’ve taught the school at home, where we had twenty pupils, all grown men.”

At this I protested. I confess I was hot.

“If you are kind to them they will think you’re afraid of them,” I declared. “If you mule-lick them, hog-strap them, and generally beat the devil out of them, they’ll do as you tell them—not otherwise. I’m not running a school aboard here, if you please, and while I will give you any assistance you want or can get, I go on the log right now that as far as we handle these men, we must beat them and lick them into submission. There’s no other way at sea. It’s brutal, but the other way will turn out more brutal. I’m not responsible for them being in this ship—but I’ll see they get to their port of discharge, all right, if I have to flay them alive!”

“I think you are perfectly horrible—perfectly brutal to say such things,” said Miss MacDonald.

“Are all seamen brutes? Does the captain stand for such things aboard here?”

“There is only one way to do with cattle of this sort,” I insisted. “I don’t want the job—I’d rather run in a bunch of snakes. But a ship’s bound to be run the way ships are run. There isn’t any new way to run a ship, believe me. It’s all been tried out hundreds of years before you were born. Perhaps some day, when we don’t need ships, the brotherly-love racket will work all right; but not these days.”

“I don’t believe it, anyhow,” said the lady, “and I’m amazed that a man of apparent intelligence should say such things. You should do unto others as you would have them do unto you—always.”

“Quite so,” I assented, somewhat nettled at the idea that a young lady should give me points on running a ship. “I always do, always do unto the crew or those coolies the same as I would expect them to do to me—if I was the same kind of rascal they are—and if our places were exchanged. There can be only one man in charge of the deck, the watch officer, and he’s responsible for everything that happens. And if I would be so bold as to give you a bit of advice, I should say to you, for God’s sake don’t try any foolishness on those yellow-skins while they are under my charge. It’ll only make trouble, and there’ll be enough of that, anyhow, by the way things look.”

“What do you mean?” asked Miss Aline.

“I mean that Yellow Dog, as the skipper calls him, that big Chink, is not liking ship’s discipline already.

If you will go near the door of the alleyway when they open it you will smell the fumes of opium strong enough to knock you down. They don't pretend to obey orders, and the company makes us carry them and take care of them like they were babies. We can't even search them or offer any kind of protest—they'd refuse to come if the contract was not drawn that way."

"Well, be kind to them, be always lenient with them," said Miss Aline, in a tone so different, so pleading that I gave up. "Don't yell at them like I heard you to-day. It isn't dignified, it isn't right—you will be good to them, now, won't you?—just try it and see if it don't work."

"Ho, well, I'll try to do the best I can, of course," I answered, thinking of the stout pirate with the hangers. "Yes, I'll try to be just as kind as I possibly can—of course, I'll promise you that—that's the skipper's orders, you know."

The steward had already brought the mess things for the cabin, and the lady went below to join her aunt and the old man—and Slade. The mate was not standing for my line of talk, as I could see by the way Miss Aline spoke, and it made me warm to think that a mate of Slade's attainments should be so mushy as to snicker and grin when I told him how things stood.

"'Keep solid with the passengers'—that's one of the old rules in the express steamers, you know—'keep right with the ladies,'" he said, grinning at me when I mentioned the missionary work the young lady had undertaken. "And, by the way,

lend me a couple of your clean collars—you won't need them right away, and I do."

"I'll do nothing of the kind," I answered shortly.

"Oh, don't get rattled because I've got the inside route. Don't be mad, old man, because I've gained the weather of you. All's fair in the game. And between you and me, if the Chink gets gay with you, bang him on the nut for fair, and I'll slip in with you—if it's dark. But you don't want to queer me below. Now, be sane, and come across with those collars. I'm young and single—and mate, see?"

"Go to the devil!" I answered, but I knew Slade would go to my room, instead, and nail those white-laundered collars I had kept clean.

That night, when I turned in, I found that, indeed, Slade had been below, and had rummaged my things about most unkindly, taking my linen. I turned in with a feeling of resentment at his luck in position, but I dismissed the feeling quickly as the absurdity of the affair dawned upon me, for, after all, I was not thinking of women at all, and had no right to under the present high salary I was drawing.

Rolling into my bunk, I was instantly asleep. In my dreams I saw that walrus-looking Chink. His long black feelers hung down over me, the points piercing my vitals like tusks. I gave a yell and awoke!

The lamp was burning dimly, as it always did in my room at night, ready for the sudden call to the deck, and I could see everything distinctly the moment I opened my eyes. A face was just leaving

the glass of my window. I sprang out of the bunk, and peered out through the glass. At that instant there was a heavy rat-tat-tat upon the door, and the voice of Jim Douglas, of Slade's watch, called to me that it was eight bells, and time to turn out. I threw open the door.

"Did you look in through my window?" I asked him.

"No, sir; I wouldn't do anything like that, sir," said the seaman.

He was a good-looking young Scotchman of twenty-four, tall and strong, with an honest face. I knew he was telling the truth.

"That's all," I said, and he went on his way.

I looked at the gun that hung over my shelf at the bunk head. It was one I took off a dago named Louis, of my watch, and it was a heavy gun, forty-five caliber, and long in the barrel.

"Perfectly absurd to think of it," I muttered to myself. I pulled on my coat, and started for the deck, when something, some instinct, told me to take the weapon.

"Sentiment be hanged!" I said out loud, and tucked the revolver in a rear pocket. Then I made the deck, and found Slade standing at the mizzen waiting for me.

"We'll raise the land before morning," said he. "She's been running like a scared rat all night. Keep a lookout, and when you sight anything sing out to the old man—he'll be on deck probably, but he's been acting queer lately, and you better watch

him. We'll heave her to for a pilot, and you know the rest."

"All right," I answered.

The soft, damp air of the trade wind made the decks soaking wet. The low hum through the rigging added to the murmuring of the side wash. The creaking of sheet blocks and slight straining of the gear were the only noises that broke the stillness of the peaceful night. The schooner was running along rapidly, heeling gently to the wind, and everything drawing. The rolling motion was slight, for the wind was strong enough to hold her steady.

The voices of the watch forward sounded above the murmuring, and I could see the glow of a pipe belonging to some one who disregarded the ship's discipline sufficiently to smoke while on duty. I took my place at the mizzen rigging to con the vessel, and stood there silently for a long time watching the foam rushing past her, now and then gazing far ahead to see if I could raise the lights of Pearl Harbor. The wind was almost astern, and the headsails were consequently not doing much work. I listened to the slatting, and then sang out:

"Haul down the jib topsail and roll it up."

"Aye, aye, sir," came the response, and the men went to the forecastle head.

Aft at the wheel the shadow of a man holding the spokes was the only sign of life on deck. I took my place again at the weather rigging, and waited for the report from forward.

A heavier swell than usual rolled the schooner, and I turned to look aft. At that instant something

whizzed past my ear, and struck with a chugging sound into the backstay. My ear stung sharply, and something warm ran down my neck. I saw a form vanish behind the mast, and called out.

I knew I had been struck, and drew my gun, springing toward the figure, which dashed silently across the deck as I gained the mast. I fired at it without hesitation, and the fellow let out a scream, gained the rail, and plunged over the side.

I was at the rail in an instant, but saw nothing in the foam. A moment's silence followed, and then a sound of steps and a rising murmur of voices told me of the alarm.

Gantline was on deck in less time than it takes to tell it, and he roared out: "What's the matter?"

Slade sprang from the door of the forward cabin, calling out that he was coming. Men from forward rushed aft. Then, from out of the doors of the alleyways, a stream of figures poured forth, flowing like a black tide onto the main deck. A sudden roar of voices followed, and I recognized the high-pitched tones of our coolies.

"All hands—help! All hands aft—quick!" I yelled, and fired into the black figures who swarmed up the poop and crowded upon me.

As I fired, I heard the shrill screams of the elder Miss MacDonald, and then there was indiscriminate firing. I yelled to Slade, and he answered once. The crowd surged over me, and I was down, with a dozen panting heathens on top of me. In a minute it was all over. Some one passed a line about my arms, and, kick as I might, they soon had me snug

and fast. Gantline roared out orders from the wheel, and I heard the crack of a pistol at rapid intervals. Then a roaring, surging mob rolled over him—and there was the schooner luffing to under full sail, her head sheets thrashing and the canvas thundering in the stiff breeze.

They had taken her. We were overpowered, all right. The men forward stood it out but a moment longer, and surrendered.

When I could see again I noticed the giant form of Yellow Dog standing near the wheel, and two of his men at the wheel spokes. He sang out orders in his musical bass voice, and the sheets were quickly trimmed in. The schooner now headed well up with the wind abeam, and pointed away across the Pacific, far to the northward of Hawaii. Yellow Dog had taken her easily.

I was hauled below, and tossed into the forward cabin. Here I found Slade lashed fast, like myself. He was hurt by a bullet that had torn his thigh, and was bleeding. Upon a transom lay Gantline, trussed from head to foot in line, and the old skipper was swearing fiercely at the ill fortune that had overtaken his ship.

I noticed a few Chinks standing near the door of the after cabin, and they looked at us casually, seeming to regard us not at all. Then I heard the soft voice of Miss Aline pleading with Yellow Dog. But of course she might have pleaded with the sea with as much effect. Then the sounds died away, and we lay there, waiting for daylight and what might follow.

Daylight came, and the schooner still held her way under all sail except the jib topsail that I had hauled down before the fracas. She now lay at a sharp angle, and felt the trade wind upon her star-board beam.

Yellow Dog came into the forward cabin. He stopped a moment near me, then kicked me savagely, muttering strange sounds in his own language. I told him fluently in good seaman's English just what I thought of him, and if he did not understand me he was something dense, for I've had every kind of human under the sun on my ship's deck, and I have so far failed to notice any who could not understand me when I let off a few pieces of literature or oratory.

Yellow Dog seemed rather pleased than otherwise, for he called his man, the walrus-mustached one, and grinned while they held a confab. I took it that something choice would be handed me within a very short time.

When I had a chance to ask the skipper, he told us we were within forty miles of Pearl Harbor. From the way we nosed into the breeze, the schooner was now heading northwest across the ocean, giving the harbor a wide berth.

"What'll they do?" I asked him.

"Sink her, with us aboard—take the ten thousand dollars in the safe, and make a get-away with it. They'll turn up ashore in some deserted place, and that'll be about all. Then they'll divide the swag, separate, and Yellow Dog will go his way—probably back to China. It's not much money when

you think of it for a white man, but it's a whole heap for a Chink."

After the day had well advanced we heard noises on deck. The foresail was lowered, or, rather, let go by the run, the noise of tearing gear sounding plainly. Topsails, staysails, and everything forward except the jib were cut away. Then the spanker was lowered, and left threshing about, half up, with the sheet hauled amidships. The jib was hauled to the mast, and the schooner lay hove to in the trade swell, riding easily upon the sea, and remaining very steady.

We heard them getting out the boats, and there was much noise from aft where the safe was fast to the deck in the captain's cabin. Finally a terrific explosion took place there, and after that the noises died away.

"Blew it," said Slade.

A smell of smoke now began to be apparently in the confined air of the cabin.

"Good Lord! Are they going to fire us?" asked the mate.

"Safest way, I suppose. Knock a hole in her bottom first, set her on fire, and then get out," I said.

"But the girl?" asked Slade.

"Oh, Yellow Dog will take care of her—probably take her along with him in the boats."

"Not if I know it. Man, do you know what that means?" he panted, straining at his wrist lashings.

"Well, it's a mighty bad outlook, but if you can stop it, sing out; I'll help," I said.

The smoke grew more dense in the confined space. The noise of hoisting gear died away, and the shouts of men from a distance told that they already had the small boats over, and were alongside.

Slade strained away at his lines, and I did, also, but we were fast. Gantline muttered on the transom, and began to choke with the smoke. Suddenly a form burst into the room. It was Oleson, the carpenter. He slashed at our lashings with a heavy knife, and in a moment we were free.

We dragged ourselves out on deck, crawling to keep below the rail, so that we could not be seen from the small boats. Two forms lay right in front of a door—two of our men who had been killed. Not a sign of a wounded Chink, or dead one, either. They had taken them along if there were any.

“I cut loose,” said Oleson; “rubbed the lashings on a broken bottle they left on deck near me. They’ve knocked a few holes in her, and it’s up to us to stop them up before the schooner sinks. She’s on fire forward—whole barrel of oil poured over her decks and lit up before——”

“Looks like they have her either way, then,” said Gantline. “But we’ll try the fire first, and take a chance at her settling under us.”

I peeped over the rail and saw the boats—three of them—about a mile distant. Then Slade and I ran below aft. The two passengers had apparently gone with them, and the cabin was empty. Gantline, with Oleson and six men left alive aboard, fought the fire, and we joined them.

Half an hour's work and we had the fire out, but it had played the mischief with the running gear, having burned up plenty of line that lay on the deck. Oleson and Slade went below forward, while Gantline and I went after to find where they had knocked holes in her bottom.

The sound of rushing water told us the position of the leak almost before we reached the lower deck. They had not done much of a job, having cut squarely into her just below the water line, trusting to the fire to finish their work for them.

Calling all hands, we jammed a mattress into the hole, and then passed a tarpaulin down on the outside. Oleson spiked planks over the wad, and we had a fair stopper on the place. Then we set to work to get the canvas on her.

Yellow Dog, finding that the schooner was not burning quickly, put back in his boat to see what the trouble was. We were then at the gear, and he soon saw us. His men sent the boat along with a will, and they drew close aboard in a few minutes.

We were now without arms, and he seemed to be satisfied that he would get us without trouble. It was blowing fresh, and the schooner was drifting bodily to leeward.

We crammed the oil-soaked stuff from her decks into the donkey boiler, and as the fire was already burning, and steam was almost up, we waited, while some of us hoisted the headsails and swung her head off before the wind. The mizzen was swayed up, and in a few minutes the schooner was under

good headway, sliding along at four or five knots, and keeping the boat at a distance.

"Now, then, my hearty, we'll soon fix you," said Gantline.

Between moments of desperate work we had a chance to see that the other boats were also coming back after us. At the present rate we were holding our own, and Yellow Dog stood no chance to catch us, but he kept on, and managed to get within a couple of hundred yards.

From here he opened fire upon us with the heavy six-shooters, and we heard the spat of the lead in the canvas, but for ourselves we kept below the rail, and the power of a revolver was not enough to bother us exceedingly.

Soon Oleson announced that we could put the halyards to the winches, and we sent the foresail and mainsail up in no time. Then we set the spanker and had all the lower canvas on her.

The schooner lay well over under the pressure, and we sent her along a good ten knots, while we cleared up the gear and made things shipshape. The boats were soon black specks in the sunshine.

"Now, then, let's get to work on that yellow boy right," said the old man.

"No, don't let him get too far away from us," said Slade. "The two ladies are in that boat with the big Chink, and we better attend to it first."

We hauled our wind and began reaching back, the boat with Yellow Dog being kept right under the jibboom end.

"I reckon I'll take the wheel and you go forward, Mr. Garnett," said Gantline.

"Will you run him down?" I asked.

"Without any mistake at all—if you'll give me the course right when he gets in close," said the captain.

"But the ladies, the passengers?" said Slade.

"We'll do the best we can for them—just as well to get killed that way as to get away with those fellows, isn't it?"

The men took to the idea at once, and we grouped close under the shelter of the windlass, watching the schooner run. She was going a full ten, and rising and falling with a rhythmic motion, her side, where the patch was, being almost clear of the sea.

Yellow Dog saw us, and knew what we intended to do. He swung his boat around and pulled dead into the wind's eye, knowing that if we missed him we would not get a chance to strike again until we beat well up to windward of him. He would make it warm on deck as we came close, and Gantline took the precaution to place a few boards against the binnacle, so that he could crouch behind them when the firing began. I was to wave my hand which way he should steer, and he was to keep me in sight readily.

We drew rapidly up to the boat. Yellow Dog stood up in the stern, and held a long, black-barreled revolver in his hand.

We crouched lower, and the schooner bore down upon the boat. I waved my hand to starboard, and Gantline gave her a few spokes. Yellow Dog

backed water, and the boat would have gone clear of the cutwater, but at that instant a heavier puff of wind heeled the schooner over, and she luffed to a trifle, her cutwater rising upon a swell.

Then, with the downward plunge, she shored through the small boat, striking it fairly amidships.

I was so taken up with the affair that I poked my head too far over the rail, and a bullet ripped my cheek open, knocking me head over heels with the shock.

I scrambled to my feet, furious with the pain and excitement. The fragments of the small boat drifted alongside, the after part going to leeward, and dragging along the channels. I saw Slade spring upon the rail for an instant, and then plunge overboard.

Holding my bleeding face with one hand, I ran to the forechannels, and saw Yellow Dog grasp the chains as they washed past. He had a mighty grip, and that hand hold of his was a wonder. He drew himself into the chains, and, without waiting, clambered up and over the rail, springing to the deck right in front of me as I backed away.

Oleson saw him coming, and so did a seaman named Wales. The three of us closed on him, and dragged him down, and we rolled in the lee scuppers, a fighting, snarling pile of humanity, while Gantline let the wheel go, and ran to help us.

Yellow Dog tossed the three of us off with the ease of a man throwing aside children, and would have taken charge in another moment, but Gantline, running up behind him with a handspike, swung the bar down with full force upon that little skullcap,

and the giant Chink stretched out harmless. We had him trussed before the schooner had stopped her headway into the breeze.

Then we ran to the side, and looked for Slade. He was swimming easily about a hundred yards astern, holding the form of Miss Aline with one hand, and keeping her head clear of the water. All about were the forms of swimming Chinamen.

Quickly backing the headsails, we sent the schooner astern, drifting down upon the mate. I made a line fast to a life buoy, and flung it far out. After what seemed a long time, we finally had the mate fast to it, and were hauling him in. Soon he was taken aboard, and Miss MacDonald was carried below. Then we went to work trying to pick up the Chinks.

Many of these refused to come aboard, preferring to die in the sea. Some we caught and dragged up forcibly. We caught most of them, and then hauled our wind for the two boats that were now almost out of sight.

Within a couple of hours we had the first alongside, and she surrendered. In it was Miss Aline's aunt, and she was passed below insensible. The other boat took longer to get, but we finally got her alongside, and the men out of her. Forty-seven Chinks stood the muster. We had lost ten of them and two of our men in the fracas. Miss MacDonald came out of her faint, and from her room, where she had locked herself. She fell into the arms of her niece.

“Oh, the brave men, those romantic sailors, those

heroes!" she cried, in an ecstasy of joy, and she gave me a look worth millions.

"Hush!" said Miss Aline. "Perhaps if those heroes had been a little more gentle there would have been no trouble—but I am glad we are saved. Mr. Slade risked his life for me."

The Kanaka cook crawled from the lower hold, where he had hidden at the first outcry, and the stewardess came from the lazaret. We came into Honolulu that evening with the police flag flying, and turned the big Chink over to the authorities for treatment. His lieutenant of the walrus mustaches was missing.

Miss Aline came on deck to look around. She saw Slade, and went to him. What she said to him was none of my business, but Slade was a good man and a good mate. Afterward she came to the mizzen where I stood like a bandaged soldier.

"I suppose you'll not make the rest of the voyage with us?" I asked.

"Why not?" she asked.

"Oh—er—I don't know; maybe you don't care so much for the heathen. Brotherly love and kindness—fine theory, all right, but we're not just ready to put it in practice—willing to wait, you know, until it comes our way—perhaps a bit afraid——"

"You are very much mistaken, sir," she broke in. "You will find out your error, too, I think, before we get through. I am firmly convinced that your own actions with that poor heathen are as much at fault as his, and that if you had not treated him so roughly he would never have done what he did."

