JULY 5, 1923
VOL. V No. 5

ACTION : ADVENTURE : TREASURE-TROVE

Sea Stories Magazine

TWICE -A- MONTH

JULY 5, 1923

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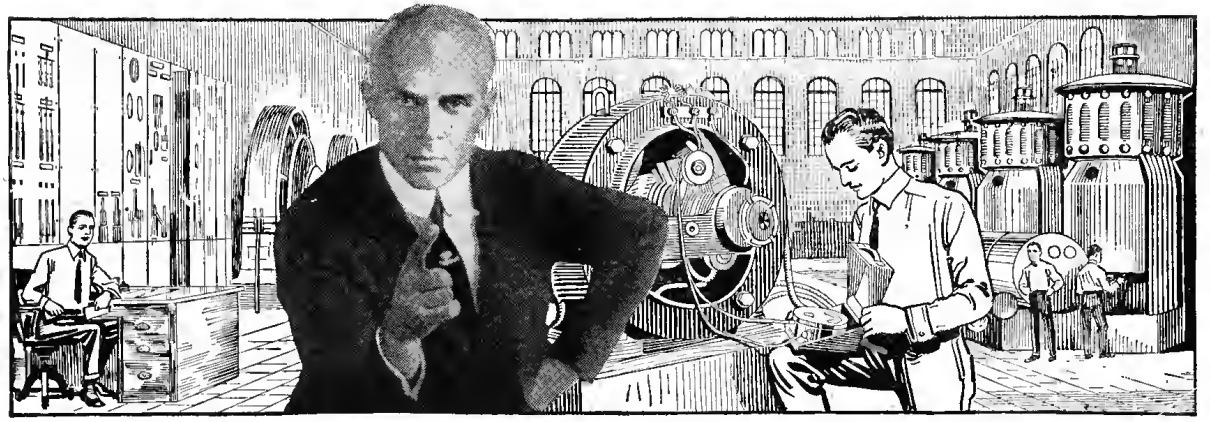

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TWICE-A-MONTH

Sea Stories Magazine

VOLUME V — JULY 5, 1923 — NUMBER 5

CONTENTS

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Sea Stories Magazine

PUBLISHED TWICE A MONTH

Vol. V **July 5, 1923** **No. 5**

You have all read whaling stories, but you have never read one like this. It is one of the most exciting yarns which the good ship SEA STORIES ever carried. We wish that it was longer. It would spoil the story utterly if we told you anything about it now beyond saying that it's a whale of a story. So we leave to you the pleasure of reading this with a mind that is utterly innocent of any idea of the plot.

A NOVELETTE

IT was a fine evening in the second dog watch on the whaling bark *Banshee*. Mr. Brown, the mate, and myself were standing by the mainmast talking. "I hope we raise whales to-morrow and get one to our boat, 'Spunyarn,'" said Mr. Brown to me. "So do I, sir," was my reply.

"Well," said the mate, "we've had good luck so far. A month on these grounds, and we've taken two hundred barrels, not half bad for that length of time. The old man claims that the parrot, which he bought at Atacamas brought us good luck."

"How did these grounds get their name?" I asked.

"They're named after the *Arethusa*. Captain Worth filled her right up here, taking two thousand two hundred barrels in fifteen months. That was twenty years ago and as far as I know they haven't been cruised on for the last four or five years.

"These grounds are a big eddy circling around, and moving somewhat to the north or south according to the season of the year. They are between two ocean currents, known to sperm whalemen as the 'east set' and the 'west set.'

The speed of the circular current is about two or three knots. In very light airs or calms it would be impossible for a disabled vessel to work out of it.

"The nearest land, if you except Salav Gomez Rocks, is Easter Island, which is about one thousand miles distant. The old man tells me that he aims to keep about fifty miles from the center of the eddy. Sperm whales seem to know just where this eddy is, and visit it regularly. I've heard men who have cruised here before speak of one big bull known as 'Old Smokestack.' He gets this name from having an overgrown spouthole rising about a foot higher than any ordinary whales.

"Boats from several ships have succeeded in getting their irons in Old Smokestack, but they always lost him. They generally lost the boat, too, and sometimes a couple of men. He cuts the boats in two by a peculiar sideswiping motion of his jaw. Bill Manchester, who was mate of the *Golconda* some years ago told me a weird yarn about these grounds. Bill said they had been cruising here for several days when one night the man at the wheel disappeared. Apparently he vanished into thin air, for they never found a trace of him. This was strange enough in itself, but about a week later the man at the wheel disappeared again. In both cases the weather was calm and clear, so that there was no possibility of the men falling overboard, and if they had made any outcry it would have been heard by the watch on deck forward. These occurrences were so strange, and the thought of the men disappearing so completely frightened all hands to such an extent that they left the grounds in a hurry. Have you ever heard the story?"

"No, sir, I haven't," I answered.

Several nights after the above-mentioned conversation took place, the port watch, of which I am a member, went on deck at midnight. This watch is headed by the third mate, Mr. King. It was a fine, clear night, not a breath of air stirring, and as still and quiet as only the sea can be during an oil calm in the tropics. A man named Patsy had the wheel. Mr. King, his boat steerer, a Nantucketer whom we called "Skeezix," and myself, were yarning by the main rigging. We had been at this for some time when Mr. King remarked that the time semed to be dragging very slowly. "It surely seems as though it ought to be two bells," said he. "I wonder if Patsy has gone to sleep at the wheel. If he has I'll skin him alive; guess I'll go aft and see." With that he went aft. We waited silently for him to return. In about three or four minutes he was back with us, saying in a nervous fashion, "Dammit, he's not there; did either of you see him go for'ard?" We both answered "No."

"He must be skulking around somewhere. It would be impossible for him to leave the wheel and sneak for'ard without being seen. I'm beginning to feel creepy about it. Perhaps he's slipped down into the cabin to try to steal something to eat out of the steward's pantry, and is keeping out of sight because he heard me come aft, and is waiting his chance to slip back to the wheel as though nothing had happened. But we'll get him. Skeezix, you take the port side, look in the bosun's locker, and on top of the hurricane house, in the port, waist and bow boats, and aloft, too, as you go along. Spunyarn, you do the same on the starboard side. Look into the potato pen and galley. Both of you look over the side, too. If we don't find him, we'll know he's down in the fo'c's'le, or got scared over our hunting for him and has hidden himself in the fore peak."

With the aid of the watch below, which had been aroused by the commotion of our search, we combed the ship thoroughly, but no trace of Patsy could we find. Mr. King then called the old man and we searched again with the

same result, the only trace which we found was a few wet spots on the rim of the wheel. "I guess he must have jumped over the side," said the old man, as he ordered us to give up the search for the night, "but we'll try once more in the morning just for luck."

The next morning we hunted over the old bark from lazarette to fore peak, and from her trucks to the hold, but no Patsy did we find. So Captain Allen made an entry in the log to the effect that Patsy had committed suicide by jumping overboard.

At noon that day, after working up his sights, the old man said that we were at least twenty-five miles nearer to the center of the eddy than he had expected us to be. This he attributed to some cross or counter current which was working across the eddy.

That night we of the port watch had the deck from eight to twelve. It was just such a night as the one previous, a little warmer, perhaps, but no different aside from that. Because of the oppressive heat, the Captain had ordered the carpenter to open the big stern windows that day, and he had left them open for the night, as he was one of those unfortunate people who suffer intensely from the heat. He was seated in the cabin reading, the first mate had turned in and the third was talking to Skeezix and myself about the strange disappearance of Patsy, and other similar occurrences at sea.

Hundreds and perhaps thousands of ships have gone to sea, well found in every respect, but after leaving port have never been heard from again. Of course, there are many ways in which they could be lost, collision with others, by icebergs, striking uncharted reefs, fire, explosion, pirates, mutiny, lightning, sudden squalls, or running aground on uninhabited islands. These are all natural causes, though they are liable to happen to most any ship. But, how are we going to explain the case of the *Marie Celeste?* or last night's happenings? What was it? What did it? Something, of course, but what?