I grinned. I couldn't help it. Slade was winking at me from the door of the forward house. Oh, well, here was a good woman gone wrong in her theories, and I would not be insolent enough to disagree with her. I let it go at that. I was willing to wait until she had finished the voyage—for Slade's sake. He was a sly dog, that Slade.

We found about two thousand dollars of the money taken among the men captured. The rest was a total loss, and Gantline bemoaned his fate, as it fell upon him to a certain extent.

We cleared, leaving the big Chinaman to stand trial with two others as accessories, and the police absolved me absolutely from all blame in the matter.

PART II

"No loafing around the ship," I called to the little yellow chap who was sitting near the spring line which held the schooner *Tanner* to the wharf at Honolulu. The man paid not the slightest attention to me.

"Hey, there, sonny! Move out! Beat it; make a getaway, you savvy?" I bawled in a louder tone.

Then he arose, and instead of a young fellow I was amazed to find him at least ten years older than myself—and I had been a ship's officer some years. He walked slowly to the vessel's side, and gazed up at me where I stood near the break of the poop, holding to a backstay.

She was a modern, short-poop schooner. The sallow little man was not a Chinaman, nor of Kanaka breed, but a full-blooded Japanese. He was stout, strong, yellow of skin, and his black hair was too long for his country's custom, sticking out from under the rim of a brown derby that had seen its best days. His eyes were slitlike, keen little eyes, but there was nothing repulsive in them. They attracted me. For one thing, he had an open frankness, an honest and fearless look, and his face was sad.

"What you doin' on the dock, Togi?" I asked, eying him humorously.

"If your august presence will listen, I'll tell you," he answered easily.

"Sure, Michael, let her go, and don't mind my gigantic—er—august self," I sniggered.

"In the first place," he said, "I'm not sonny, being, if your honorable temper allows, a man of forty. If fine schooner says so, I go with you as far as Tokyo. There I am the humble cousin of the Honorable Baron Komuri, son of a Samurai, under the former emperor. I should like indeed to sail with you, and will——" Here he stopped a moment, hesitating.

"Go on, king, old man; don't let anything stop you from telling your yarn. Sing it out, and I'll listen if it breaks a bone."

"No, no; not king, old man; just Mister Komuri—if your presence allows me to correct. Your humble servant is but a plain man. Better be plain man than dead lion, as your excellent books say.

I accept plain man, and go that way if so ship says."

"We are not going to Tokyo, but if you see the skipper he'll take you clear to Manila for a hundred or two yen. You savvy him yen. Must pay, you know."

"Ah, that is of what I wish to tell your honorable self. Allow me to make myself so humble to tell I have not the yen you ask. I have not anything _____"

"Nothing doing, kiddo; on your way," I said remorselessly.

"But I sit on dock end waiting——"

"Waiting for what?"

"Waiting for two hundred yen to fly up and knock me dead. I wait and no yen fly up to strike me on the cranium. Now I go with fine ship, and work like plain man."

"You have a sense of humor, king," said I, "and sink me if I don't try to get you a job wrastling the dishes aft. How about it? Can you sling the pots—are you a number-one pot-wrastler?"

"I never wrastle; a little jujutsu sometimes when necessary for take care, but I work at anything your august self tells. If honorable commander tells me to wrastle pots, I try him so. I pretty good with sword or short knife——"

"Not so fast, king; this isn't a man-of-war; no fighting here. All the fracasing done here is done by my august self and the other mate, Mr. Bill Slade, both, as you say, honorable men, and some hustlers when it comes right down to handling

cloth in a blow. What I want—honorable ship wants—is a man to give the eats aft—savvy? Bring in the hash from honorable cook in galley—see? Set dish on table, wash dish off table. You know.”

“But I am soldier—son of Samurai. I do not like dishwork; but if no other way, I do mean work to get to Tokyo,” he said sadly.

“You’re on,” I hastened to say. “You’re on, king, but in the future you will be known as Koko. Savvy?”

“As Mister Komuri,” he interrupted, with a look from those slits of eyes that called my attention.

“No misters aboard here but my honorable self and mate. Rules of honorable ship, you know. Sorry, but august skipper has discipline, and you are soldier. You savvy? We’ll compromise on Komuri. How’s that—just plain Komuri, steward, hash boy, hey?”

“Your august self, yes; to common men, Mister Komuri, yes.”

“Get aboard, then,” I said. “Go forward to the galley. The cook—that big Kanaka there—he’ll give you the line. In the meantime I’ll square it with the boss.”

Mister Komuri sprang over the rail, and made his way as directed. It was easy to see that he had been in ships before, as what Japanese hasn’t, since they are a race of seamen.

Our new member took hold without further orders, and I saw him not again until the land was well astern, and we were on our way to Guam, with

forty-seven chink coolies below, and two lady passengers aft.

This was the second part of our run, the first being from Frisco, where we had shipped the coolies under the leadership of their gigantic foreman, who had tried to take the ship and landed in jail for his pains. The few thousand dollars we now carried in the safe aft was not worthy of anxiety in regard to protection. Our voyage promised to be uneventful.

Among our crew were two new hands we had shipped at Honolulu to help run the ship, also to take care of the Chinese we carried. Our experience with the coolies had taught us that being short-handed was not either good or safe. Our arms were now ready, being, as they were, riot guns full of buckshot, and reliable six-shooters of heavy caliber. This going out with nearly half a hundred Chinks with but three men in a watch was all right if the Chinks were good, but we had found they were not to be trusted. With the leader of the uprising in jail for murder, and his lieutenant killed, we hoped for an easy life.

We now had four men in watch, with the engineer for the ever-ready steam winch bunking in his engine house with banked fires and enough steam always ready to handle line. We were really carrying a full crew for a schooner, and the expense of the engine was extra, there being now enough men to handle her canvas easily without the aid of the winches.

One of the new men was a strange-looking fel-

low, who was neither dago nor Dutchman. Just what he was I don't know, except that he was crafty, watchful, and dodged all work possible. He had a way of looking at you with eyes that seemed to fathom your inmost thoughts, an affected way of appearing to understand, and his peculiar silences gave support to the look. It deceived the old man.

It deceived both Slade and myself at first, but afterward we grew more discerning, peered deeper into his meaning, and saw—nothing. He was just a petty, crafty sea lawyer who was looking for trouble to carry back to the coast, where they love to get masters and mates mixed up in courts for some violation of the shipping articles.

This fellow's name was Dodd—Alfred Dodd—and he was called Alf by his shipmates. Komuri seemed to sense danger the moment he jostled the seaman in the gangway the first day out. I heard the row from the deck, and it was short.

“Hey, Jack,” yelled Dodd to the regular steward we had signed on in Frisco, “Jack, you seem to belong to the nobility now—can't hand a man a pot of coffee during the mid-watch no more, hey? Let the king do it.”

“Not king; just plain Mister Komuri,” purred our little helper, as he grinned.

“What's the matter?” asked Dodd. “Don't four-flush at your title, hey?”

“Aw, give us rest,” said Jack, who was good-natured and liked the little yellow man, for Ko-

muri did all his work now, and there was no come-back.

"I don't know if honorable sailor means wrong by four-flush," said Komuri quietly, "but if he does the finger of Fate will point at him."

"Wow! Fate will point at me! What der you think o' that?" sneered Dodd. "Let's hope you ain't Fate, sonny, or I might p'int my own fair hand at you in return."

"If honorable seaman will step out to the fore end of ship I'll show him just what a son of Samurai means. It will take short time."

"Sure, king; I'll go you that explanation, all right. Come right along while the watch are getting their whack. No one will notice us."

Komuri jumped like a tiger without warning. He sprang upon the fellow, and had a strangle hold of his wrist, and twisted over his neck until I thought he was getting killed. I had to stop laughing to run up and stop the fracas. Dodd was sweating with pain, and cursing furiously, absolutely helpless. It was so quickly done that I wondered at it. Of course, a strong man might grab the small fellow and jerk him out of his shoes, but that was not Dodd.

"Drop it!" I commanded, and the second steward let go at once, smiling. "Now, get below, and quit this fooling," said I, and the sailor waited for no further orders. "You can show me some of your tricks, you Japanese juggler, when we have more time," I said to the little man. "You interest

me considerable. Get to the hash, and don't waste time with a fool like that."

Of course, it might be expected that a man of Komuri's parts would be gallant, for it seems always the case when a man is able and unafraid that he is sure to love with more passion than discernment. Komuri was not an exception.

Not being at the first table with the passengers, I had small opportunity to see how he treated Miss MacDonald, but from what Slade told me I was concerned. The small chap was always in attendance upon the ladies when they were on deck. He was politeness itself, and he busied himself with all kinds of little efforts to make them more comfortable than they were.

"If honorable ladies will allow, I fix the rugs in chairs," he would say, and although the weather was tropical, a rug made a softer seat when they took the air on deck, which they did nearly all day-time while we ran our westing down beneath the tropic of Cancer.

With a good full month or six weeks before us, and a fair wind on the starboard quarter all the time, we had a stretch of water to cross that put one in mind of steamers. The ship ran steadily day and night at about from eight to ten knots an hour. We seldom touched a sheet or halyard except to set it up, and the gentle heeling with the trade swell made the voyage seem like a yachting trip.

Komuri had much time to devote to the comfort of the ladies, and the elder one seemed to like him very much indeed. He told them stories of the

warlike Samurai, and honor and self-respect stood out plainly in them all. It was not a bad thing, except that he always seemed to be something of a hero, and no steward either second or first should be such a thing where there are seamen around waiting for the job.

"I have always believed that you heathen were very able people," said Miss Aline, "and if you were treated properly you would be just as gentle and tractable as the European races."

"Heathen," said Komuri calmly, "are those who do not accept your own honorable views. Who knows which is right? It is a word we never use in Japan."

She looked at him a moment, and said: "You are quite incorrigible. I hope you are not really bad, after all."

"Honorable lady must see by how I do—not how I talk; she judge humble self most true. Her heart right," said the Japanese, which I thought was going some for a second steward, especially when I remembered how Slade stood, or wished to stand, in a certain quarter. I thought it best to let the humble steward see he was going far enough.

"Say, king, old man," I interrupted, "Jack wants you to get busy with the potatoes for dinner. He's waiting for the peelings."

Komuri nodded to me respectfully.

"At once, august mate, I go," he said, and went.

"Quite a superior steward, that Japanese boy," said the elder lady to me.

"Oh, he's a wonder, all right," I assented; "but

his place is in the galley, and not on the quarter-deck—if I may be allowed to speak of it.”

“And I do hope you will treat him kindly—not as you did the Chinese man who went bad,” said Miss Aline.

“No fear of it—not the king. He wouldn’t stand roughing—and don’t call for it. You see, while he goes with the Chinks altogether too much for their own good, and talks altogether too much for his own, he is not a Chinaman. Oh, no; he is far removed from the coolie Chinks, as far as the skipper himself. He’s just a plain little fighting man, that a good-sized mate like myself could bite in two; but I know him—just what he’d do.”

“Why, what?” asked Miss Aline.

“I’d hate to tell you,” I grinned.

“You may be a good seaman, but you’re somewhat stupid,” said Miss Aline, and I laughed outright at her humor.

“What do you think of this fine weather?” asked her aunt to change the conversation.

“It’s good as it goes, but it’s the hurricane season, and we can’t count on it lasting all the way, you know,” I said. “Maybe we’ll hook right into a typhoon before——”

“Oh, you always want something rough, something bad,” put in Miss Aline. “I never saw such a man. Why do you always look for trouble? Don’t you find it often enough without hunting it always?”

“Sure as eggs,” I said; “but I’m only telling

you what I believe, what the signs show me. I'm not trying to frighten you at all."

"I think you are perfectly horrid," said the young woman.

"I hope I'm wrong, at least," I answered. But as I scanned the perfect sky I felt that indeed I was trespassing upon the feelings of the passengers too much, in spite of the fact that I had a mercury glass to observe in Slade's room.

The coolies came on deck in the daytime now, and sat in rows along the waterways, eating their rice and chewing some sort of stuff to fill in the interval between meals. They chattered a lot, and appeared not to feel abashed at their former behavior.

At these times the old man would come on deck—it being about the time he'd take the noon sight—and gaze down at them dismally. He hated Chinks, and their presence in his ship was more than he could get used to.

"What good are Chinks, anyway?" he would say.

"Somebody's got to do the work in hot countries, and you can't always get the blacks. They are just like mules, carabao buffalo, or jacks. They'll work on ten cents a day and get fat; they don't know any better," I'd tell him.

But he would shake his old, shaggy head and mutter:

"What good, what good, anyway?"

As a matter of fact, they did no harm aboard besides befouling the air of the alleyways with their eternal opium smoking. They had nothing at all

to do with the men forward, and the only person who appeared to be able to hold intercourse with them was Komuri. He understood their lingo or singsong way of telling it, and he would talk to them for hours during the evening after the supper things were washed up, and Jack, the steward, had turned in.

I was a bit suspicious of this, for I don't like men of the after guard to be intimate with either the crew or the passengers. It starts something before long, and the voyage across the Pacific is a long one if nothing else. Slade commented upon the Japanese often, and he rather disliked our little second steward for his untiring efforts in behalf of the ladies. Slade was a jealous man, although he was a seaman from clew to earing, and his attentions to Miss Aline were more and more marked as the schooner sped on her course.

"Why shouldn't I get married?" he used to say to me when we had a chance to be together, which was seldom enough. "Why shouldn't I get a wife, and take up the simple life of the farmer? I've been through all the hardness of seagoing, and I'm tired of it. What is a man, after all, if he sticks to it? He gets to be a skipper of some blamed hooker that'll make him a couple of thousand a year when he is too old to enjoy spending it. Then he loses her, maybe, and then where is he? A fit subject for the sailors' home. No, I'm going to marry that woman and get a berth ashore. You watch me."

Of course, I encouraged him all I thought neces-

sary. I even grinned at times when I thought of the picture he would make as a husband of a woman like Miss Aline MacDonald—after he had been on the beach for a year or two.

And so we ran our westing down, and drew near the one hundred and sixtieth meridian to the northward of the Marshall Islands. Here the trade failed us for a wonder, and began to get fitful and squally. At times it would come with a rush, and then die away altogether, the squalls being accompanied by rain. A mighty swell began to heave in from the southeast diagonally across the trade swell, and it lumped up some, heaving the schooner over and rolling her down to her bearings when the wind failed to hold her.

The glass fell, and the air became sultry, the sun glowing like a ball of red copper in the hazy atmosphere. The squall clouds grew heavier, and when the sun shone between them it sent long rays, fan-shaped, through the mist.

The old man came on deck, and viewed the sea with a critical eye. It was nearly eight bells, and Slade was on watch. I came out and watched them take the sun for meridian altitude—both of them sometimes did this together—and when the bells struck off, Slade came down from the poop, and joined me on the main deck.

“What’d you make of the weather, old man?” he asked.

“Looks dirty to me; glass falling and the hot squalls coming from that quarter—whew! Look at it!”

As I spoke a huge roller swept under the schooner, lifting her skyward, and then dropping her slowly down the side. It was an enormous sea—a hill of water full forty feet high—and it rolled like a living mountain, a mighty mass that made nothing of the trade swell, and told of some tremendous power behind it.

The sea ran swiftly, with a quick, live feeling. As sure as death there was awful wind somewhere in that peaceful ocean, driving with immense force and resistless power.

Slade looked askance at the topsails. As he gazed the old man sang out from aft:

“Clew up the topsails and roll them up snug. Put extra gaskets on them!”

Then came the main and mizzen along with the outer jibs, and by the time the watch had their dinner we were close reefing the mizzen and taking the bonnet out of the foresail.

Miss Aline was on deck, as the sudden motion was so extraordinary that to remain below meant to be seasick. Her aunt came up from a hasty meal, and clung to the poop rail and watched us work.

“Oh, those gallant men!” she murmured to her niece. “See how they climb like monkeys upon that awful sail. Romantic heroes! Yes, Aline, they are wonderful, and the way that officer talks to them is a revelation. Just hear him.”

I was at that moment holding forth to a couple of squareheads upon the evident virtues of passing reef points properly, and I may have slipped my

etiquette a bit, for my language was such that I was almost persuaded to follow it with action. But I had heard enough. I stopped. The men went on lazily, growling at the work.

“Reefing a ship in a dead calm,” grumbled one, “ten minutes for the eats, and then we’ll loose these here p’intns out ag’in, and take the sail to the winch.”

I was too angry to hear more. Here was an old lady putting me queer with men who ought to know better than talk when they were expected to hurry. At least they should not criticize their officers.

“Get along, you Scandaluvian sons of Haman! Get those points in lively, or the squall’ll break before you know it—an’ I’ll be the rain, thunder, and lightning!” I roared.

I refused to look at the two passengers, and went to the forward end of the poop, and looked down at the Chinks, who were seated in the waterways eating their rice and long-lick—molasses. Just what to do with these fellows seemed to me a problem. We could hardly lock them in now, and if trouble came along quickly they would be in it, right in the middle.

The old man came from below, and gazed solemnly across the misty sea, and I went to him.

“How about it?” he asked. “Hadn’t we better house them Chinks now, before it’s too late? They’ll die of suffocation in those alleyways with the ports shut fast—I suppose you shut the ports in, didn’t you?” he said.

“Sure. Everything is snugged in below. Ko-muri saw to it. He knows how to talk to the Mon-

golians—tell them they must keep the ports shut. But I don't like leaving them on deck, even if it is hot enough to roast potatoes on the deck planks. How's the glass, sir?"

"Bottom dropped out of it somehow; mercury concave and 'way down. There's some unusual disturbance knocking about this sea. There's trouble ahead—typhoon season, you know. Nothing but wind moves that awful swell. Look at that!"

A hill of water rolled majestically onward, catching us under the counter, and sending us along its great, smooth crest, then dropping us again as we had hardly steering way under the short canvas.

"I'd like to know which way it's coming—lay our course to drift out of it, or run, but who knows—who knows before it strikes? I wish you would see to the gear forward. I don't want things to get loose. And take charge. No, sir; don't let anything out of the way happen while you're on deck."

I saw the old man was getting nervous. The low pressure and the sultriness were telling on him. He knew what was coming well enough, and fretted under it. It was hard waiting, even for an old seaman like himself. Slade came on deck, and puffed carelessly at his pipe, gazing about, and then going aft to chat with the ladies. He was always ready to cheer them up. Nothing would happen—positively nothing. There was no use of their getting nervous at the heavy swell. It had often happened before—a heavy swell and no wind, 'way out here in the middle of the Pacific. No telling where the

storm might be, but, of course it wouldn't be near us—oh, no.

Oleson came aft to me.

“Shall I lock in the Chinks?” he asked.

“Yes,” I answered. “Lock 'em up, put a padlock on both doors, and see that they don't get loose again until this is over.”

Oleson went to Komuri. The Jap listened to him, and then repeated the order, passing the word like a seaman should, without comment. The Chinks followed him into their quarters in the alleyways, and Oleson locked the doors on the outside, putting extra padlocks on them. The alleyways were upon the main deck, and shut off from the lazaret by a bulkhead.

“If honorable mate will let me open those ports inside, Chinese men will be able to breathe better—air very hot in there,” said Komuri.

“All right, king; go ahead. And if she lists over and drowns them like rats in a trap you'll be the man to loose them—see?” I warned him.

“I'll take care them, me,” said Komuri. “If honorable ship, she turns over, me, Komuri, will see to ports. Very hot inside there.”

I turned away and watched the horizon. The haze was thickening, and the squalls were beginning to come with more force than before. A sudden spurt of wind sang hoarsely in the rigging, and a drift of spray flew upward.

The men were still at work making things snug when I heard a murmuring, a moaning, vast, filling the air, then dying away again. It was all about

us, seemingly upon all sides. Then again I heard a harplike note of great volume. The horizon disappeared in the southeast, and the blue-steel bank of vapor shut off the sunlight. It grew dark and gloomy.

"She's coming along all right in a few minutes," said Slade, who came near to me and passed on to his room. He came on deck in a couple of minutes, with an oilskin coat buttoned fast about him, and he sweltered in its heat. I still stood at the weather rigging.

"Go get your rain clothes on," he said, coming to relieve me.

"Nix! Let her go as it is—better wet with salt water than sweat," I replied.

The skipper came forward. He suggested that the two passengers go below, and Jack, the steward, with Komuri to assist him, managed to get them below without protest, although it was something like ninety-six or seven in that saloon.

A white streak spread upon the sea. The squall struck, snoring away with a vigor that told of more coming. The spumedrift flew over us. Then another, and another furious blast of wind bore down upon the schooner, and she lay slowly over until her rail was submerged.

In five minutes the hurricane was roaring over us, and the *Tanner* lay upon her beam ends while we struggled with the mizzen, and held the wheel hard up to throw her off, the weight of the wind holding her down with a giant hand.

Yelling and struggling, all hands now tried to

get that mizzen in. It was a waste of time. I saw the skipper clinging to the boom and using his knife upon the canvas, and did likewise. With a thundering roar the sail split, torn to ribbons. We could not make ourselves heard in the chaos of sound, but waved frantically our orders and helped as only good seamen can.

But the *Tanner* refused to go off. She lay flat out with her cross-trees in the lift of the sea, and she hung there. The forestaysail burst with a crack that we heard aft, and vanished as if it had been snow in a jet of steam. The bonneted foresail held with the wind roaring over the top of it, spilling away, but still keeping full enough to keep from slatting and bursting. It was the heaviest canvas and brand new, and all the time squall after squall bore upon the straining ship, roaring, screaming with the blast of a gun as the puffs came and went.

That wind was like a wall of something solid. To move in it was enough to tax the strength. It pressed one against what was to leeward—pressed him, held him and bore upon him like a weight of something solid. To let go meant to run the risk of being blown bodily away into the sea.

We clung along the weather rail, and hung on with both hands, watching the white smother fore and aft, but unable to look to windward for an instant against the blast. The outfly and uproar was so tremendous that all sounds were lost in it. I found myself near Slade and the old man, all three clinging to the rail, and gasping for breath. The

skipper's gray head shone bare in the blast, and the white foam flecked it, and dripped from his beard, his ruddy cheeks glowing red in contrast. His teeth were set, and he was just holding on.

For a long time we three hung there, and did nothing but try to survive the fury of that hurricane. The forward part of the schooner was blotted out, and I just remember that to leeward, where I could look, the surge boiled and foamed clear up to the hatch coamings.

I thought of the women below, and knew they were safe for the time being. Then I remembered the starboard alleyway, and the ports that Komuri had left open to give the Chinks air. The alleyway was now completely submerged; the ports far below the surface of the sea, the Chinamen were caught there like rats in a trap.

The narrow space must even now be filling up, and I thought of the poor coolies struggling against that door the carpenter had so securely locked and fastened upon them. They could never break it open, for upon it we had placed our safety against another uprising, and the double, two-inch planks bolted crossways would stand more than the weight of the crowd that would be able to surge against it. The alleyway could fill entirely without any water getting below.

I grabbed Slade by the arm, and pointed at the lower deck.

"The Chinks—below—can't get out!" I roared against the hurricane.

Slade grinned a sickly grin and nodded. Then

he ducked his head against the wind and bellowed back:

“Can’t help it—can’t go there—sure death!”

I fancied I could hear the outcries of the imprisoned men, but the deep, bass undertone of the hurricane roared away overhead and swept away the impression.

It was sickening to think of it. Fully twenty men were in that alleyway, and the four eight-inch ports were letting in four streams of sea water, for the Chinamen would not know enough to jam them full of clothes or anything they could get hold of, being little better than animals in point of intelligence.

If the schooner would only pay off she would right herself and let the openings come above the sea level; but she hung there dead, beaten down by a blast so terrific that it seemed like a solid wall of something heavy bearing upon her and crushing her life out. It took the breath away, and I found myself gasping, trying to get air to breathe, sucking in the flying drift and spray, and choking, holding one hand over my nose and mouth to keep from actually drowning in the smother.

It seemed as if we had already been hove down a full hour, and I was tiring. The schooner held doggedly broadside in the trough of the sea, which was now appalling in height, and was breaking solidly over her high rail and upturned side. We could not last much longer in the dangerous position, and I began to believe we were lost. Our hatches were closed, and no water could get below

unless something gave way, but it was certain something would go before long under that strain.

I looked hopelessly at the man at the wheel, who had passed a lashing upon his waist, and was straddling the shaft, clinging to the spokes with desperation. I wondered if he still held the wheel hard up, but knew that in her present knocked-down state it would make little difference, for she would not steer without some headsail to swing her out and off that mighty sea.,

I crawled along the rail, fighting my way hand over hand, passing the skipper and gaining the edge of the poop. I yelled to Douglas, who was the man straddling the wheel shaft, but he only shook his head and ducked from the squalls.

While I bawled for him to tell me what helm she carried, I was aware of a figure crawling from the companionway to the after cabin. It came creeping up just under me, up the almost perpendicular deck, and it looked like a big monkey until it came right into me, and then I recognized Komuri, our little steward.

Komuri was yellow, a pasty yellow, and his wrinkled face looked old and haggard. He was only partly dressed, and he clawed the rail frantically for a hand hold. He looked the worst-scared Jap I had ever seen or dreamed of. He climbed close to me.

"Men locked in—all die—ports open," he screeched in my ear.

"I know—can't help it—door under water—no tools," I yelled in reply, and he howled something

that ended in a screech that was unintelligible, for over it all sounded that deep, bass roar, thundering, booming, vibrating into chaos all sounds.

I watched him, and he climbed past me, making his way forward with amazing speed, considering he was crawling along a wall which had been the deck. He made the break of the poop, and disappeared, going in the direction of the forward house, although how he ever expected to get there was beyond reason.

Something made me follow him, and soon Slade and myself were at the edge of the poop, and gazing down at the partly submerged door of the starboard alleyway. While we looked, Komuri came climbing along the rail of the ship, disappearing now and then under the solid water that swept her, but, to our amazement, still keeping hold of the pins, and gaining slowly toward us.

In one hand he held Oleson's ax, and he was coming toward us, coming to do a piece of work we had already given up as impossible.

No word was spoken as Komuri struggled up to where we clung and gasped for breath, half drowned in the rush of water.

I passed the end of a line about him after a fashion, and he dropped off to starboard down the steep slant, and instantly went under as a huge sea fell over the schooner.

We held the line. Then we saw him again, and he was hacking away at the door, chopping at the lock and staple while he swung scrambling with his

feet against the planks. Slade thoughtfully dropped down other lines, and made them fast.

I could see little of what was going on. The seas were breaking over us now with tremendous volume, and it seemed only a question of a few minutes before the schooner must go down, anyhow, for she couldn't lie on her beam ends very long without something giving way.

The work of getting at those Chinks appeared to me now a useless labor. We would all be where there was no caste, no coolies, in a short time. And yet such is the habit of a seaman, he works on against certain failure at times, when ordinary folk would accept the verdict and quit.

I held Komuri until my arms were nearly paralyzed, and I was fainting with exertion and lack of air. The first thing I knew of what he had done was when a Chink came climbing monkey fashion up one of the lines, followed by another and another, their yellow faces pasty and drawn, and their pigtails streaming after them. They clung along the weather side, and lashed themselves fast to whatever they could find. I saw the dark figures of a couple fade away in the smother to leeward, and knew they had gone to where all Chinks go sooner or later, but the rest came up and clung for life there in the strident breath of the typhoon, and the booming roar drowned out even their shrieks and yelps.

I tried to haul Komuri up again, but could not. I howled for Slade to help me, but he was separated by a row of Chinks, and couldn't reach me.

I hammered the nearest Chinaman over the head in frantic desperation to make him haul line and save the little Jap, but the fellow only ducked the blows, which were too weak to hurt much.

Komuri, exhausted, could not climb back. He could no longer help himself, and he was trusting to me to get him up from the white smother beneath that was drowning him. The madness of my weakness came over me. I had been a bucko mate with ready hand, and could take them by and large as they came from the dock to the forecastle, but here I was weakening, holding to a line at the end of which was the bravest little man I had even seen, the gamest little fighter—Komuri, son of Samurai, the fighting class of the Japanese.

And Komuri was going to his death because I couldn't help him. On and on I struggled with the line, bellowing curses, but I could get little or no line over the pin, and I was growing surely weaker and weaker.

Then I stopped, and tried to see if there was any chance to help, any chance to save the little hero. I saw Komuri dangling in the foam, his face upturned to me, and a smile upon his yellow, wrinkled visage. He waved feebly to me, and I knew he was signaling for me to haul him up—and was wondering why I didn't.

“Oh, my God, you poor little devil!” I howled. “It's too bad—too bad!”

A gigantic sea crashed over the schooner, a mountain of water. I passed the line about my waist, and snatched a turn to keep from being

washed away. That was the last I remembered for some time.

When I regained my senses I was lying on the deck, and Slade was dragging me by the arm toward the cabin doors. The roar of the hurricane still boomed over us—the wild rush of the sea—but it came from aft now, and I knew they had at last got her off the wind, and were running her either to hell or safety.

Ten minutes later I was struggling up the companionway again to the deck, where the old man was now conning her, and watching her run seventeen knots an hour before a series of hurricane squalls that simply lifted her almost bodily out of the sea.

I saw we had passed the center of the cyclone, for we had the wind almost directly opposite from where it was when we lay knocked down. I got to the shelter of the mizzen, and from there watched the men at the wheel hold her as she ran. Some one had loosed a bit of canvas forward, but it had blown away, and the ribbon streamers stretched and cracked until they vanished in the blast.

“How’d you do it?” I yelled to Slade, who clung in the lee.

“Squalls let up sudden—hit the center—she righted, and then ran off when we hit the other side of it!” howled the mate.

“Where’s Komuri?” I howled.

“Don’t know—must have gone to leeward. Some Chinks gone, too—you came near going.”

That was all I could get from Slade. But I

knew all that was necessary. Komuri had gone to the port of missing ships. He had died as a Samurai should, facing his end fearlessly, fighting to the last for others in the hope to save them, the ones he had tried to help by giving them air and leaving their ports open when they should have been closed. He had known his responsibility, and had done what we had failed to do.

There were three Chinamen missing, but our own men were safe. They had got under the side of the engine house, where they were protected from both the sea and wind. They clung there until the vessel righted, and then turned to with a will to save the ship.

We ran the *Tanner* all that day and the following night, keeping her before a mighty sea that almost overran us. She steered well once she got off before it, and after we got canvas on her forward she was safe enough. It had been a close squeak for all hands, and we breathed easier as she ran out of the disturbance and came again upon her course. A week later we ran her in behind the reef of Guam, and came to anchor off the town of Agana, where we were to discharge part of our cargo and the Chinese.

In behind the barrier we ran her without further incident, and as the wind fell we rolled up the canvas and let her drift into fifteen fathoms before letting go the hook.

The ladies came on deck for the first time since the typhoon, and gazed happily at the beautiful island crowned with green, tropical foliage—a wel-

come relief to the eye that had seen only the blue water for so long. They were to leave us here, and we were to go on to Manila, coming later to take them back upon the return voyage. It would give them three months on Guam.

"Where is our little Jap, Kamuri—we haven't seen him for a week?" asked Miss Aline. "He was nice about getting our things together—we really must have him help us ashore."

"Hasn't Slade told you?" I said.

"No. What do you mean?" she asked in surprise.

"Komuri is dead—lost in the typhoon—he saved the Chinks," I answered.

Both women gasped their surprise.

"I am so sorry!" exclaimed the younger.

"And he was so good," said her aunt. "I wondered why Mr. Slade hadn't spoken of him before. I suppose it's because Mr. Slade feels that he is now to be your guardian and must protect you from all ill news—oh, I forgot—you hadn't heard. Yes, Mr. Slade is the man. He saved Aline's life, you know, and they are to be married after we get back. Strange he didn't tell you."

I thought so, too. Slade was a sly dog—and he had used my collars, also, in his wooing. I was—well, I was ready to congratulate any man who could make up his mind to marry.

But I turned away so abruptly that I thought I had to apologize to Slade afterward, to keep from getting in a row with him. But Slade understood, and squeezed my hand.

"There's some of that port left over below," he said, and he led the way down.

He filled two glasses to the brim, handing me one.

"To your health—and that of Miss Aline," I said stiffly, feeling that there was something to say, or do.

"No," said Slade slowly, thoughtfully, "to the best man."

"Sure—to me, the best man at the wedding?" I said, in feigned surprise.

"Oh, no," corrected the mate. "Not at all—although you are not so bad, old chap." He raised his eyes and looked straight into mine. "We drink to the best man in the ship—who was in the ship—to Komuri."

And we drained our glasses.

AT THE END OF THE DRAG-ROPE

THERE were five men all told in the fishing schooner *Flying Star*. I had known them all well, and had been shipmate with four of them. Captain Johnny Sparks was a Dutchman, a "squarehead," but a good seaman, and he had fished on the Hatteras Banks during three bluefish seasons. His vessel was a Provincetown specimen—what used to be termed the "Gloucester fisherman" type, before the decadence of that port in the industry which once made it famous had ended its shipbuilding.

She was a small vessel, much smaller than the modern Provincetown fisherman, which has a short foremast, a mainmast planted almost amidships, and sweeping canoe bows with overhang. No, she was of the old type—two sticks stuck upright in her at almost equal distances, marking her into three almost equal parts; a main-topmast sprung well forward and stayed well aft to steady the "whip" of long and continuous plunging into a lifting head sea. She was "chunky" in model, bows rather bluff, almost like a coaster, and her stern was of the old-time sawed-off pattern, sunk

low in the water, an ugly stern for running in a heavy sea when the lift is quick and fast.

She was not worth over two thousand dollars, but Captain Johnny owned half of her, and he had no criticisms to make of her behavior in heavy weather. With a long, straight keel and full under-body, she was an excellent sea craft, provided she was properly handled.

I was mate of the passenger ship *Prince Alfred* with Bill Baldwin, running from New York to the West Indies, and as we ran on schedule we often fell in with the Hatteras fishermen twice during a voyage.

Johnny was fishing three miles north of the Diamond Shoal Lightship as we passed him on our voyage out. He stood upon his quarterdeck and waved to me. I was on the bridge, and bawled out I would have some fruit for him on the return trip. He nodded and waved his hand in appreciation, and his cook poked his head out of the galley and grinned. His boats were scattered along the shoal, all hauling up bluefish as fast as they could.

Four other vessels from New York were on the grounds, but I recognized none of them. Our passengers gazed at the small boats tossing as only light-built dories can toss in a lively sea; and they commented on the fishing.

As a rule, the average landsman thinks all fishing is done on the Grand or George's Banks. They get the idea from writers who know these waters well, and it never enters their heads that the northern banks are but a very small part of the great

Atlantic fishing grounds, where the professional fisherman must toil to wrest his living from the salt sea.

It was due to a Gloucester Yankee, though, that the great fishing of Campeche Bank became known. Hove-to in a vicious norther a few score miles off Galveston, the "cod-hauler" was driven gradually off shore until he was far away from the land. Suddenly from a fathomless gulf—he had had the perseverance to keep his lead going at intervals—he fetched the ground in thirty fathoms, and gradually shoaled his water.

With a hook just above the lead, he soon began to haul up snappers, and he came running into port a few days later with his schooner loaded to her bearings with as prime fish as ever came out of the sea.

Captain Johnny had fished there a year, but owing to the slowness of the *Flying Star* he had given it up until the steam patrol boat had been put on to make the rounds and buy the fish on the grounds. It was Johnny who had gone into Sabine once for water when Dick Hollister was marshal.

Hollister was a saturnine chap, who wore a heavy Colt with seven notches in the handle, each notch meant for some beggar he had been forced to perforate in the course of his strenuous career. He was accounted one of the most fearless and able marshals in Texas. One morning he visited the *Flying Star*, apparently looking for a man he wanted for a certain episode in horses. He swaggered about the decks with his Colt in full view,

and caused so much interest that he impeded the work.

Johnny spoke softly to him—he always had a soft way of speaking—and told him he must get ashore. The marshal turned and gazed at the little “squarehead” in disdain; but Captain Johnny, who was sitting on his hatch-combing, looked up with gentle gray eyes and pointed to the jetty.

“You get away—get oudt wid you, my friend. I don’t got no time fer wastin’ wid circus-actor mens wid funny fringes and artillery dragging mid dere waist belts—git!”

And as the marshal didn’t move, Johnny shied a coiled line at him, hitting him somewhat violently in the body.

Instantly Hollister drew his Colt.

“You blamed little shrimp! if you do that again I’ll plug you,” he said quietly, wiping the fish scales and salt water from his clothes. “Don’t make any mistake; I’m not your friend.”

Captain Johnny was especially blue and sad that morning, so he gazed at the marshal, while his hand reached for a heavy sinker.

“If you ain’t my friend, fire away not; if you are mine friend, you shoot me, for I’m tired enough wid dis business, an’ I don’t vant do be livin’ always, forever, yet. Shoot, mein dear friend, shoot—or if not mine friend, den take dis!”

And he tossed the pound lead with such precision that it stretched Hollister flat upon the deck before he could take good aim to do more than rip the collar off Johnny’s coat with his fire. When he

came to, Johnny was bathing his head where the sinker had cut him, and pouring good whisky down his throat.

“You are mine friend—but a poor shot—take another drink with me, and den go. Here’s your blunderbust—you interrupts de vork on de deck—git oudt!”

And yet there was a lot of energy in that sturdy form standing there upon the deck of his undermanned schooner waving his acknowledgments to me upon the bridge of the liner. Yes, Captain Johnny Sparks was a good seaman. May the deep ocean hold him gently in its eternal embrace, for he loved it—loved it as only a true seaman does!

We made the run south, and were coming up with a full complement of passengers from Jamaica, when we began to notice a definite change in the weather. It was the hurricane season, September, and the heat was oppressive. The passengers lay about the decks in chairs all day and half the night, getting what air the ship made with her rush of fifteen knots an hour through the quiet sea. We ran along through the Passage, leaving Cape Maysi out of sight before dark, and rapidly hauling up under the lee of the Great Inagua Bank. Here in the smooth sea night fell upon the ocean, and I went on the bridge for the first watch.

As I came into the pilot house to sign the order-book for my course, Captain Baldwin called my attention to the glass. It had fallen rapidly during the last few hours, and was now dangerously low.

“Keep a good lookout,” he said, “and call me at

the first signs of a change." I signed the order-book, and he went below.

How many times has an officer signed that order-book before even going on the bridge? And how many times has the said officer made an entirely different course from that signed for? But then steamship companies do not supply ships and coal for their officers to study navigation. It would not look well on paper. Every officer of a passenger ship is a licensed master, a captain; and no first-class company will ship any other kind of man to go on the bridge to take charge for the watch of four hours, for during that time the ship is absolutely under his command, and it is necessary that he shall be a skilled navigator, capable of taking the ship along just as safely should accident befall her commander. For this responsibility he receives from seventy-five to a hundred dollars per month; and half of the passengers whose lives he holds in the hollow of his hand for half the night look upon him as little better than a ship's cook!