I can't make myself believe that Patsy committed suicide; perhaps the old man doesn't. Maybe he just put it that way to keep us from getting panicky. But this much I do know, and that is that the *Golconda* lost two men in this very place some years ago. They disappeared in exactly the same manner that Patsy did. Just vanished one night when they were at the wheel. After the second man was lost, the *Golconda* lost no time in leaving these grounds, which is what we should do. Here we are in the same place and have the same experience that they had on the *Golconda*. A man goes to the wheel at night, and what happens? He apparently evaporates, absolutely no trace left to show how he met his fate; simply vanished in the twinkling of an eye. No cry, no splash, nothing broken, no blood, nothing that leaves any clew as to his passing.

As he paused, a wild half-stifled cry reached our ears, coming from Bowser, the man at the wheel, which plainly meant trouble or fright. We rushed aft to where he stood, just forward of the wheel, holding it by one hand as he stared with bulging eyes, down into the after-cabin.

"What is it? What's the matter, Bowser?" asked the third mate. Bowser was speechless. He gulped like he'd had a stroke of apoplexy, then wilted as his knees gave way, and he went down in a heap, collapsed. "He's had a shock, poor fellow, I'm afraid he's gone. Get a bucket of water and douse him; perhaps we'll have to bleed him," said Mr. King.

By this time the other officers, aroused by the cry, and the unusual disturbance over their heads, had come on deck.

"What's up?" asked Mr. Brown. "I think Bowser's had a shock, sir," answered Mr. King.

Just then Skeezix came up with a bucket of water, and soused it onto

Bowser's face and chest, Bowser gasped and shuddered, his eyes opened, he struggled weakly to get up, and then fell back.

"What is it? What's the trouble? Where do you feel sick, Bowser?" asked Mr. King. For a few seconds Bowser tried to speak. He seemed unable to make his voice work at first, but when he finally got it back, he wailed despairingly: "The Old Man, the Old Man's gone, gone, *gone!*" and he pointed with his finger toward the cabin.

"By thunder! That's it, he's been frightened out of his wits, there's something wrong with the Old Man," shouted Mr. King.

"I was thinking that nobody has seen or heard him," said the second mate.

"Where in hell is the Old Man, anyway," roared Mr. Brown. "Come on! Let's go and see what's wrong with him," he added, as he started down the companionway, followed by the other officers.

The alarm had by this time become general, and all hands from the steerage and fo'c's'le were on deck and clustered around the passageways on either side of the cabin skylight.

Bowser started to rise again; failing in that, he began to talk, saying: "As I'd nothing to do but hold the wheel, I was watching the Old Man. He was sitting in his chair beside the chart table cutting some tobacco, which he put into his pipe. After lighting the pipe he sat and smoked for a few minutes, staring at his stateroom door. I was looking straight at him, when he vanished before my eyes, and there was his empty chair. I think I heard a sound as though something had snapped or broken, but I'm not sure. Perhaps it was all a dream, but it frightened me so I'll never forget it. Where's the captain? Don't you know? Why is everybody aft? What's happened? Why don't you tell me what the trouble is? Did I fall overboard? I'm all wet." No one answered.

The officers came up from the cabin, one glance at their putty-like faces confirmed our worst fears. Mr. Brown was leading and holding something in his hand. He opened his hand as he staggered over to me and said hoarsely: "The Old Man's gone, and that's all he left behind to tell how he went. It's the same damned thing that got the *Golconda's* men, whatever that may be. With a man right here at the wheel, it would be impossible for the Old Man to get out of the cabin unobserved, unless he went through one of the stern windows. They're plenty big enough, but why should he do such a thing, unless there is some unknown mental disease round here that gets into a man's mind, and makes him want to commit suicide secretly?"

"I can't say, but if the rest of us want to see home again, we've got to leave this place, sir," I answered.

"Look at these: Here's a broken clay pipe, which, with a little tobacco, still smoldering on the cabin floor in front of his chair, is all that is left to tell us what he did or why he did it. So we are all in the dark, and I wonder which of us will go next," said Mr. Brown.