We appeared to follow the low barometer, or it to follow us, for when daylight came we were still running smoothly across the Atlantic with nothing but an oppressive heat and mugginess to warn the landsman of the low pressure.

"There's something coming along behind us; something there astern that will probably make things howl," said Baldwin, as he came on deck in the morning.

The sun was brassy in a coppery haze, but it was clear enough to get a good sight for longitude. I

called off three good sights, took the note, and went below to work the longitude before breakfast. On ships running across the Gulf or Florida Stream from the southward, bound for New York or some port south of it, there is every necessity for getting the westing accurate. We always found that, running diagonally across for the Diamond Shoal Light vessel, we were set about twelve miles to the northeast while running at from twelve to fifteen knots. This was almost a regular fixed factor, but in heavy weather it was not always safe to run full speed inside of it.

To make to the eastward of the lightship was well enough, but to fetch to the westward was the one thing that has always made Baldwin nervous, and rightly so. If he missed it going to the eastward, he would pick up some other landfall to the northward, if he was too far off; but if he missed it going to the westward in a driving gale, when it was too thick to see half a mile—well, we had never done so yet, and had no reason to pray for the experience.

We were a fast liner, full of fruit and passengers, and we could not stop for anything on the run up. With fifty thousand bunches of bananas below, we must drive the ship to her destination as fast as she could go, and neither hurricane nor calm must stop her. The company seldom kept a seaman long who brought in fifty thousand bunches of ruined fruit, some of it twelve hands, and most of it more than eight, selling at retail at nearly a dollar a bunch.

Two years before, Baldwin, after being hove-to

for thirty-six hours in a gale, had brought in his ship laden with fruit he had taken under protest, the "yellow" being plainly in sight at the ends of more than half the bunches. He had docked, and a score of men had waded about for several days up to their hips in a mess which, once seen, causes all lovers of bananas to eschew that fruit forever afterward. Banana juice will cut the steel plates of a ship's side almost like diluted sulphuric acid—but they gave him another chance.

It was late in the afternoon of the day we had run clear of the land, when the first signs of the hurricane of September 19, 1903, made its appearance. The swell began to roll heavily from the southeast with a curious cross-roll from the westward, making a peculiarly uncomfortable sea for a steamer running northward. It dropped away from under our counter, and the *Prince Alfred* dipped her taffrail almost to the unruffled surface. Then she would rise upon it, and, as it lifted well under her underbody, she would roll to port and throw her stern so high that the starboard screw would race in a storm of foam at the surface, shaking her tremendously, and annoying the passengers who happened to occupy after-staterooms.

When the second officer, Smith, came on duty, I made my way aft to take a look over things—to see that the small boats were securely lashed; that gratings and gear were in place, for it was evident that we were to have a piece of dirty weather. A large, fat, pale-faced woman poked her head out of window and demanded that I have the starboard

engine stopped at once, as it was too racking on her nerves. She declared she had stood it as long as she could, and would lodge a complaint with the president of the company immediately she got ashore, if her demand were not complied with instantly. I started to argue the case, but she cut me short, exclaiming that "they never did such things on the French boats."

All the gear was in order aft, and I had just made my way to the bridge, when the Captain called my attention to a haze gathering to the southward.

"The glass is starting down again—dropped two more tenths," he said. "We'll run foul of something before eight bells. Looks like it was following the Stream along to the northward; it usually does."

A heavy, blue-black bank of cloud, smooth, and swept into an immense semicircle over the southern horizon, but rising fast, told of the beginning of trouble. Half an hour later we began to feel the squalls, which came suddenly and with vicious spurts of fine rain.

"According to old Captain Valdes," said Baldwin, "if you place your back to the wind, the center of the blow is to the left, or port side, and a bit behind you. This breeze is coming in from the eastward good and quick, and it looks like we'll fetch the center straight and fair the way we're heading."

"Would you stop her and heave her up?" I asked.

"Stop her? Not as long as she'll swim. What do you think we are—a sand-barge? Stop a liner running on schedule with a fortune of bananas lying below? Get those ventilators trimmed, and put

three covers on the after hatch and lash them fast. We'll run her. Who do you think would take this packet out the next voyage if he hove her to?"

As it was only too evident that it would be my chance, I said nothing.

The light grew dim as the gray pall of the storm quickly overspread the sky. The dull gray light made the sea appear queer and dark, with the great heave now running quickly, as though a mighty power were working close behind it. The tops of the breaking combers had a peculiar lift to them as they met the cross-swell, and the racing of the star-board engine became more and more violent. A terrific squall bore upon the ship, seemed to almost lift her bodily before it. The roar of the wind whirling through the heavy standing rigging told of its velocity, and then we waded right into the thick of it, with the *Prince Alfred* lurching along eighteen knots an hour over a sea which was torn into a white and gray world that ended, so far as our vision was concerned, a few fathoms from the ship's side.

Baldwin was standing on the bridge, holding to the rail, and leaning to the blasts as though it took his whole weight to bear up against them. I came close to him.

"Get every one . . . below! Lock in . . . passengers!" I caught his words with my ear ten inches from his mouth. "Cover . . . hatches . . . all fast."

I knew what he meant. When the *Prince Alfred* closed down her cargo there was something unusual

happening. Making my way down the bridge steps, I got the men of the watch together. It was tough work, for the sea was now ugly, and we were running our weather-rail down at each roll, and scooping up plenty of water which she sent across her decks to leeward. To stand up without holding on meant to be blown bodily against the lee rail at the risk of going over.

It was an hour before I got back to the bridge, and when I did so, the squalls were becoming more frequent, and more and more violent, but there was no shift yet. It soon grew dark—a black dark—and we tore along into the blackness, unable to see two fathoms ahead. As yet we were outside the Stream, and consequently not in the usual line of the coasters, which are the dread of the liner's officers, for nothing is so uncomfortable as the sudden raising of the dim and sometimes half-extinguished lights of a schooner on a thick night while tearing along before a gale. Having the right of way, the sailing vessel has nothing to do but keep her course, while the steamship, with but a few seconds to spare, swings quickly to pass, sometimes missing a catastrophe by a few feet. A poor red light on such a night cannot be seen twenty fathoms.

Before midnight the shift began. It came from the southward—a bad sign, for it told plainly that we were nearing the center of the disturbance; and as we were heading diagonally across the path of the storm, we were almost certain to bring up in its dread vortex. As chief officer, it would have been a bit out of place for me to suggest the thing the

ordinary seaman would do—that is, heave to and work out of it. Baldwin stood on his bridge and kept her going.

And yet it had to come. Before daylight the sea was terrific—the squalls coming with furious rushes, shifting, and hurling a frightful sea. A huge, lifting hill of water broke high above the taff-rail, and roared a full fathom deep over the quarter-deck. The crash shook the steamer through her whole frame. It was as though she had struck a solid rock. The white glint of the foam showed through the blackness, but the dull, thunderous roar drowned all other sounds.

Baldwin went to the speaking tube in the pilot house, called to the chief engineer to stand by to heave her to and watch the engines as she came into the trough.

“We’ll have to stop her,” he said; and I nodded assent.

In the pilot house the clanking of the steam steering gear sounded dully in the deep, sonorous undertone of the gale outside.

Baldwin waited but a moment, and then gave the order:

“Hard over, sir!” cried the quartermaster; and the rattling clank of the engine sounded the signal for me to take advantage of the opportunity to get outside by the lee door.

If it had been blowing before while we were running, it was now a blast.

The *Prince Alfred* laid down her whole five hundred feet of steel side into that sea, and the crash

of the mighty hill that swept her shook her as though she had been struck amidships by the ram of a battleship. The forward funnel guys parted, and I had a momentary glimpse of a great pillar of iron going over the side to leeward. Then she began to head the sea, and no human could face the storm of flying water which swept the bridge.

With heads down, gasping for breath, Baldwin and myself gripped the bridge rail. The flying atmosphere tore past us. We dared not loose our grasp for an instant, and to get back to the shelter of the pilot house was impossible without following the iron rail aft.

After a thunderous rush of quick and vicious squalls, there was a sudden lull. A giant comber showed ahead, and its white and foaming crest lifted clear into the night. She buried her whole forward deck, and, as the water cleared, we could see about us. The dull snore of a giant sea sounded close aboard. It was uncanny, this sudden stillness, full of a palpitating murmur and pregnant with an ominous power.

"Right in it!" gasped Baldwin. "How does she head now?"

"Southeast by south," I answered. "The next squall will probably come from the northwest."

"Well, I guess we'll swing her while it's still—Lord, what an awful sea!"

The *Prince Alfred* came slowly around with her engines turning at half speed. The high, leaping hills of water seemed to come from all directions at once. They fell upon her decks and shook her

up a bit, but did no damage. Five, ten, fifteen minutes passed. A distant murmuring sounded over the torn sea.

"Which way?" asked Baldwin nervously.

A puff of cool air blew straight in our faces; we had not noted how sultry it was, for we were soaking wet and exhausted. The puff blew to a breeze. Then came a spurt of rain and a faint flash of lightning. In a minute we were facing furious squalls, and the *Prince Alfred*, with a full head of steam, had all she could do to keep steering way with her nose pointed straight into the blast from nor'-nor'-west.

It was in the gray of the early morning, while Baldwin and I were still on the bridge, and the second and third officers were in charge of the saloons quelling the panic, that we sighted something dead ahead. The squalls were still whirling over us with longer intervals between, but with still undiminished vigor. The great sea began to show in front now through the dim light, and it was all the full-powered liner could do to hold her own head to it. To swerve to either side meant falling off into the dangerous trough, with the hazard of not being able to regain her course. Even as it was, we had to more than once slow the port or starboard engine to enable her to point her nose straight into the hurricane.

Upon the crest of a giant hill of water something showed black. It was a momentary glimpse, but Baldwin and I saw it instantly. It was close aboard and, as we yelled to each other and strained our

eyes ahead, we made out the thin line of a mast. Baldwin dropped on his hands and knees and was blown to the pilot-house door. I waved my hand to ease her to starboard a little. Just then a sea struck us heavily upon the starboard bow, and held her with its rush. The next moment the shape ahead was high upon the crest of a mighty sea, and I recognized the stern of a vessel outlined against the gray pall.

I looked over the side. The foam was lying dead with us, showing we were not going ahead more than a knot or two. Baldwin saw it also, and knew that to slew his ship now would mean to get struck a blow in the side which in that sea would probably prove fatal. He thought of his passengers. They must be considered first. Whatever was ahead was going to hit us, and it was due to those we had aboard that it must strike us as fairly upon the stem as we could land it. God help them, we must save our own!

We plunged headlong into the trough, and right above us upon the following crest rose the stern of that sailing vessel. She was plainly in view now; so close that I recognized the sawed-off shape of an old-time fishing schooner. Upon her main a bit of rag like a trysail showed white. She was heading the sea at the end of her sea anchor, a long drag-rope, and as her deck showed, I saw she had been badly swept.

There was no one in sight. She was going astern fast, much faster than we thought, for even while Baldwin tried to edge to starboard, and did

all he could to swing his ship without getting his head thrown off with the sea, the stern sank just ahead of us in the hollow of a sea, and our stem rose above. I leaned forward and held my breath. The *Prince Alfred* fell headlong into the hollow, and just as we struck I read the name *Flying Star* painted large and white right across the transom.

A dull grinding thud, which shook the *Prince Alfred* but slightly, was all that came to us. A sea swung the wreck to port, and as she heeled and settled, I saw Johnny Sparks spring from the companionway, followed by several men. The next instant a great comber roared over them and the schooner disappeared, leaving nothing above the foam to show where she had floated a moment before. Something caught in my throat. I shut my eyes, and held my head down for I don't know how long.

We came into port four days later with Baldwin on the bridge, his face lined and haggard. Below, thirty thousand dollars' worth of bananas slushed about in a ghastly mess, in spite of the pens and shorings. But the passengers were happy. Women in gay dresses came on deck and smiled and chatted, and children romped and played. The captain did not look at me—he had not since the collision—but he spoke to me for the first time.

“See that everything is shipshape when we dock,” said he, “and then meet me at the company's office at four o'clock. I'll probably not take her out next voyage—take a lay-off for a while—understand?”

PIRATES TWAIN

AT last I was back in the regular liners of the Prince ships. My work on the *Heraldine* had been appreciated by Lord Hawkes, the manager, and his lordship was no piker.

He refused Baldwin my company when that worthy but thirsty skipper asked to have me back in the old *Prince Alfred*, where a certain lady whom I admired greatly was stewardess.

The new *Prince George*, twenty-five thousand tons and a twenty-two-knot vessel, was wanting a first officer, and old man Hall was somewhat disposed to give me "a chance," as the saying is at sea when an officer applies for a berth.

"You may report to the captain to-morrow at the dock," said his lordship, and our interview was at an end. Baldwin looked sour, for I had been a good mate to him, and he wanted me badly, but the manager's word was law.

I found the giant liner all that modern improvements could make her. From her six-hundred-foot keel to her four immense funnel tops, she was a beauty.

It would take a week to describe her many qualities, and I must admit it gave me a feeling of re-

sponsibility when I stepped upon her flying bridge and looked her over.

There I would be in command every four hours, and when I gazed over her immense length and breadth it seemed indeed that I must be a person of some small ability to hold the job.

No flippant remarks here, no joking about the passengers or the company. It was silence and dignity.

How I stood it at first is more of a wonder to me, when I look back at the time, than the actual work, for really a ship's officer is not considered a mighty position, even though he does hold the lives of a couple of thousand folks in his keeping during his watch on deck.

But I was not too old, and had ambition, for some day I wanted to have a little farm of my own and raise chickens and hogs—the true ambition of every seaman I ever met—and I wanted to ask a certain lady to run the said farm for me, or rather do the cooking, which is probably the same thing.

Our crew was shipped by the agents. Old man Hall had nothing whatever to do but act as overseer of the navigators, which same were myself and a second officer named MacFarland.

Mac was a good seaman, although he had never been in sail, but had risen from the apprentice school of officers established by the company to train men for its ships—and they were of course all steam.

I must admit he knew more of express ships than I, but I had ten years more sea duty done, and I was something of a windjammer in my time. This

gave me the rating with the older men who had served the same way in the old sailing vessels.

We knew each other, and could depend always upon certain things in each other that no school could develop the same way. I sat at the head of the chief officers' table, and I bought a book of table etiquette to get the lay of the whack just right.

It taught me many things I hadn't learned in a ship's fore-castle, and soon I was able to speak to the prosperous-looking passengers without feeling that my tongue was in the way of my teeth.

We carried three hundred first-class—that was some when you think of it—and we often herded fifteen hundred to two thousand in the steerage. Four hundred seconds added sometimes put our total complement over three thousand souls, counting, of course, our crew, stokers, and waiters.

You will realize at once the inability of a chief mate getting even the slightest acquaintance with hundreds of the people who used the *Prince George* for transportation across the ocean, and, if I could not get a line on them, it was equally impossible for the pursers, pursers' clerks, and stewards to do so.

Mr. Samuels, the head purser, had a memory that was said to be infallible. He said he never forgot a face. Of the million or two people he came in contact with during his runs, he boasted that he could always tell if he had ever seen one of them before.

I didn't believe it, of course; but, then, pursers

have a way that many seamen can't understand, anyhow.

Being an express ship, and carrying the first-class mail, we also had an express safe. This was built into the body of the vessel, and was like the new bank safes, with solid steel doors and time locks.

Two watchmen took charge, alternating night and day, and the massive doors were not to be opened by any one alone. In that safe we often carried three or four million dollars in solid gold bars or gold coin.

Sometimes the banking houses of the United States shipped as much as two million at a time in coin. Precautions were of the modern banking sort, and the giant safe caused no comment.

The other safes of the purser and captain were just plain, every-day affairs, and seldom held more than a few thousand dollars. These were very different from the "through" safe.

I had been in the ship four months before I noticed a man who sat at my table. He had made a voyage with us the first run I made, and I remembered him as a clergyman who had relatives abroad in Europe, but who was himself an American.

He was a very dignified man, about fifty-five years of age, and he knew a great deal. I enjoyed talking to him, for he told me of many places and events that were most interesting. But he never at any time discussed religion, or even spoke of subjects relating to it.

Once on his second trip over, he came to my

room, and presented me with a box of fine Havana cigars and, although it was against custom, I asked him in, and he came.

We smoked while I should have been sleeping, but I was not by any means overworked, and I rather enjoyed his society, flattered of course that a man of such vast experience and learning should single out the chief officer for a companion.

But then I knew many folks looked upon a master navigator as a likely person to know, and was not very much surprised, setting it down to his good taste and discernment—for I had gone a mile or two myself in my day, and had seen a few things both ashore and afloat.

Once I remember he talked of finance and the great gold shipments that were disturbing the country. He had followed the administration in its effort to curb a panic that was threatened, and spoke of the money we carried in gold coin that was for the purpose of staying a run at that time upon a banking house that had many foreign affiliations.

“The express safe is generally full, is it not, during times like these?” he asked.

“Yes, we carry millions every voyage now,” I answered, and noticed that the Reverend Mr. Jackson made a peculiar grimace as if amused at the news.

The conversation immediately drifted off to Cape Town, where the minister had lately spent much time, and he soon left me to my slumber and cigars.

I noticed that he had remarkable hands, immensely strong, as though he had done much hard

work, and afterward I wondered at a small tattoo mark on his wrist just beneath the edge of his cuff. He had powerful, hairy wrists, and the blue mark showed very indistinctly through the black hair, but it caused me to think of him as a strange man.

I asked him about it the next day when at the table, but he made an evasive answer, smiling at my compliment to his strong physique.

"I was something of an athlete in my younger days," he finally admitted, "and you must not think that because of my profession I live a sedentary life. I work very hard among my parishioners, and play golf a great deal. Of course, you, as a seaman, would hardly appreciate the mysteries of this manly game."

"I confess that it seems rather tame," I admitted; "seems like a poor sort of 'shinny' we used to play in America when I was a lad."

"My wife plays it also, and she is very strong and agile from the exercise," said Mr. Jackson; "I hope you will meet her next month when I return, as she will probably go to London with me."

I expressed pleasure at the thought, and noticed that Doctor Jackson was really quite a good-looking man, and there was no reason in the world why he should not possess a very pretty wife.

His clean-shaven face, lined, it is true, as though he had spent much time at physical exertion of the heavier sort, was handsome enough. A large, high nose, not badly shaped, set in between two steel-blue eyes, wide apart, and his mouth, although thin-

lipped and hard-looking, was not ugly, and his teeth were large, even, and snow-white.

Altogether he was a man of strength and character from his appearance, and I remembered him for his kindness—and cigars.

Three weeks later, upon the return voyage, he came aboard and told me he would bring his wife aboard the next morning, and was just then seeing to his room, which was amidships, and upon the lower or main deck, just above the express room and over the steel safe.

He asked me if I thought the noise from below would disturb them, his wife being a nervous woman and irritable. I knew no sounds of any consequence would penetrate the deck, which was steel, and assured him that the voyage would be most pleasant, as the time of year was fine upon the western ocean.

The next day I was too busy to notice the couple, but when we were at sea and had made our departure, allowing me to go below to dinner, I found that Doctor Jackson and his wife were seated at my table about midway down the row of seats.

The minister nodded to me, and his wife smiled pleasantly. Her back was to the ports, and the light was bad, but I saw that she was about thirty, and very masculine in her appearance.

She had a very good complexion, rosy and healthy, but her face had a peculiar hardness, a settling about the corners of the mouth that boded ill for any one who crossed her temper. I made up my mind to feel sorry for the doctor. Her voice

I could hear very indistinctly, but it had a sort of hardness, a suppressed tone of assumed smoothness which I did not like.