"Bowser was right when he told us that he thought he'd heard something break or fall, just as the Old Man disappeared," I told him.

"How's that? I understood Mr. King to say that Bowser had had a shock," Mr. Brown said. "It was a shock, but not an apoplectic one, as we first thought. He recovered enough to tell us about it, while you were hunting for the Old Man," I replied. "I believe that whatever it was, the same thing happened to Patsy, but, anyway, we all need something to brace us up after this, for the devil knows what follows.

"Steward! Go below and get that jug of rum in the Old Man's room, bring it up, and serve a stiff drink to all hands," ordered the mate.

"I'm afraid to go down there, sir," said the steward.

"Then I'll go myself," snapped Mr. Brown, starting for the companionway. As he put his foot inside, the binnacle-lamp went out, leaving us in darkness, and this capped the climax.

Several of the more superstitious yelled, some muttered a prayer, others kept silent, knowing that no noise from a human mouth would be able to change the pending course of events.

"Who in hell blew that lamp out?" asked Mr. Brown, angrily.

"No one, sir," answered Mr. Folger.

An ear-piercing scream from Mr. King cut the air, then—"Look! There! On the taffrail! My God! *What is it!*" he shrieked.

Low down against the faint star-lit skyline, a huge *black shape* showed a semicircle outline over the taffrail, blotting out the stars behind it as the ship's stern lifted to the swell, allowing them to come into view again, as it fell, and two great round luminous spots, eyes, a fathom apart, near its middle.

Jet-black, coal-black, soot-black, it was, as if all the *blackness* ever made had been pounded together by a thousand ton trip-hammer in an effort to produce something blacker than human eyes had ever seen. It nauseated every drop of blood in my body, and then, even while we frozenly stared at it, Bowser went nutty, commenced giggling loudly, and in a few seconds to laugh uproariously.

"Great God! Stop it!" yelled Mr. Folger.

Then, too excited to understand, and snarling like an animal, he smashed Bowser on the head with a belaying pin, knocking him out.

Some of us started for the try-works, others for the fore-rigging, none knowing what to do, running like a flock of sheep, leaving Bowser unconscious on the deck, near the mizzenmast.

In a few minutes, as nothing further had happened, we began to get our wits back a little, and Mr. Brown called all hands to the mainmast. Hardly had we gathered there, when we felt the ship's stern rise suddenly, without the slightest sound or jar, just as if she had been pushed up aft, from beneath, by some unknown enormous power, or as if she had been instantly relieved of many tons of weight at the stern, and yet without any noise.

"It's *death, we're all dead, or crazy and don't know it,*" bawled Skeezix, as he flung himself prostrate on the deck.

Something hard and solid then struck the port bow, bumped amid ships on the starboard side, then here and there on both sides. Once more a new terror assailed us, and our frayed-out nerves screeched in agony.

After the thumping ceased, we then brought Bowser for'ard and laid him out. He was conscious, but weak and bleeding slowly where his scalp was cut open. Strangely, his senses seemed to be sharpest now. Something's sucking air, something's sucking air. He heard it. It grew louder and came nearer, then it was on us and we were in the midst of sounds which came from all sides.

"It's a *Soul Sucker,* the Soul Sucker of the South Seas, I've heard about it," screamed the steward, and fell in a faint.

The ship then began to turn around, slowly at first, then faster and faster, the end of her flying-jibboom swept the circle of low lying stars, while a dozen men cried out, "We're lost, we're lost!"

"Oh, Lord! Save my soul," howled Antone, a big ear-ringed Cape Verder, as he dropped to the deck a limp lump of terrified humanity.

Uniting with the sound of the Soul Sucker, clarion clear, and loud, came Bowser's voice, singing joyously:

"My wife's got the fever, and I hope it won't leave her, for I want to be single again."

Mr. Folger wrung his hands, looked at Bowser, and then at the mate, saying:

"He's the cause of it all, he's a damned Jonah, we've got to throw him overboard if we want to save ourselves."

"Gag him, and lash him up if you like," said Mr. Brown.

This was done.

After a few moments had passed the ship seemed to be revolving more slowly, and we noticed that the sound of the Soul Sucker grew fainter and fainter, until it died away completely. The circular motion ceased and for a minute we sat motionless in expectation of we knew not what dread manifestation of the evil powers of darkness which appeared to be leagued against us.

Nor had we long to wait, for presently a cold clammy mist seemed to rise from the sea, spreading upward, which completely hid the spars and sails from our view. We stared at each other with blanched faces, speechless, stricken dumb with fear of the awful powers which seemed to be loose on that frightful night.

It seemed to me that evil spirits were using all of their hideous powers to strip us of our reason. And, as if in proof of this, the ghastly silence was split by a raucous voice high aloft in the mist: "All hands on deck, ho, ho, eight bells, tumble out all hands!" We sat or stood around the main hatch like statues. Fear of the dread unknown left us without even the power of thought.

"Eight bells! hi there! all hands on deck!" Again the awful disembodied voice floated down to us from out of the impenetrable mist overhead. God! *What was it?*

Another pregnant silence ensued. This was broken by the mate's voice: "We won't be sane by sunrise if we don't turn to and do something," said he. "First we've got to have some light, and the more the better. Mr. King set up the chimneys on the try-works and get the light going. Fill it with scraps, and don't be stingy with them."

We were keyed to such a pitch by this time that all hands jumped like marionettes when the strings are pulled.

Our reaction to the sound of a human voice was so great that some of the men began to laugh hysterically, while one sobbed in a high uneven key, as we ran to carry out the mate's orders. As there was no wind the light was soon going full blast. The bright blaze from the oily "scraps" shot up and made the entire deck almost as light as day.

The sense of relief, obtained by action, hearing human voices once more and seeing in clear light, all of the old familiar and homely details of the bark's deck fittings, was great beyond expression. As the light mounted aloft we searched the masts and rigging with our eyes, expecting to see, we knew not what.

The bright light seemed to assume a definite personality which fought in our behalf. We thought we could feel the nameless foes which had beset us retreat before the attack of its darting rays.

Any ship coming on the *Banshee* in that horrible mist, all ablaze with "Bug Light," must assuredly have imagined that the Lord of the Nether Regions was on a yachting trip. For surely Dante in his wildest flight of imagination never conceived a more weirdly startling picture than the old bark presented that night.

Great soldiers have spoken of that rare quality, "two o'clock in the morning courage," but the morale of the bravest man on earth would have quailed before the fearful manifestations which we had experienced during those two awful nights.

The entire crew had been in such a state of hypnotic fear and hysteria, that had the "voice" commanded them to leap over the side, they would probably have done so to a man.

As the night wore on we busied ourselves keeping the light going and carrying up fuel for it. Bowser, still tied

and gagged, was propped against the mainmast, in the full glare of the light. The poor fellow presented a wild spectacle in the lurid light of the dancing flames, his hair matted, and his face streaked with blood.

Though our spirits were somewhat raised by the light, and action, we were still too frightened to go below during the hours of darkness, and no one went off by himself.

Although the *Banshee* had ceased her strange antics of a few hours before, dull thumps were still occasionally felt on the ship's bottom.

"I believe," said Mr. Brown to the rest of us, "that I can explain one or two of the different things that have happened to-night, but not all. I think that we have drifted, or been drawn into, the very center of a shifting *eddy*, and the sucking sound which we heard was due to the indrawn air in its moving vortex, which would account also for our being turned round and round for awhile. We got out of it somehow, but why we were not carried along with it, I can't say. I think that the bumps we felt against the ship, were due to the flotsam and jetsam of the sea, such as cocoanut trees, lumber, spars from wrecks, etc., moving along with the eddy. This mist may be caused by an unusually large amount of cold water driven up here by continued southerly gales, too far away for us to feel, and, meeting with the warm tropical current, has brought about a sudden atmospheric condensation producing this mist. I may not be right, but it is possible. Further, I've got a strong suspicion that the voice we heard calling to us from aloft belongs to that damned parrot of ours. He got out of his cage while he had everything to himself aft, and took advantage of the chance to stretch his wings and his mouth at the same time. That binnacle-lamp may have gone out for the lack of oil, we'll see in the morning. The other things are beyond me, and may never be explained, but time will tell. We'll leave this accursed ground as speedily as possible, as soon as we get wind enough.