At eight bells that night when the day's work allowed me to get my time below, I met them as I left the bridge. The doctor introduced me to the lady, who stood tall and commanding in the darkness. She murmured something indefinite, but acknowledged me without offering her hand.

I believed this coldness was more cultivated than natural, but, as I had learned since being in express ships that ladies did, or did not shake hands, according to their training, I passed it up for what it was worth.

Doctor Jackson seemed a bit annoyed at the strained feeling, but I saw no reason why a woman, a wife of a minister, should find much in common with a seaman, even if he did happen to be the chief mate of the liner.

Our ways would naturally be different. Her topics of conversation would not fit in with mine, and I was mortally afraid of offending her by some sailor's slip in my tongue.

I really was glad when they left me to go to my room, and I hoped that I would not have to entertain them any more than the rules of the liner's etiquette called for.

The next day the doctor informed me that his wife had succumbed to the rigors of the sea and the motion had made her deathly ill. I saw her no more, and it was the fifth day out when the steward

came to my room at night and asked to speak to me privately.

“The couple in Room Sixty-two will not allow their bed to be made up nor any one to enter. Doctor Jackson said to see you and it would be all right; but you know, sir, it’s against the rules not to allow inspection. If you will attend to the matter, it will take the weight off the old man—he tried to enter, but he was told he could not, owing to the lady’s indisposition.”

“Aw, they’re all right,” I said. “Tell the captain I know the old sky-pilot well, and that he’s a minister who has been across twice before with us. I’ll go down there myself to-morrow and inspect. Give the doctor my compliments and tell him I’m sorry the rules make the inspection necessary.”

“There’s a strong smell of whisky, alcohol, sir, all the time, coming from the room—don’t know what it can be, but I’m afraid of fire. It’s probably some of those patent traveling stoves they use for heating certain medicines or something.”

“Well, cut it out—I’ll go down in the morning—that’s all,” I said, and then I turned in and forgot all about the incident.

The next day when I went below, I found the doctor and his wife waiting for me. The lady had her face wrapped up in towels, and the doctor was reading, sitting near the bed, which was a brass one, bolted to the deck.

I excused myself, and was just on the point of leaving when I noticed the smell of alcohol. It was

mixed with one similar to the heated odor of a red-hot stovepipe, burning metal.

"Have any trouble with the lights?" I asked.

"Oh, no, everything is all right—one of the electrics broke and made a little smell—no, all is as comfortable as one could wish, thank you," said the doctor.

"I suppose you'll go the route all the way up?" I asked.

"No, we'll transship at Queenstown—there's a yacht waiting for me there, and we'll take her for the rest of the way to the African coast, by way of Gibraltar. You might help us with our luggage tomorrow—our little trunk is very heavy, you see." And he tried to raise one end of a small steamer trunk that was allowed in the room.

"Oh, that will be all right—the steward will fix you up—I'll see you before you go," I said, turning away.

"I hope so," returned the doctor, with a most peculiar intonation in his voice that made me look at him. But he was now turning the leaves of the book again, and a moan from the bed made me hesitate no longer.

I left them, and sent word to the head steward to see to my friends getting ashore in the morning.

As we entered the Channel, the passengers who were to go ashore came on deck. Doctor Jackson and his wife appeared at the gangway, and waited quietly for the boat.

The lady was now wrapped up in shawls, and her face was heavily veiled. The clergyman himself

seemed a bit nervous, but they finally went over the side with their luggage all right.

What he had told about that steamer trunk was no joke. Two assistant stewards could hardly lift it.

Bound with iron and stoutly strapped, it seemed as though it would burst of its own weight before it was placed in the lugger that would take it ashore or rather to the small schooner that lay a few miles distant and which the doctor had pointed out as the vessel he had chartered as a yacht to take them on their summer cruise to the beautiful Mediterranean.

I waved my hand, and then went below to turn in, for the last night is always a bad one for the chief mate when making the land.

“Bang, bang, bang,” came blows upon my door, followed by a yell from without. I expected to find the ship in collision, and leaped from my bunk half asleep. The express messenger stood without, accompanied by four assistants and the steward, the purser, and the second officer.

“Safe blown, sir!” yelled the messenger. “It’s bloomin’ well half empty, sir! Nearly a quarter of a million gone. Party from above—you knew them, the steward says!”

I ran with them to Room Sixty-two, and burst in where the captain stood gazing at a hole in the deck. He turned to me, but said nothing. The rug which had been placed over the opening was thrown aside, and there lay a hole eighteen inches wide right in the floor.

Upon the sides the charred wood told of some fierce heat to which it had been exposed. The heavy steel plate beneath had been melted and burned as if the blast of a volcano had seared it.

Ragged-edged, melted, and bent lay the plate, and beneath it again lay the hole in the express safe right in the treasure room beneath. Down and through all led the seared hole. Some mighty heat had melted, burned, and blown away the plates of hard steel.

I leaned over, and gazed down into the room where the gold had been packed in the short, stout boxes of the bank. It was scattered about, thrown all around in confusion as though the robbers had at last given up all hope of getting more out.

They had taken all that two men could lift or carry for a few rods, stopping only at the limit of their endurance; and, though the amount was not so large as the express messenger had at first stated, it ran well over one hundred thousand dollars.

For a moment I stood staring from the hole to Captain Hall and back, too amazed to speak, while the old man looked at me keenly.

“Nice little job,” he commented dryly.

“The doctor and his wife—do you think?” I asked. I was beginning to see light.

“Wife, thunder! That was a young man of tremendous strength,” snarled the express messenger. “Look how he used that electric burner—look how he bent and tore at the plate—he was a giant—had the current on his hot chisel all day—that’s the

smell you noticed. Probably the two most expert safe-crackers alive, and our outfit gave them the chance to work the hot knife, burn their way in where they never could have blown. They connected with the light—got current enough to work with, and covered up with the rug——”

“Well, we won’t waste time seeing how it was done; we’ll get a move after them,” said the old man. “Jump on deck, and blow the siren—blow the alarm for fire, police—set the signals——”

I was gone before he had finished, and by the time the uproar was well under way I had time to gaze toward the little schooner the doctor had marked out as his yacht.

She was still lying at anchor, but beyond her and about five miles distant lay a fishing schooner with very tall spars and a very able look. She was hoisting her foresail, and I could just make out that she was getting under way at once.

I waited no longer. Jumping to the upper deck, I yelled for the crew of the first cutter, boat number one, and gave the signal for her men. They came scrambling as to the drill, and as they came I yelled to young Smith, the third officer, to get arms and join me.

He dashed into his room, and came back with a heavy revolver. The express messenger came up while we were lowering away, and handed me another.

“We’ll go with you,” he said.

“No! No use loading her down with men,” I replied; “we want to get some speed on her—row six

oars double banked, and that'll fill her up—you can come, you, Smith, and myself—it won't take a ship's crew to get them—lower away," I called, and the boat dropped.

We followed, and in less time than it takes to tell it we were going through the sea at seven knots an hour with the best-drilled boat in the ship. Three men aft armed, and that was all.

It was a bright summer morning, with almost no wind, and I was certain that we would soon overhaul the runaways. The schooner lifted her anchor, and stood out to the westward and southward, and soon appeared to be making good headway.

"By Jupiter, she's got a motor in her!" said Smith.

She was going ahead, almost straight in the eye of the wind, just close enough to keep her sails full, and she was moving a good five knots. She was a good four miles distant, and we would have to do some fine rowing to catch her.

I looked my men over, and wondered if they could stand it. They pulled steadily, and the boat went along swiftly, but even a heavy ship with an engine has a distinct advantage over oars.

The schooner's motor was but an auxiliary, to be sure, but five or six knots under motor was something desperate to catch by rowing when we were so far astern.

At the end of another mile I was getting anxious. Our bearings were not changed to any extent, and the third officer looked askance at me.

"Give it to her, bullies—there's a hundred apiece

if we get them," I said, and swung my body with the stroke of the oars. This had an effect upon the men. A hundred dollars was more than three months' pay.

They put their weight upon the ash, and the boat fairly lifted under the strain. The sweat began to pour down their faces, and the wind died away, until the swell ran oily and smooth.

"Give it to her," I cried again, as we gained a little.

The two men at the bow oar swung mightily upon it. There was a sharp crack. The bow oar snapped off at the rowlock, and the boat eased up her speed, leaving two good men idle.

"Great snakes!" howled Smith, and the express messenger looked at me in despair.

"We can't catch her now," he muttered.

I knew it was true. We were now dropping back, and I kept on only because I felt that it would not do to give up. I scanned the sea for signs of a boat.

There were some fishing to the northward, and it was our only chance. I swung her around toward them.

"We've got to try for one—maybe there's one with a good motor in her," I said. In a quarter of an hour we were up to one boat, and saw she was not fit. We swept past without slowing up.

"Any boat about here with a strong motor?" I asked, as we came close.

A fisherman waved his hand to the northward.

"Boat up there—*Seawave*—she's fast; what's the matter?" he replied.

But we were gone without further words, and soon came to the boat. She was long and narrow, built like a seiner, only not so heavy. Two men sat in her with lines out. I hailed them as we came up.

"Want to catch that schooner out there," I yelled, pointing to the vessel. "Give you a hundred dollars if you land us alongside—quick."

"Got the money?" asked the man who appeared to own her.

We came alongside without delay, and I felt rather foolish for a moment. But the express messenger had the cash with him. He handed it over without a word, and the fisherman turned quickly to his engine.

The other man pulled up the anchor at once, and in half a minute we were under way, with the motor roaring out its glad sound in a series of rapid shots that were like the discharges of a rapid-fire gun.

"Take the boat and follow," I called to the men, and then Smith, the messenger, and myself were away in the wake of the schooner that was now a good five miles off and going steadily seaward. It would be a chase for fair.

"Can you make it?" I asked the owner, who sat in his oilskins at the engine.

"Sure t'ing we make 'em—'bout two, three hours, if the gas holds out."

We were now going along at eight knots and run-

ning steadily. After all, there's nothing like machinery to get things done.

"This is something like," said Smith. "There'll be some shooting inside of an hour if the signs hold."

The messenger said nothing. The men of the boat had not asked a question. They had taken us at our word, and were doing what they could to put us alongside.

Perhaps it would be different when we came to close quarters. We had better tell them what our errand was before they stopped the motor at the beginning of hostilities. They might take us for what we were after—burglars, and spoil our chance to make a catch.

We drew near the schooner after two hours' chase. The land was lost astern, and we had run fully fifteen miles off shore.

The breeze began to freshen, but not enough to give the schooner her full, or even half, speed. She plugged along steadily at about five knots, and we drew up close enough to see a man at the wheel and no one else on deck.

Smith and the messenger told our skipper how matters stood, and the fisherman seemed to hardly relish the game after he knew it. There was certain to be trouble.

"Schooner ahoy!" I yelled, as we drew near enough to hail.

The man at the wheel paid no attention until I had repeated it several times. Then he turned and asked us what we wished in no pleasant tone.

“You stop your engine and let us board,” I yelled. “You have two robbers aboard, and we want them in the name of the law.”

“Who are you?” asked the man, spitting over the rail. “Go away—I don’t know you.”

“Run alongside—we’ll jump her,” I said to the skipper. The messenger, Smith, and myself drew our revolvers, and stood ready as the small craft came up to the main channels. The schooner kept right along. We sprang aboard without meeting resistance, and gained the deck.

“Where’re your passengers? Don’t fool with us,” I snapped. “There’s an old man and a young one dressed as a woman.”

“Oh, Doctor Jackson and the young feller—they’re down below—asleep. What do you want with them?”

We wasted no time talking. All three jumped down the companionway and into the little cabin. Doctor Jackson was in a bunk, apparently fast asleep, and a young man, whom I instantly recognized as the “wife,” lay reclining upon a transom.

“Well, what’s the row—what’s up?” asked the young fellow, rising at the sight of three armed men.

“We want you—you know what for,” said the messenger quietly. “Don’t make any trouble—we won’t stand it—come right along back with us, you and the other fellow there.”

The doctor awoke, and sat up, seemingly amazed. He expostulated, was dumfounded at the charge,

couldn't understand it—we must all be crazy. Two men came from forward and joined our group. It was all hands, just three men and two passengers—five in all to work the ship.

“Stop the engine,” I ordered, “and either come with us or turn the schooner back, and we'll go with you.”

They turned her around, and stood back toward the shore. On the way, while one of us stood guard over the two, the rest searched the schooner for the treasure, for the trunk. There was not a sign of gold anywhere aboard her.

We took turns, but found nothing, leaving not a bolt hole unsearched. It was disheartening, and looked like we had lost, after all.

“Well, what do you make of it?” I asked the messenger.

“Looks like they got us right, after all,” he said; “we haven't the slightest clew to the money, and won't get it after they once get in to the police. They'll buy their way out, for there's not the slightest evidence they did the job, although I know it was them as well as they themselves.”

“Plant it, you think?”

“Sure as death, they dropped it somewhere, and they only know just where. They'll take a chance at going up for a spell, doing their bit, and then getting the cache. It's on the course out somewhere, but just where who knows? We're out of sight of land now, and it'll take a wizard to locate it on the schooner's course.”

"That's right enough," I asserted, "but how about trying them for a confession?"

"Go ahead," he replied gloomily.

I put it right up to the doctor. I promised him complete immunity if he would just tell where they had dropped that four hundred and odd pounds of gold.

The pair simply grinned in amusement. It seemed to tickle them immensely.

"And so you'd be a party to a felony?" asked the doctor, with great regret in his tone. "I didn't think that of you, captain—you surely disappoint me greatly. Now, if I knew where the gold lay, I should tell you at once, but warn you not to touch it, for I don't believe in mixing up with things of this sort. The men you are after must surely have taken the stuff on the previous voyage—or some other time——"

"All right," I interrupted, "if you want it that way, you'll get it. We have enough evidence to send you up for twenty years at least—direct evidence."

"I hate to hear you take on in this terrible manner, my dear captain, but I don't see what I can do about it. What makes you think I had anything to do with that gold?"

It was of no use. They would not talk about it. I began to study the schooner's course and try to figure out where in that vast area of sea they could have let the stuff go overboard with the certainty of getting hold of it again.

In a short time we met our own boat being rowed

rapidly after us, and then we took her in tow and dismissed our motor boat, which had been dragging along at the main channels. The men had earned their hundred, and they departed, highly pleased at their luck, which represented more than a month's profits fishing.

As our boat came alongside, we were hailed joyfully by Jim Sanders, the coxswain, during my absence, and he held up a long line, at the end of which was fastened a small buoy. The other we saw was fast to the small trunk.

"We found it all right," said Jim. "We was rowing along fast after you, an' suddenly my eye catches sight o' this here float. I grabs it, and up comes that trunk fast to the other end in about ten fathoms of water. That trunk is sure some heavy, and I reckon it's got the stuff in it."

"Very good, very good indeed," cried the messenger. "Now things look better."

"Yes," said the third officer, "this is what we are looking for—no mistake."

"Hoist it right on deck," I said, and a line was passed to it. It was all two men could do to get it aboard. When it was safe on the deck, I went below and saw the doctor.

"We have the trunk with the gold all safe—now, what have you to say?" I said.

"Indeed?" asked the doctor, in surprise.

"Not really, say not so," remarked the younger man, in mock alarm. "Why, then you seem to have what you've been after, what you are looking for. If that is all, you better let us turn the ship about

and continue our journey. Why didn't you say you were looking for that trunk?"

A yell from the deck told me something was not right. I came up the companion, and looked out, holding my pistol ready for trouble. The messenger was standing at the side of the trunk. So also was Smith.

Two men had just opened it, and had dumped a lot of old iron and bolts onto the deck, where they lay in a pile of rusty, wet junk.

For a moment I gazed in amazement at the littered deck. Then I smiled.

"Do you suppose we could have made a mistake by any possible means?" I asked the express messenger.

"Not by any chance, not a chance. This is a plant—why should they sink this trunk with a line and buoy to it? It proves beyond all doubt they have got the stuff somewhere. They dropped it, hoping we would stop and haul it up, and they'd gain just so much time by the device."

"Then where in Davy Jones is the swag? Where could they have hidden it?"

"That's for us to find out—I don't know."

As we came in, a dozen boats came to meet us. The police took charge, and the two prisoners were ironed and taken ashore. The schooner was put in charge of detectives, and no one allowed aboard her.

We went back to the ship in our boat, and reported the capture of the men, but the loss of the

money. Whereat Captain Hall was so angry that he would not speak to me that day. I felt that I had done what I could and that I was not at fault.

I could do no less—nor no more, for that matter. I went below, and the ship went on to her dock, the passengers were sent ashore, and the dull routine of the lay-up began.

I had some time now to myself, and studied the situation carefully. It would be a month before the trial, and we would have made another voyage before then. I was served, however, with a subpoena to appear as a principal witness, and I put the paper away and took up the study of the case with vigor.

The three men aboard the schooner who had acted as crew were not in the game. That was evident, for they proved to be just plain fishermen who had chartered their craft to the doctor upon an agreement made on his former voyage. He had planned the coup, and made the vessel ready for the getaway. That was certain. The men were discharged.

Every portion of the schooner capable of hiding a gold piece was thoroughly probed. Even her masts were bored at intervals, and she was hauled out and her keel searched for a hollow that might contain the treasure. Everything that men could do was apparently done. But not a sign of gold.

The two men, the doctor and his accomplice, were sent to trial, and had the best lawyer in England to defend them, a man who did not work for small amounts. I noted that fact and waited.

They were sent up for two years each solely on

the circumstantial evidence that they had occupied the room above the safe on that voyage and that if any one had committed the theft upon a former voyage it must necessarily have been discovered, as the safe was thoroughly cleaned and refilled with a new cargo of gold for that single trip.

The schooner was sold at auction by the fishermen who owned her, as they were afraid to run her under the continual scrutiny which the company put upon her. She was broken up and her gear sold for junk. That was the end of her.

It was thoroughly believed that the treasure was planted somewhere on the course we had taken during the chase, and many fishermen dragged the sea on that line in the hope of reward. But nothing came of it, and a year passed.

The time came for the doctor and his pal to get out, for the law which cut the prison term to one-half for good behavior was now in force. I watched the papers, and tried to keep posted, but nothing was printed about the convicts.

One day the doctor and his partner came aboard just as we were leaving, and spoke pleasantly to me. They had taken second class and return to New York. It was pure nerve, I thought, but the regulations allowed them the privilege, as they might not, under the "undesirable-citizen" act, be allowed to land in the States.

They took no pains at all to hide their identity, and greeted me most cordially when I met them on deck the first day out. I asked them about their so-

journal in Dartmoor, and they talked freely, telling of the rigors of prison life.

“But it is all over now,” said the doctor. “We will live our lives as we always have, clean, honest, without fear and without reproach. We were innocent, as you know.”

“Perhaps so—but what became of the gold?” I asked cynically.

“Ah, yes, the gold,” murmured the doctor. “To be sure there was some doubt about the—what shall I call it?—the disposition of the treasure that the robbers worked so hard for. That will always be a mystery.”

I thought differently. I had by the process of elimination long ago come to the conclusion that the gold never left the ship in Europe.

The strange way they had taken their baggage ashore, their ostentatious manner of taking out the heavy trunk and lowering it over the side in full view of all was evidently meant for a purpose.

Why had they taken so much trouble to let all see its weight? Why had they dragged it with them when, after all, it contained apparently nothing but old iron? That it was to cover up the real effort of disposition was growing more and more plain to me, but, then, where could they have planted the heavy weight of gold?

They could not have dropped it in mid-ocean—that was absurd. It did not occur to me for a long time that the hour down the bay from New York out to the lightship might suffice to enable them to

cut into the through safe, which, of course, would not be opened until the other side was reached.

It was upon a return voyage that an incident occurred that started my line of research upon the American channel.

I noticed that in going down the bay we were forced—owing to the great length of the ship—close to the Southwest Spit Buoy. The turn here is abrupt, and, while the tide runs swiftly, there is a certainty of position always for a large ship.

A smaller vessel might swing well out, but a vessel of the *Prince's* size could not. Then the idea of the buoys marking the line at close intervals came to me. It was just what they would desire for marking their cache.

They could make a note of position, and drop their swag so closely to an established position that there would be no trouble at all in picking it up, even after a year's submersion.

The trunk must have carried the hot-chisel outfit, the electrical tools for cutting, and these the burglars had tossed into the sea at the first opportunity, afterward filling the trunk with junk for a blind, feeling sure we would think it held the treasure.

I had studied the process of cutting with an electrical jimmy, the melting of the plates, and I soon came to the conclusion that the job was done, finished before the ship left soundings off Sandy Hook.

The pair were seemingly not well supplied with money, and I determined to watch them after they got ashore. By some strange freak the inspectors passed them, and they disappeared in the city, leaving no trace.

"I want a two-weeks' leave of absence," I said to the old man that night, "and I want it right away—I'll get the gold we lost or lose my job. I'll take the third mate with me. Smith knows them."

There was some trouble getting officers to fill our berths on such short notice, but the old man had some faith in me, and let us go. I drew a hundred dollars in pay, and we went right to Brooklyn and chartered a fast and powerful launch.

Then we ran over the course the ship always steered on her run out the main ship channel, going close to the Southwest Spit Buoy.

We did not come back to town again, but remained in the boat for two days and nights, coming in only to get gasoline and supplies, and then keeping right on the run in and out to sea.

It was lonesome work, and we passed many small boats daily, but none had the men we hoped for in them.

The third evening, just about dark, we noticed a launch running for the red buoy at the turn of the channel near Sandy Hook. We both were much disguised, being rigged with false beards and uncouth clothes.

In daylight no one would have recognized us thirty feet distant, and at night we might have talked to our best friends without detection.

As we came in, running very slow, we noticed a boat with two men in her near the Southwest Spit Buoy. The boat had stopped, and the men were doing nothing. They seemed to be waiting for something.

We came past, sitting well below the gunwales of our craft, but watching the other boat. When we

came within fifty feet Smith sank below the coamings.

"That's them all right," he whispered.

I watched the pair from the corner of my eye, and headed away from the vicinity, keeping well down in our boat, and showing nothing but the back of an old battered hat.

It was the doctor and his pal, and they were at work. They stood back and forth across the channel a few times, and one of them held a line towing astern. It was evident that they were dragging a grapnel over a certain part of the channel marked by the buoy and bearings upon Sandy Hook.

Before we were half a mile away, they were hauling in the drag, both at it with all their strength, and we knew they had struck something.

It was necessary to decide at once what to do. If they had the cache, we would find it; if they had hold of something else or were simply playing to throw any one off the scent, they would keep their secret. We decided to take the chance.

I swung the launch around, and opened her up to the limit. In an instant we were flying toward them at fifteen miles an hour, and within two minutes were in hailing distance. They saw us coming, and hesitated. That hesitation made me sure of our game. They would not let go the cache unless something dangerous was about to happen, the danger of losing it altogether being too great. Smith jumped up, revolver in hand, as the launch came tearing up.

"Hands up—stop that drag," he yelled. "We've got you, Doctor Jackson."

A flash flicked the gloom, and a sharp "pop"

sounded, followed by another and another. Smith dropped his gun, and fell into the bottom of the boat.

"They got me," he gasped.

Then he raised himself upon his knees and, while I headed the flying craft straight for them and opened fire, Smith rested his revolver upon the coamings, and shot the doctor through the head.

Then the launch crashed into their craft, going at full speed, and her sharp nose cut straight in a full foot and a half before she stopped.

The young man who had shot my third mate was snapping an empty gun at me as he went over the side into the sea. I stopped the engine, and jumped for him.

He dived, but as he came up I hit him over the head with a boat hook that lay handy, and before he sank I had caught the hook into his collar and dragged him alongside.

Then I lifted him into our boat, and as his face came close to mine I recognized him as the former "wife" of the doctor, the robber who had masqueraded as a woman and who was evidently the electrical expert of the pair.

I passed a lashing upon him quickly, and then went to Smith. My poor friend and shipmate was gasping in pain, lying upon the boat's bottom. I examined him, and found two wounds, one through his arm and another through his chest, both bullets being from a high-powered automatic and having passed cleanly through.

In a few minutes I had anchored the wreck of the launch which had swamped to the gunwales, and was running for the fort at the Hook, where I ar-

rived fifteen minutes later, with Smith unconscious.

Here I turned him over to the surgeon and, getting help from the officer in charge, I ran quickly back to the buoy. The dead body of the doctor was still lying in the swamped boat, and the men removed it.

Then I got a pull upon the drag line, and was not surprised to find it caught to something very heavy. Three men helped me haul it in, and it came slowly.

A bight of chain appeared upon the surface. We caught hold of this, and hove it in also. At each end were iron boxes weighing at least two hundred and fifty pounds each. In spite of our misfortunes I gave a yell. It was the gold at last.

Young Simpson told how it was done after he had been turned over to the authorities. He had already been sentenced for the crime, and would therefore not have to suffer again, having served his term.

He told glibly how they had done the job during the two hours they had after the treasure room was closed and the ship warping out and down the channel. The time had been ample, and the rest of the voyage was just to cover up, to throw us off the track. They had the cutting outfit in the trunk that had weighed so heavy, and had taken it away to throw overboard, which they did long before we came near them in the schooner.

They had kept the trunk, but when they saw we were after them they had sunk it with a buoy, knowing that we would probably see it in the smooth sea and were aware of the old smuggler trick of sinking treasure down at the end of a fine line and small mark.

Then they had decided to make no resistance, believing rightly that the easiest way was the best. They had taken their sentence based upon the circumstantial evidence in the case, and they were just about to get their treasure when we nabbed them. They had originally intended to get it in their schooner at their leisure, but we had stopped that. The location of the buoy at the turn of the channel marking the run to sea was a safe place to drop anything. It would hardly be disturbed for some time.

The heavy, small iron boxes had been made purposely for the work, and the chains connecting them had been long enough to cover fifty feet, or cross enough space to insure picking it up without delay when dragged for.

The old man smiled when I reported for duty, but was sad at the thought of our young third officer, who would be an invalid for many days.

"They are going to give him the first mate's berth in the new ship to be out next season," said he, "and I'm mighty glad of it—he deserves something."

"That's correct—he sure does, he worked hard, and took risks—and Smith is a good man anywhere, a good navigator also. But did you hear anything about me?" I asked.

"Sure; you're to stay right on here—chief officer, but they're going to hand you one thousand dollars for taking one hundred and twenty-five from the bottom—don't that satisfy you?"

"Mighty well indeed—mighty well indeed," I replied. "Shake, captain."

THE JUDGMENT OF MEN *

I HAD rowed in for fresh beef. The weather was cold, the water rough and when Wilson asked permission to go up town to get tobacco, I let him go and made my own way to the ship-chandler's, where we men of the sea usually bought our supplies and sometimes spent an hour or two discussing primage freights and other things pertaining to shipping.

There were two big five-masters lying just outside of us in the channel and their masters were known to me. One of them had picked me up at sea from a derelict and the other was Bull Simpson, well known on the coast. Simpson was much given to gregariousness. Johnson was companionable, but quiet, and I knew they would be in Jackson's store that morning, for they would clear the next day.

The day was in midwinter. The gloomy sky whipped by the nor'wester showed signs of snow. How one hates snow at sea! The nasty white stuff making the decks like glass, hiding everything from view. The harbor was white with the scrape of the cold wind, and the salt water froze where it struck

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in spray. Yes, I would go to Jackson's store. The shipping looked too gloomy to contemplate any longer. I thought of the frozen fingers handling canvas stiff as tin.

The stove, a ship's bogie, was red hot in the back room. Simpson was there, long, lean and solemn. So was Johnson there, but he was smiling, smoking and so glad to be in harbor that it stuck out all over him. Captain Cone, master of a tramp steamer, sat near and warmed his fat toes, his pudgy hands red with frost.

"Go back, they're all there," grinned Jackson to me, as I passed the desk. "Thought you'd gone to sea—sech fine wedder—for gulls—what? Go back an' set in, Cap; I'll come back for your order presently."

"Hello, you look cool," said Johnson, smiling up at me from his chair.

"Glad to see you—set in," said Simpson, making room for a chair near the bogie. "Shake hands with Captain Cone of the *Prince Albert*—Cone has a good tea-kettle for this weather—don't you wish you ran a tramp? Please? No, I didn't hear that last——"

I bowed to the Captain. A captain of a tramp was something new to us. We seldom had any but sailormen in the group and British skippers were always looked upon as a rarity. Still they were always welcome. Cone stuck out his pudgy hand. I squeezed the fat fingers until he winced and withdrew them. I never cared for pudgy-handed seamen—just prejudice, a meanness, but it couldn't be

helped. We can't help everything, we must be human, and Cone took it good-naturedly—was way above such things. He showed it by spitting voluminously at the bogie and remarking it was very cold to go to sea.

Simpson didn't like it at all. He showed it, grumbled something about Yankees and stiff-necked folks, then subsided while I lit up and gazed complacently at Johnson. We talked of various things until Cone rose, buttoned his coat and went into the office to fill his order. Simpson glared at me for a moment.

"What's the use of being so damned short with the Britisher? What's he done?" he asked.

"It's what he hasn't done I object to," I answered. "Stupid, heavy brute——"

Captain Cone came back and extended his hand. "Good-by, Simpson—good-by, gentlemen—hope you'll have better weather of it to-morrow."

I noticed that he held out his left hand; it was the left hand that was so pudgy, so fat and soft. His right hand was gloved and the fingers of the glove were stiff, straight.

"Good day," I said, rising, "and good luck to you." Johnson nodded also and the stranger withdrew, followed by Jackson who saw him to the door.

"Wake up," I said to Simpson. "Don't think I meant anything, but these Britisher tramp skippers are the limit. High ideals! lots of feeling! Human as a beef and twice as heavy—after dinner. Where did he blow in from?"

“He came in for coals to take him to Brunswick—he’ll load for lumber there and go back home—hope he’ll get a better reception than he got here—he’s a member of the English Masters’ Association; you might have been kind to him,” said Simpson.

“Was he the man they fired from the Association last month? Seems to me I heard of a Cone—seems like he was accused of brutality or something, lacks humanity—looks like it, anyway,” said Johnson.

“Yes, he was fired—yes—by God, he was,” snapped Simpson, “and it was just such judgment that gets lots of good men into trouble. ‘Lacked human sentiment’—lacked human sentiment—well, that’s a charge for you! Hell! you fellows get narrower and narrower—I happen to know Cone, knew him years ago—he was fired for losing the *Champion*—‘lacked human sentiment,’ bah! Oh, now you remember him, heh?”

“Yes, we remember him—the man who lost a fine ship in collision in a clear night,” said I, with something of a sneer. “But that wasn’t the worst of it——”

“Yes, you read the damned papers—you got a fine idea of it all,” snapped Simpson. The old seaman turned and spat viciously at the bogie as if the poor old stove, red-hot, had done him some grievous wrong. Then he turned scornfully to Johnson.

“You remember the *Champion*? You know something about her, you ain’t so damned stuck about yourself. I happened to be aboard of her the day she sailed, talking to Redding, her chief mate—Redding, that was lost in the *Arctic*—yes, Redding

was as straight as a string—and he told me the details of that accident after he came from the hospital—too late. He was nearly a year in the insane ward from a blow that smashed his head, but he told me about Cone.

“Yes, it was Cone who left his wife—so they said—left her, deserted her and the children. It was Cone who acted in every disgraceful way the old women tell about, Cone who raised hell and paid the devil wherever he went, Cone who only got command of the *Champion* after pulling shares and playing the game for all it was worth—no, don’t tell me—don’t, I say—I don’t want to hear about what he did. I’ll tell you how he lost the ship, and you say you’ll believe anything poor Redding said—so would I. If there was truth in any man it was in Dan Redding—poor devil.”

“Yes,” I assented, “Redding was all right.”

Simpson scorned to notice me. He talked at Johnson, or rather talked at me through Johnson, over him, and—Simpson could talk, talk like an Admiralty lawyer with two noggins of rum under his ribs. Jackson came in and took Cone’s vacated chair. He rubbed his hands. Cone had been a good buyer, had needed plenty of stuff—and he got it at the highest rates. Jackson approved of Redding also, approved of him for the sake of memory—Redding had always paid a full bill—never asked rake-off, *pourboire*, “graft,” or other money from him.

“You heard all that stuff about Cone, too,” said Simpson, sneeringly at Jackson; “and I dare say

you believe it like a good old woman you are, but I'll tell you just how he lost the ship—if you believe Redding.

“They cleared at daylight, bound for St. John’s—had twenty passengers first class and about seventy second—no steerage those days. Redding said the weather was hell and something worse from the time they dropped the land, and you men know how it is on the coast in the winter time. The old *Champion* came across and poked her nose into the fog bank off Sable Island—bad place? Well, I reckon it is. Bad because you can't tell where the devil you are and can't keep any kind of reckoning in that current. That Sable Island bank is nearly as bad as Hatteras for us windjammers.

“Cone slowed his ship that last morning—according to Redding—slowed her down to a few knots, made the passengers keep off the decks in order to have peace and quiet aboard. One old lady didn't like it at all. She insisted she had a right to go where she pleased aboard—told the skipper so to his face and dared him to put her below. Some of the other women folks followed her example—did Cone do it? Well, he just called his quartermaster and told him to remove the objectionable old women, told him to carry them below if necessary—and that square-head did. Yes, sir, he just picked up the leader and carried her off in his arms while she screamed and clawed him, calling to the men to save her from the brutal assault.

“Oh, yes, he got a nice name for that. The passengers told how he acted, told how he brutally

made his men remove innocent and unoffending females—oh, what's the use? He was a brute and they made it out plain—it was all published in the papers.

“It was along about five o'clock and the sun must have been well along to the nor'west horizon, tho' of course he couldn't see it in the fog—that a horn blared out faintly right ahead. The man on lookout heard it—for it was now quiet on deck—and the siren roared out its reply. Then he got a faint blow right off his starboard bow, a blow as if from a small fishing schooner. He kept along blowing regular blasts, kept along very slow.

“Right out of the setting sun a bit of wind seemed to make. It lifted the bank enough to show him a four-masted ship standing right into him not two hundred feet from his bow. She was heeling with the growing breeze and going about six knots or better with just a white bone across her forefoot. Cone rang off his engines.

“It is in these moments, you know, that things happen. Had Cone rang ahead full speed like Chambers did in the old *Lawrence*, rang and shoved into her full swing, he would have either gone clear or cut out enough to give her his stern on the turn and probably not sink either ship. He kept to the rules by British force of habit of abiding by them—and, well, the *Potomack*, under three skysails and shoving along with four thousand tons of cargo in her, hit him fair upon the side while he was swinging to port. The ship's jibboom reached over and drove a hole through the deckhouse first, poked right

through and ripped off his blowoff pipe, letting the steam come roaring out of her, and then the heavy forefoot sunk like a wedge fair in her, right in the wake of her engines. It was the worst possible place to get it—you know that—right in the wake of the engines and close enough to the engine-room bulkhead to smash it so it was useless. Then it cut, shore down under the water line, and there he was with a hole in him big enough to drive in a trolley car, a hole and nothing but the forward bulkheads to hold him up—no, he was badly hit, hit right in the vitals, and the roar of the steam told him plainly that the ship was going to be put to it to float.

“Then came the usual panic.

“Cone tried to stop it, tried to stem the tide of passengers. His officers were good, but Redding was hit on the head by a block from the main-gaff vang and while Cone was trusting to him to take charge aft, he set to work forward to get the boats out in ship-shape and seamanlike order. His second was a new man—Billings—a blue-nose he knew nothing about, but a good enough fellow to take charge. He and the third officer stood the crowd back for a time and got the port boats over.

“You see, it was smooth and there wouldn't have been much trouble, but the passengers had a grouch against Cone, hated him. The women thought him a brute and the men had heard so much from them about his private life, his affairs, his general rascality, they wouldn't stand it any longer. They rushed it and two were shot, one fell overboard and

another was badly hurt. These were the only casualties—strange, wasn't it? Only passengers hurt were those who were trying to save themselves from the brutal and overbearing Cone.

"The *Champion* settled quickly by the head, her nose getting well down. This had the evil tendency of lifting her stern so high that the boats couldn't be handled easily. It stopped the flow of the sea to a certain extent, but it was too late to do anything to help that now. The fireroom force came up, they were literally drowned out, forced to quit, and the engineers came forward and told of the useless steam—not enough to run the pumps. Then Cone knew it was get away while he could.

"Cone stood on the port side of the flying bridge, stood there and roared out his orders, wondering why Redding didn't respond to the work cut out aft. He saw no boats going over where Redding should be tending to them, and when the crowd finally surged forward he had to let them come, had to let them get into the boats there. Oh, yes, he was charged with not holding them back, not being able to command his ship, but man, he had to let them come forward, it was only the fighting ones who insisted in getting first places and taking charge that got hurt.

"The *Potomack* lay to and sent in her boats, sent in four big whaleboats and one dinghy. The water wasn't rough—any good boat would live a long time—and Cone let them take off his passengers as fast as they could. He was well scored for it afterward; they told how he couldn't do it himself, and if it

hadn't been for the *Potomack* he would have lost all his passengers.

"When the *Champion* settled Cone was still standing there on the bridge, standing there and he knew what it meant to him.

"'You'd better go along, sir,' said Billings, 'we're going in the next boat.'

"But Cone just looked at him for a minute, just stood there watching things and saw the last passenger get away.

"'You hound,' the fellow yelled, 'you cowardly rascal—you insulter of women!'

"You see, passengers get excited in such cases, get to lose their heads. Cone never even looked at him, never took his eyes from the settling ship.

"The engineer force had gone, the only men left aboard were the quartermasters and mates. Cone spoke to Billings.

"'Get Redding and the rest—get in the boat, I'll come along in a moment.'

"The *Champion* was settling fast now. The roar of the steam and air from between decks was deafening. Billings didn't quite get the words, but he knew he was told to go—and he went. The third officer found Redding lying with a broken head and dragged him to the side, lowered him down and started after him. Just as he did this, there was a ripping noise from below. It was like a tearing sort of explosion, a rending. Cone had disappeared from the bridge and they waited no longer but shoved clear. At that instant the *Champion* surged ahead, lifted her stern and dropped—she was gone.

“The suction whirled about, sucked the boat first one way and then another, bringing her right over the foundering ship. Billings saw a form jammed under the topmast backstay, saw a hand clutching something white and he reached for it as the topmast went under.

“It was Cone. It was the skipper.

“They hauled him into the boat and he still clutched that thing in his hand. He had been drawn under, been badly strangled and he was unconscious, but his hand hold was firm and no one took notice of what he held. It was the photograph of a woman.

“Billings didn’t know anything about him; didn’t know but what the tales told were true—so he took the thing away from him and said nothing about it; but Redding knew, Redding knew after he saw it—months afterward when it was shown him—too late to stop the nasty stories—oh, yes, it was the picture of his wife.

“Of course, Cone was living alone, had many affairs—so they said—and it would not do to drag a woman into his ugly life. He had gone into his room to get it—the picture—gone in to get it with that ship sinking under him, the unsentimental and brutal Cone—oh, well, what’s the use?

“Yes, his hand was jammed between the backstay and the mast and Billings just got him clear in time—funny, is it? Well, I don’t know, some men wouldn’t have been so particular over a photograph, would have used both their hands to fight clear with—what? But then, that’s what you call sentiment.

No, you wouldn't expect it from Cone, wouldn't expect to find it in a seaman with ruddy cheeks and quiet manner, soft and a bit fat——”

“No,” said Jackson, “you wouldn't expect a thing like that from Captain Cone—that's right.”

“No, you expect sentiment from the thin, poetical, big-eyed, tender men, the men who slush and slobber it over at all occasions. You find women looking for it in the tender talkers, the soft-spoken, the amorous—oh, hell! did you ever see a man who looked the part—what?”

“I've sometimes had my doubts concerning heroes,” said Johnson, “but they are—the real ones—generally most common-looking, most quiet and unassuming; but that Cone—well, he is a hard dose to swallow, and that's a fact.”

“Well, treat him decently when he comes back,” said Simpson.

Some years later I met Cone at the dinner given by the Manager of the Southern Fruit Company to the Captains of the West India fleet who ran the steamers chartered under contract to fill the winter schedule. There were as usual many British vessels in the trade, some Norwegian and a few American, including myself.

Cone had passed entirely out of my ken and this time I took his hand with the feeling that perhaps I had done the man an injustice by the human judgment passed upon him. He was a very old man now and his hand was still in a glove to hide the deformity which the accident had caused. He looked

very much the kindly old-time shipmaster, bright of eye and vigorous to the last. He sat near me and remained silent during the opening of the somewhat formal repast. The Manager had been discussing some subject, for he seemed to wish to follow it at once.

“A thing’s either right or wrong,” said the Manager didactically, as he looked over the gathering. He paused for the effect of his words to be felt. He loved platitudes, although the leading man in his business and a millionaire. “A thing is either right or wrong,” he repeated, “and a man is either right or wrong. There’s a difference between them as plain as between black and white.”

Captain Cone squirmed in his chair. He had listened to this sort of thing before from the Manager. The Company, the greatest shipping firm in the whole world, had paid him his salary, given him his liner and here was the Manager setting forth again against the manner of trusted employees who should know these self-evident truths. He interrupted.

“In fifty-five years spent knocking about the world upon every sea, I’ve come to a different conclusion,” said he quietly.

It was so different from the usual applause, the applause which had already started and which would follow the Manager’s splendid appreciation of the obvious. Several diners—there were twelve at the table—looked up quickly and wondered at the Captain.

“What—what do you mean?” asked the Manager softly, amazed at the interruption. He had been

coming to a point where he expected to hurl a smashing argument against the methods of some men who handled millions, and here he had been held up by a Captain, an employee of his Company. There was a silence, awkward, impressive—and the old seaman felt it, causing him to blush through his mahogany tan. He had committed himself, and he was essentially a modest man.

“I don’t know exactly how to explain,” said the Captain slowly. “These questions of human analysis are so very subtle, so elusive—I am only a sailor-man after all, and perhaps I see things differently from the view taken by landsmen. There is much in the point of view. But it seems that I am still reasonable, still logical—and I am able to perform my duties even though I’m seventy.”

He paused, passed his brown hand across his grizzled forehead, where the hair still hung thickly. Then he let it drop slowly down over his beard and his eyes seemed to have an introspective look. He spoke very slowly and with considerable hesitation as one not used to the ready flow of language, words every one of which had a meaning.

“There was a small matter,” he continued, “which called my attention to the human judgment. I don’t know how to tell it, but—well, you remember Jones, Captain Jones, who had an interest in the oil ships? Yes; well, I was thinking of him.

“Jones was one of the first oil carriers. That was before the Standard took charge. I had sailed with him as mate long before the war. He got a great tank ship—lost her. Then came the squeeze

of the Consolidated, then the death of competition—and, well, Jones lost one thing after another. Froze out. They made him watchman at the office, made him night watchman, a man who had once run a ten-thousand-ton oiler, a man who had made them millions by his care and industry. Then he sank to the gutter and on forty dollars a month he tried to wrest a living for seven children—four of them girls. You know the old story, the sordid details. Jones had to take on liquor once in a while. He would have gone mad without a drunk at least once a month. He figured that it was best to get drunk than go mad, best for his family. It's all well enough to talk, for the chicken-souled loafers who preach to their flocks and then get their living through the generosity of silly women, to call poor Jones a drunken reprobate, a useless loafer, because he drank. But the red-hearted men, the men who knew him, knew what he was suffering, knew what weight was pulling him down. In two years he never bought a suit of clothes. He never spent anything upon himself—except at certain times he felt that he must undergo relaxation, must get away from himself—then he would get drunk, very drunk.

“His wife—oh, yes, he had his wife. She knew him, knew what he had gone through—she saw he got enough money for rum, helped him, stinted herself, slaved, worked—well, she did everything a poor, high-spirited woman could do.”

Cone paused, took a drink, a mere sip, from his glass of water, then pushed it from him. The looks

of the guests annoyed him. A prohibitionist from Maine glared at him and made him uncomfortable. There was a half-suppressed sneer upon the lips of the Manager, but he was a gentleman—and a host.

“Yes—I was speaking of his wife,” he went on. “She helped him, held him up with a mighty soul, a tremendous strength for a woman. All through the dark and gloomy life he led, sleeping in the daytime and wandering about the desolate offices at night, she was always ready, always willing to lend a hand, steadying, guiding, always sound in judgment and above all ready at all times to make any sacrifice for either him or the children—yes, she was a great woman—may the God of the sea hold her gently where she lies in its bosom—dead? Oh, yes, she died long ago. The worst of the affair came about when Jones fell sick. He finally broke down under the awful strain, couldn’t stand it—no, the liquor didn’t hurt him, he was used to that. It was the despair, the dead weight of crushed hopes, the knowledge of an old man unable to make good against the tide, the tide which was sweeping his children down to hell. The oldest girl was twenty and forced to work at a place where—well, never mind, it was the same old sordid story of a young woman staying, sticking out at a place where it was impossible for her to come out as she went in. Ruin, and hell for her afterward—convention, we call it—but what’s the use? She was the old man’s favorite, and it hit him very hard, very hard indeed.

“Yes, I remember it very well. Poor old Jones, captain of a ten-thousand-ton ship, owner of a quar-

ter interest in one of the biggest commercial enterprises in the world—six children and a wife starving on forty dollars a month and the seventh child—yes, it was pretty bad, especially bad for Jones, for he had done nothing to deserve his fate, nothing but fight a combination which knew no mercy. The relentless, implacable cruelty of corporations is well enough known to you gentlemen. Their laws are like the laws of Nature—transgress them and you must die. The laws of life are supposed to be just, therefore it is probable that those of some corporations are so likewise—I don't know. But they had smashed Jones. Crushed him down—yes, there he was at forty a month, trying to forget, trying to do something to keep his family alive, and then under the heaviest strain he broke one day—broke and went down.”

Many of the guests at the Manager's table had now resumed their poise. Some at the farther end resumed conversation, overlooking the story-teller and wondering a little at his bad form to monopolize the talk of the complaisant dinner humor. But some of the men nearest the Manager still listened and the old Captain watched them with his dark bright eyes, eyes which seemed to sparkle like diamonds in the light. They were the eyes which had pointed the way to many millions of dollars' worth of cargo, many thousand passengers, and they watched over them through many a wild and stormy night upon the bridge of his ship in mid-ocean where the mind has much time to ponder over the methods, the ethics of the commercial human.

"I found him at the hospital," went on Cone. "He was shaky, but he fought his weakness back and went home at the end of two weeks to find his wife down with pneumonia and the house full of famished children."

Cone stopped speaking for a moment and gazed across the table at the polished buffet, seeming to see something in the mirror back of it. The Manager looked up, saw his gaze and spoke:

"I know there's lots of hardships, Captain," said he, "and I don't lay it all to the drink habit. Let your glass be filled—what?"

"Pardon me," said the old seaman. "I am old and forgetting my story—I was just thinking a bit. This is not a temperance lecture at all—no, no, that is not what I was thinking of." And he gazed at the prohibitionist across the board who was fingering his napkin.

"No, the thing that I was coming to is this. Jones found things in a desperate condition at his home. He must have money. It was an absolute necessity to have medical attendance at once for his wife, and he dreaded the free ward of the hospitals—he had gone into one once himself and knew what it meant. He must have money for his children."

"A man might steal under those conditions without being very bad," interrupted a man sitting next to him.

"That isn't what he did," said the old Captain. "He met a friend on the street while on his way to a pawnshop—and the friend heard his tale. His friend was a bank messenger, at least he was carry-

ing the proceeds of a ship's cargo in a bag. You see, in those days, captains were allowed to collect freights at certain points, being in the companies, and these moneys were carried aboard the ship until she reached her home port. Sometimes there were many thousand dollars. This friend had been with Jones in the old days and he knew his history. The money he carried was freights from an oil ship just arrived. There was fifteen thousand dollars of it in gold, and it was the property of the very corporation which had squeezed Jones and ruined him. Well, the friend did the obvious, did the human thing. He opened the bag and gave Jones just five hundred dollars in gold and then went along to try and fix the matter up with the firm—it required lying—that is bad; it required many other things which we will not discuss here, but they are eminently bad, bad as they can be—and by dint of lying, and pilfering, and—well, the friend made good the loss without ever getting found out—yes, a horrible example, I admit. He made good the five hundred and no one ever knew he was a thief. No one knows to this day—except—anyway, Jones saved his wife, and at the end of the money the friend helped him to buy into a schooner and he got command. They paid twenty-five per cent. in those days and he pulled out making enough to save the rest from abject poverty.”

“But you don't mean you approve of that fellow, that thief who appropriated other people's money, his employers' money, do you?” asked the Manager in amazement. “The thing for him to have done

was to have gone to the firm and stated the case, told of the poverty of Jones, told how he should be helped. No human being would have refused him.”

“On the contrary, the friend did just those things—afterward—and as I said before, corporations know no laws but their own. They are relentless as the laws of Nature, as implacable as the laws of health. Go where there is cholera, get the germ into your system, and you will understand what I mean. No human feeling, no sympathy—nothing will save you but your own powers of resistance. You will necessarily die unless you can stand it. Most people die. And it may be right to have things this way—I don’t know, I don’t set up as a judge; I am a sailor. But I am human—and I don’t hate my neighbor, I don’t look upon my friend as my enemy. Perhaps I am wrong. Still the thief in this case suffered much. He was for years afraid of being found out. That shows the whole horrible futility of it all. He suffered more than Jones, for Jones knew from where the money came, knew it was money which by his judgment should have gone to him anyway. Jones refused to pay it back and wanted to publish the fact that he had gotten even with the corporation to the extent of five hundred dollars.

“Of course, he didn’t do it. The friend persuaded him not to, and when he went into the coaster he forgot to talk about it even when under the effects of his drinks.

“You see, it was about that time the insurance troubles came about. Marine insurance had a tum-

ble owing to the loss of several heavy ships and other matters not worth discussing now. You were badly hit yourself, I believe,"—and the old Captain nodded to the Manager, who smiled acquiescence—"you told me at the time—if I remember rightly—that one more vessel gone and you would go to the wall.

"The friend owned shares in that schooner, owned more than half of her, and he it was that let her go out, made her go to sea after her policies ran out. He would not stop her carrying, for it meant laying her up and Jones would have to go ashore again until things straightened out. It was the hurricane season and she had to go light to Cuba.

"I remember something of the affair, for I happened to be on the dock when she sailed. Jones was standing aft giving orders, and his wife, with her three daughters, were below in the cabin. It was a pretty picture of commercial life, a picture of a man doing his work with his family or part of it around him, and I almost envied him his place. What does an old liner skipper ever have of domestic life? Never gets home, never sees his wife but once or twice a year, and the company never lets her go aboard the ship at all if they can help it. Well, she sailed out that August day, and the next thing we heard of him was that his schooner was driven ashore during a gale. She rammed up on one of the Bahamas, Castle Rock, I believe, and then broke up. Some of the crew and his daughters were saved—he and his wife went down—lost before they could get them ashore.

"And so there it is—did the men do all that was

right or did they do all that was wrong? That's the question. Where is the line of demarkation, where does the wrong leave off and right begin, or how is the mixture to be sifted down? We go by rules, we must play according to rules or the game becomes chaos. But do the rules always hold, do they always cover every emergency? I don't know, but I believe there is bad, or what is called bad, in all men, also there is good—it depends upon the man—not the rule."

There was a long pause. The Manager gazed curiously at his guest.

"You say the schooner went ashore on Castle Rock?"

"I said—well, it was somewhere about there, I don't know exactly," replied the old seaman, annoyed.

"There never was a wreck on Castle Rock that I ever heard of," said the Manager, eying the old Captain curiously, "but there was the *Hattie Davis* that was lost on the Great Inagua Bank—she wasn't insured, I believe."

"Yes, she was lost on the Great Inagua," assented the Captain, leaning back, as though the story were closed.

"You had a large interest in her, I believe," said the Manager slowly, "and I recollect, now, you lost all in her——"

"The light was not so good as it is now," quickly put in the old seaman. "It used to show only in clear weather—and it's almost always clear through the passage—I remember how the passengers used to be glad when we entered the passage coming up from Cuba in the old Panama ships—rough in the

tumble off Maysi when the wind holds nor'east for a spell."

The Manager was gazing at the old skipper strangely. Then he suddenly turned and started to discuss other matters with his guests. The dinner went along without incident and afterward we arose to go to the smoking-room for our cigars.

"Come along with me, Cone," said the Manager, "I have a new orchid I picked up I want to show you; you always liked flowers, you know." Afterward I passed them and overheard the Manager saying in a low tone—"Well, you always had a hell of a reputation, Cone, anyway, but under the circumstances—well, there might be some sort of justification. You are too full of that damned sentiment for any business whatever. Still, I'll admit that it isn't so much what a man does that matters—that is, it doesn't matter so much as *how* it is done—and *who* does it."

And so this was Cone? This was the master who had earned a reputation for some very queer things as seamen see them. I remember the old days, the words of poor old Simpson who had long gone to the port of missing ships. Sentimental Captain Cone, stout, grizzled, bronzed, the man who lost his hand holding to the picture of a wife who had been false to him and who had accused him of many things too hard to print. It was strange.

I suddenly felt I would like to see Simpson, to acknowledge he was not so far wrong after all.

"The judgment of man is not good," I said in answer to some question relative to nothing concerning Cone, and with this platitude upon my lips I went home.

ON GOING TO SEA

WE sat together upon the quarter-deck under the awning of the *Harvest Queen*. My own ship lay in the berth opposite, and I had come over for a quiet smoke with Captain Large. He sailed in the morning, and was bound for Frisco around Cape Horn. I would not see him again for a year or two—probably never; but he and I had sailed together and I had been his mate. We talked of things, confidences, the talk of old shipmates who know each other very well, and who are passing to know each other as memories. I had shipped five apprentices, two sons of prominent men in the shipping circles of New York, and I wondered at the outcome.

“I never take them any more,” said Large. “I took one out of here a few years ago, and—well, I don’t care to repeat the job.”

“But the boys are good—signed on regular—what can they do?” I asked.

“I don’t know, but I’ll tell you what one did in the *Wildwood* when I took him to China. I don’t know how to explain it. The strangeness of it all, the peculiar development that came about under seeming natural causes—hereditary, you will say, and perhaps that is right. I have often studied it over, often lain awake in my bunk wondering at it all, what peculiar ideas grew in a brain that was

almost human—almost, for when you think of what he did you cannot believe he was quite so, even though his father was the President of the Marine Association and had commanded the best American ships in his day.” The old skipper sat quiet for some minutes and seemed to be thinking, studying over some problem. His cigar shone like a spark in the warm night, but the smoke was invisible. I waited. Apprentices were new to me. I had not had much chance to study the training of youth. My own way had been rough. I had at last gotten my ship after a life of strenuous endeavor and often desperate effort, and I wanted to learn all I could. Men I knew. I had handled them by and large from every part of the globe, and discipline, iron discipline, was a thing my ship was noted for. She had a bad name.

“You see,” said Large, his deep voice booming softly in the night, “there is something intangible that a human being inherits from his forbears. We look at the successful man as a target to aim at, an idol we point out for youth to emulate. We don’t always analyze the greatness. A successful man is often so from the stress he puts upon others. He will not stay in equilibrium. He keeps going on up, up beyond the place his own production entitles him. He becomes predatory, but unlike wolves or felines he preys upon his own kind.

“When President Jackson of the Bengal Line asked me to take Willie, his son, I did so with the feeling that it was an honor conferred upon me, the captain of one of the ships. Jackson had earned

his position by his own efforts and fought his way up to the top. I remembered him well enough when he was a master, but he was now President of the Line. He had a very sinister reputation in the old ships, but that was all forgotten now.

“Willie came aboard looking like a physical wreck. He was a slight youth of fifteen, stoop-shouldered, pale of face, but with the eye of his father, and the peculiar settling of the corners of his mouth noticeable in the old man. ‘Be sure you bring him back safely,’ said his father, giving me a look I long remembered. ‘Be sure you take good care of him—and bring him back.’ I didn’t quite know what he meant. I don’t yet; but I know why he said it. I began to think of it before we were at sea a week.

“Yes, he was only a boy, a mere lad, but he was all of his father—his father as we remembered him in the South Sea. Degenerate? He was the ablest lad of his size I ever saw. He stood right there on the main deck the day we went out and took little or no notice of him while the tug had our line. He was signed on, mind you, signed on regular, so as not to excite the comment of ‘pull.’ Hell! why do they send boys to sea when the shore is the place to train them? He stood there and saw me looking at him, thinking of the words ‘be sure and bring him back’—yes, I would.

“‘Say, Cap, dis is fine. Let’s put de rags on her an’ let her slide. I wants to see her slip erlong—t’hell wid towin’, says me,’ and he came up the poop steps on the starboard side to chat with me—

a thing no one, as you know, can do aboard a ship without a reprimand. Every one heard him talking to me. He yelled it out in a shrill voice—yes, talking to me, the captain, on the poop. ‘See here, young man,’ I said to him, ‘you mustn’t talk to me while I’m on deck. Go down on the main deck, and when you want anything you ask the mate—he will talk with you or get you what you want—you understand? It’s not the thing to ever speak to the captain of a ship without permission.’

“‘Aw, fergit it, cully! Don’t youse make no mistake erbout me. I spoke fair an’ civil to youse, an’ if youse don’t want to answer you kin go to hell, you stuck-up old fool! D’ye git that right?’ he said shrilly.

“Well, you can imagine what that sounded like to the men. Twenty of them were grinning and both mates aghast. I was the master, a man known the world over as a ‘driver.’ There was nothing to do but take the lad in hand at once.

“‘Take him forward and rope’s-end him,’ I said to Bowles, the second officer, a man weighing two hundred pounds and a ‘bucko’ of the strongest type. You remember him, the toughest mate afloat?

“But Willie looked up at me with a sneer.

“‘You try it, you sea loafer. I’ll sweat youse fer it if youse do. You ain’t de whole thing aboard here. Youse don’t know me, I guess.’

“I had to do it. The affair had gone too far. Bowles grabbed him by the collar and lifted him off his feet, and he let out a scream like a wildcat—a most unearthly shriek. Bowles whipped him

good and hard, tanned him so he could scarcely sit down; but he just cursed and swore at the officer, telling him what he'd do to him afterward. He got an extra lick or two for this. Bowles paid no attention, but went back to his station to attend lines. Half an hour later he was standing at the rail when I saw a form shoot out of the galley door and drive a long knife into his back. He sank down without a word, and Willie stood over him ready for the finish. The mate knocked him down with a belaying pin before he could kill.

"It was a terrible thing, an awful state of affairs beginning within five minutes after the tug had let go. It was uncanny. A young boy doing such things aboard a ship. I would have put him ashore at once, but remembered the articles he had signed and the words of the president of the line. I hesitated and the opportunity was lost——"

"I would have made another," I interrupted. "I would have sent the young villain to prison at once. No good could possibly happen from such an agreement, no good come from a horrible little devil like that."

"I don't know. I don't quite know yet what to make of it all. According to the usual rule there could be no good from a boy who would deliberately commit such a crime; but we men who know life, the real life, know that rules are not good to follow. You know that. I've tried to figure it all out, but there is no answer, no accounting for the strangeness of character that develop under certain conditions. We tied Willie up while

he was unconscious from the blow of the pin, and instead of putting Bowles ashore we endeavored to bring him around. I took him aft and sewed up the cut. It was an awful wound, but Bowles was a very strong man. It took a month before he could get about the deck again. We had run clear to the equator.

“In the meantime Willie had had another run in, and I had him brought aft to have a little talk with him, to try and explain to him how a ship must be run, the iron discipline and the custom of the master not to associate with any one, either boy or man, from forward.

“‘Aw, cut it out, cully—cut de langwidge! It don’t go none wid me—see? I comes aboard dis ship an’ gets it in de neck de foist round. Den I slings inter de bloke wot does the trick—’n by rights I ought ter take a fall outer youse, Cap—’n I’ve a good mind to do it, too. Dem sea tricks don’t go none wid me.’

“‘But don’t you know I could hang you if I wanted to? Don’t you know my word is law here? I am in absolute command. If you don’t follow the rules of the ship I’ll have to punish you severely.’

“‘Nothin’ doin’, Bo, nothin’ doin’ at all. Youse kin cut all that sort o’ talk out when youse chins wid me—see? Say, Bo, whatcher take me fer, anyways? Er “come on,” er what? Whatcher t’ink I am, anyways, hey? Go tell de little choild stories to yer gran’mother—don’t spring dem on me, don’t try to hand me nothin’ funny—I’m a MAN! An’

don't youse t'ink youse kin take de call of me, neider, Bo, fer youse makes a mistake mixin' it wid me! I'm a fightin' MAN—me fader'll tell youse dat, an' dat's why he sends me wid youse when I might be goin' to school. De old man is a lulu, an' I am his son, Bo, a son of a dog—nothin' yaller in de breed; 'n if youse t'ink you kin razzle-dazzle me you'll sure fall down. Youse take dat from me, Bo! D'youse git it straight?"

"'I'll turn you loose if you'll promise to do the right thing from now on,' I said.

"'Aw, no, Bo, I don't have to promise nothin'. Youse ain't got me right yet. I ain't no child. What de hell's the matter wid youse, anyhow?"

"'All right, then, you'll stay locked up until the end of the voyage and then I'll turn you over to the police, and——'

"'An' you'll pay like hell fer that 'f I does. Youse see!' he snarled.

"Well, what could I do? What would you have done under the circumstances? The boy was not afraid. I knew his breed too well. I knew his father. He would not suffer the smallest infringement of what he believed to be his rights. He would resist to the death. He had gone with a gang of young ruffians and had developed a certain sense of what he believed to be right. He saw no law but that of absolute equality; and there is no such thing. He was at fault. It was absurd for men who ran a ship whose name was 'hard' to allow a little boy to take charge, a little fellow not weighing a hundred pounds. I decided to give him

a real whipping—a whipping that would make a permanent mark in his memory. I hated to think of it—hated to really believe it was necessary, for there is nothing so horrible as whipping a man—and the lad was a man in his own opinion. There is absolutely nothing so soul-killing, so fearfully degrading. I prefer the bloodiest fighting always to the cold-blooded lash. I have seen men lose their self-respect under the degrading stroke of the lash; and a man without self-respect had better be dead. I studied the case and remembered his father. He was a small man physically—I never knew a big man make a good seaman; but he could take charge of a ship, no matter what kind of creatures were forward, and he never spoke but once in giving an order. The father had the same idea in regard to right and wrong—he never forgave one, never forgot. Yet he had been a staunch friend of mine. He had many friends who swore by him—and he was always to be relied upon, you could always count upon him no matter what the cost to himself in any emergency. It was his idea of duty—and he feared nothing at all.

“It was just a week later on a hot day when I had gone below to work the noon sight that I became aware of a pair of eyes looking at me from the top of the companionway, and as I looked up I gazed right into those of Willie; but it was along the blue barrel of my own forty-five caliber six-shooter. The gun had always been hanging close to my bunk head—ready for emergencies.

“‘Bang!’ The shot came without a second’s

warning. The bullet tore through my arm. I sprang through the bulkhead into the forward cabin just as the second shot ripped me across the neck. I was rushing for the doorway to the main deck and the third shot threw splinters in my face as it hit the edge of the door. Willie was coming right along behind me, and firing as he came—and I—well, I confess it, I was running for my life. I heard his yell of derision, a shrill scream——

“The mate heard the firing, and as Willie came through the doorway he kicked him in the back and knocked him over. Then he jumped upon him and stamped all but the very life out of him by driving his boot-heels into his face.”

I shivered with the intensity of the tale, the horror of it all. The old man sat silent in the gloom and the spark of light from his cigar end flared and faded as he drew upon it. He was thinking of the past. I waited.

“Well, what was I to do? I was a man, a ship master, and here I was with my arm shattered by a heavy bullet from a mere boy—or devil! What could I do?”

“Yes, then I whipped him—whipped him until the men turned away. I will not tell you of it—it was too horrible.

“It was four weeks before I could get about the deck from the effects of that pistol shot. I had little medicine aboard. There I was limping about with a broken arm, and there was Bowles limping about with the tendons of his back cut through. It was awful. The men grinned. Yes, the men

grinned at us. I had an extra padlock put upon the stateroom where Willie stayed, and he was kept tight after that.

“At the end of a month Willie was all but dead. The terrific heat, the gases from the cargo and the close confinement told upon his weak frame. I saw that he would not last much longer. He would die in the ship, and I remembered the words of his father—‘bring him back; be sure and bring him back!’ There was an old man in the crew named Jim. He was half fish and the rest salt and rope-yarn. He offered to take the boy in hand and try to train him. I let him have a chance, always having him close at hand to stop any trouble with a pair of irons. And when he turned in the boy was locked up again. But there was no talk of doing right, no promise to be fair or obey orders from the little chap. I saw he would break out at the first opportunity and refused to give him one. I had old Jim read the Bible to him every day to see if I couldn’t get him interested in religion. He liked that part of the Old Testament where it is especially bloody and deals with the desperate fighting of men, but when it came to other parts he lost interest.

“ ‘Say, cull, do youse believe dat yarn erbout de whale—say? Aw, gwan! don’t spring nothin’ funny on me, Bo. Gimme some of de hot stuff or cut it—see? Dat kid David was de stuff! Gimme some more o’ his work, or let it go at dat. He might have hove de rock an’ hit de giant in de neck—but I doubts it; but maybe so, maybe so. Dat giant

warn't no bigger'n Bowles, I reckon—'n I c'u'd do fer him easy enough, as youse know. Yes, I c'u'd a dun up dat giant all right wid any sort er weaping—knife or rock—I'm a sort o' giant killer myself——'

“‘You ain't got de nerve to do nothing like that, boy. Shut up and listen!’ said Jim.

“‘Say, Bo, don't youse make no mistake erbout me noive. I got de whole gang of youse beat to a gantline. I c'u'd stick youse all back in de lazereet an' not half woik. Aw, say, Jimmy, youse ain't got me measure quite right—see? Guess onct more, old boy; but go erlong an' read some more of de fight to me. I likes it all right.’ And so they would chat together and I would listen to try and fathom the boy's mind. It was peculiar. And yet under it all was that vast ego, that immense regard for the opinions of others—not alone himself—he was too young yet, but for himself was the greatest, the self-respect. He was a leader, a boy with a soul—you may laugh when you think him a fiend, a perfect devil, if you will, but he was all right in some things.

“I was more afraid of Rose, my mate.

“Rose was a quiet man, a driver, and he had struck down the boy and beaten him to a jelly. The boy never alluded to it, never spoke of it even to Jim. That's where the danger lay. I felt that they would finish the fight when I let the lad loose, and dared not do so for a long time. Once when Jim had the boy on deck I caught Rose gazing at him with a peculiar steady light in his eyes. He

just stood looking at the boy for nearly a full minute—then the lad turned and looked right into his eyes with the same peculiar steadiness—a stare that was unblinking, yet not strained. Willie had those light eyes, almost colorless, like his father. So had Rose, and they told each other so plainly what was behind their eyes that I almost smiled; but it was no smiling work, even if there was a boy in it. Rose showed plainly that he would wring the boy's neck at the first outfly, and was regardless of consequences. Rose was not a man to trifle with, yet when you remember that I was shot and the second mate cut, there was reason for the chief to throw out all sentiment. And so I kept Willie under Jim's care until we reached Hong-Kong. Then the old seaman wanted to go ashore and take the boy with him, promising not to go near a grog-shop. You can't trust a windjammer ashore after a long voyage, no matter how good a man he is. Jim came back to the ship that night the worse for wear, and told a tale of the boy slipping away from him in the streets. The man was drunk and I had him sent down in irons. Then I sent out a call for the police.

“They found Willie, who had wandered off while Jim was drinking. The boy had walked the streets all night, not caring much about the ship, and because a Chinaman would not cut off his queue and make him a present of it, the boy had jumped him with a knife he had procured and tried to take it by force. The interference of the police was all that saved the boy's life, for the man's friends helped

him hold the lad, and they were just in the act of cutting his throat when help arrived. I was almost sorry for the interference, but I remembered the words of his father.

“Jim being unable to take further care of him for the present, I locked him up myself and turned in, being tired from the night’s work. The next evening I saw Mr. Rose dragging Willie aboard the ship. How he got adrift I don’t know, but he carried in each hand an oil can, while the mate, holding him, forced him aboard.

“‘Say, Bo, whatcher think I done—hey? Just watch dat junk dere lyin’ in de next dock—see? Aw, chee, dem Chinks is de limit. Dat feller what got me in Dutch last night is aboard dere, an’—well, you jest watch him now and tell me what youse t’ink o’ me, anyways. I remembers him, but most all Chinks looks alike to me. Anyhow, I fire her up fer fair—you watch her—see? Oh, say, Bo, what a pipe——’

“Even while he spoke the black smoke poured from the fated junk. She burned like a box of matches. She was full of camphor wood and grease, and she fired the entire dock, burning six other vessels and making it so hot we were forced to warp into the stream.

“No, I didn’t give the boy up. I suppose I might have done so and seen him hung properly. I said nothing, and Rose was a very quiet man. The damage he had done apparently took the lad’s mind off his former troubles, and on the way home I let him go back to his watch. He took to the rigging

like a monkey. I will say here he was the best sailor I had ever seen. There was nothing he could not learn about seamanship. He would always take the weather earing in a blow and no man dared to send him in. When Jim was on deck the old seaman kept him under his eye in case of trouble, and Mr. Rose was always most vigilant. The mate had determined to kill the lad at the first sign of danger. I tried again and again to win his confidence, but he seemed to look upon me as his enemy. He refused to take me for a friend, and my little talks were futile.

“‘Aw, tell it to yer gran’mother,’ he would say to me. ‘Don’t try to stuff me, Bo. Youse had your innings at that—now fergit it before you git inter the soup ag’in. I knows youse, an’ I ain’t done wid youse yet, either—see? Youse done me dirt—youse done me when I first come in de ship. I ain’t decided just what I’ll do to youse yet, but youse better keep yer eye liftin’ fer me. Don’ try to razzle-dazzle me none. I ain’t afraid of youse at all. You ain’t got de noive to do me—see? But I got it in fer youse all hunk, now don’t make no mistake erbout dat. I’ll let youse off easier the better we gets erlong—see? If we gets erlong all right I may let youse down easy—if not, I’ll kill you as sure as I breathe, an’ that goes as it lays. Do youse git it right?’

“Here was a boy, now sixteen, telling the master of a ship he would kill him if things were not to his liking. What do you think of it, anyway? I never could work it out. I couldn’t lock him up any

more for it would have killed him—and I must not kill the lad—I don't know——

“The whole affair was insane. It was grotesque. But there was my shattered arm, and there was Bowles limping about—that fire at Hong-Kong—and I must bring Willie back home. I'm telling you a true story. I'm telling you of a boy, an apprentice.

“When we struck the rough weather of the high latitudes Willie was happy. He was worked out to a gantline by Jim, and he was beginning to run the men a bit. It was amazing and absurd to hear that kid yelling orders to the men aloft. ‘Slack-away’ or ‘clew up,’ whatever the order was, and he was very smart. He could beat the best of them to the royal yard; and he was taking pride in it. His voice was at that stage when it cracks and goes into a treble, and no one laughed. Even the mate watched it all with gloomy eyes, never saying a thing, and never even smiling. And it was amazing how the men obeyed him. If a man failed to do so, only an apology and the reception of a kick upon the stern would save him from a fracas, for Willie kept right after them. Yes, he inherited all the masterly qualities of his father. He was a wonder at seamanship. One day a dago didn't like the way Willie trod upon his feet when they were both hauling a brace. They mixed, and it was the closest shave for the lad. He came out with a bad cut, for the dago at sea takes to a knife like a babe to milk. That night, while in his bunk, the dago was slammed over the head with a handspike, and

we had to keep him off duty until the ship docked.

“When we came in Jim brought his charge aft to sign off, as is the custom, you know, for their slop chest accounts. Willie came up.

“I haven’t got much against you, Willie; you owe me for a couple of plugs of tobacco, but we’ll let that go,” I said.

“‘No, we don’t, Bo; youse charge it all up right an’ proper. Den I got a small account agin de ship—which I’ll settle right now——’

“But old Jim was too quick for him.

“‘Take him forward and keep him in irons until we get in. We’ll get inside before dark,’ I ordered. You know how it is when a ship comes in. The land sharks were there in swarms, but among them was old man Jackson waiting for his son. They went away hand in hand, the old man never even speaking to me—I always thought he knew.

“Our cargo was valued at about half a million. It was nearly all Jackson’s, as he owned the greatest shares in all the ships. We docked and were forced to lay right behind a barge loaded with dynamite, nearly two tons of it ready for taking out in the morning to blow Hell Gate rock.

“Bowles had gone ashore with the rest, and Rose had stepped up the street for a ‘first night’ off. He was not due until midnight. I always suspected the second officer or the dago—I don’t know, only neither of them ever showed up again. They both had seen the President of the line take his son, his young hopeful, away with him. They both had suffered much from his hands. Perhaps it was re-

venge—to try to get even with the father for the son's sins. Anyhow, I had hardly turned in that night, leaving old Jones, the shipkeeper, on deck, when the old fellow ran below and told me the ship was afire forward. I turned out instantly and was on deck.

“The ship was burning like a beacon from the foremast to the t'gallant forecastle. She seemed to be spread with oil. Jones was seventy and unable to do much. I ran forward and yelled for help. In ten minutes the engines were playing a stream upon the ship and a fireboat was flooding her from aft. Jackson came down on the run to see his vessel being destroyed and his cargo vanishing in black smoke. He had had trouble with the insurance, and he was worried. Then while he stood upon the dock and spoke to me as I stood upon the rail amidships, I was aware of a small figure near him.

“‘Aw, say, Bo, youse better get away from there—cut out, see? There's powder to blow youse to hell and back right there in that lighter. Youse ain't got more'n a minute, cully. Better git gay wid de lines.’

“Then I recognized Willie. He had come down to see the blaze and was calling attention to the thing we had forgotten for the moment.

“‘Call de watch, an' I'll lend youse a hand.’

“I called for Jones to slack off the after lines, and then I ran as far as I could into the smoke and managed to cast off forward, getting nearly drowned with the engine water. Jackson came

aboard and worked like mad. The stern lines were cast off, but before we could do anything the ship began to swing right down upon the barge. The slip was too narrow to get the dynamite past the vessel, and there she was now surging ahead upon it. She had both blocked the slip and surged into it. I began to yell to the men standing about to get away from the place before the explosion. They had crowded about as close as they could to see the fire, not knowing anything about what was on the barge.

“Jackson rushed aft and howled to the fireboat to pass a line, as the wind was now blowing her slowly across the slip and right upon the dynamite. Every one who could understand me began to run. The dock cleared off quickly. Then, just as I was about to jump ashore myself, I heard a voice close to the rail.

“‘Aw, say, Bo, give me a heavin’ line—I kin swim acrost the slip—den hurry up an’ bend de hawser, youse can heave her over easy enough. Don’t get nutty.’

“I saw Willie standing there, and without further ado I threw him the end of a small line. He jumped in without a word and swam rapidly across the narrow stretch of water to the other dock. A man on the pier reached down and took the line from the lad. I had already bent on the hawser, and it went across lively. Then taking the end to the midship capstan, I got old Jones to hold the turns while I walked her around as fast as I could.

“But I was not strong enough to warp a heavy

ship across a slip even in still water. The ship surged ahead slowly in spite of all I could do, and Jackson grabbed a capstan bar to help. It was a poor chance at best, but we worked on. I caught a glimpse of a slight figure working upon the deck of the barge, throwing cases of powder overboard. A man appeared with him, but I could not take time to see much. The boxes were cases of about a hundred pounds each, and they were rapidly going overboard, and with the tide through the dock. Minutes passed, but nothing happened. We seemed to be getting way upon the ship, and Jackson swore and strove mightily to save her, with no thought of leaving even in the face of a terrific explosion. We would have gone clear all right but for the fact we had our port anchor over and hanging from the cathead. We had warped the ship clear of the barge, and her bow swung over, the line being too far aft and the fire and water too dangerous to work in forward. The fluke of the anchor swept a pile of boxes—about three hundred pounds—and then came the crash. It was terrific. The fluke was clear of the ship's hull by several feet, but it was blown through the deck, the five-thousand-pound anchor flung like a toy through her side. She shook from end to end. We were all blown flat, stunned, although we had many feet of solid vessel between us and the blast.

“When we came around from the shock of the explosion Jackson had the pleasure of seeing his ship without a bowsprit, her nose blown clear off, but the fire was blown out. There was not even

much smoke left. The barge had entirely vanished.

“The firemen came aboard afterward, and so did many shipmasters, whose vessels lay in the vicinity. Jackson met them dumbly. He said nothing.

“‘Good thing they got the dynamite overboard quick enough,’ said Captain Smith of the *Sunnerdun*. ‘That boy, whoever he was, was all right. The watchman ran away just before the smash.’

“‘What boy?’ asked a fireman.

“But it was no use to tell us what boy—we knew, we felt, it all along.

“Yes, that was the end of him. He had tried to save the ship, his father’s ship—and he had done it when men failed—I don’t know—I can’t judge him. Old man Jackson left without a word, and I never saw him again.”

The old seaman paused, and the night showed his cigar end flaming again. I sat there thinking over the tale, the true tale of that boy, for I knew Large was telling me only facts. It was all very strange, all like a horrid nightmare the old seaman had suffered from; but it was not a dream, it was the truth about a boy, just a rough, tough boy whose ideals had been a bit peculiar. I looked over across the berth at my own ship, where five boys were already signed on for the voyage around the Cape, and I began to wonder if I had done a wise thing to ship them. Then I determined right there to give them some extra thought and study, to try to fathom what lay behind their “going to sea.”





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