Finally, as it began to grow light, we let the Bug Light out. Within three-quarters of an hour the mist had thinned perceptibly, and daylight increased till we knew that the sun had risen and was "drying up" the excessive moisture in the air. We then regained courage enough to move more freely about the deck. The cook and steward were told to get breakfast for all hands, and the officers went down into the cabin together, making another fruitless search for the Old Man, or any evidence as to how or where he had gone, but not the slightest clue could they discover. Nothing was disturbed, and the steward found, as the mate had suspected, that there was not a drop of oil in the binnacle lamp.

On the ocean, here and there, a few cocoanuts, and an occasional tree, or log, rose and fell with the light swell. The officers returned to the deck; Mr. Brown glanced aloft, then clapped his hand on Mr. Folger's shoulder, saying:

"There he is, up on the after edge of the main-top, that's the supernatural voice which spoke to us." And, as we all looked, the parrot nodded his head, clawed his beak, and—"Lay aloft, lay aloft, damn you," he croaked.

"Spunyarn," said Mr. Brown, "Go up there and see if you can get him, put him back in his cage, and give him half a hardtack."

It took some time and lots of coaxing, but I finally got him, and put him in his cage again. In the meantime they'd searched the ship, fore and aft, finding nothing. Then we had our breakfast, a man was sent to the wheel, and as we could now see for a distance of four or five hundred feet, Mr. Brown ordered one of the men to take the "masthead" in the "fore-crows-nest," saying, "If you see anything, report it, but we won't

bother with whales if you raise any." Just as the man was over the "futtock-shrouds" to the fore-top, Mr. King yelled, "Sail Ho! broad on the port beam."

We looked in the direction in which his finger pointed, and saw the hazy outlines of some kind of a vessel, coming into view more clearly as the minutes went by, till we could see that it was a derelict lying with her head about West and perhaps a quarter of a mile due south of us. She had quite a list to starboard, that is toward us, her bowsprit was gone, close to the knightheads, foremast broken off a few feet above the deck, main-topmast carried away at the "cap." Nothing left standing but the mainmast, and mainyard, mizzenmast, with the spanker-boom and gaff and mizzen-topmast. Evidently, or at least as far as we could make out, all of the wreckage, such as spars, sails and rigging, had been cleared away. No boats could be seen, but we knew that she was, or had been, a whaler, by her "hurricane-house," "bearers" and "boat-davits."

"Good God! what a sight; she looks as if she had been drifting around here for the last ten or twelve years. I wonder if that's what our fate is going to be?" said Mr. Long.

"She was a whaler all right, and a big one, too, close to five hundred tons, I should guess," Mr. Folger put in.

"She may have been dismasted in a gale, away to the south'ard, then drifted north, caught by the current, and dragged into this eddy, with or without her crew; they may have escaped in the boats, but if they didn't, then they must have starved to death on board, for she's been adrift a long, long time," Mr. King opined.

"Clear away the port-boat, I'm going aboard and look her over. We can't do anything else while it's dead calm, Mr Folger! If a breeze springs up before I come back, set everything that'll draw, steer south. Don't wait for me, you'll have to pass us, we'll head you off and get aboard," ordered Mr. Brown. I took the steering-oar, as we started off, Mr. Brown beside me, and "Bob-stay" Frank, Sam and "Ratlin" at the oars. With no wind, the sea was like glass, a long, low swell running as easily as if it had been oiled, ahead the grisly wreck, astern, our own ship, each a home of horrors, known and unknown, we sped along. Pointing to a low-lying bank of clouds, far to the north, Mr. Brown said:

"If that keeps on rising, we may get a good breeze before sunset."

"I hope we do, for none of us will ever feel right till this devilish place is hundreds of miles behind us," I replied.

"She's one of the old 'kettle-bottomed' type of ships, they need no ballast, as they can sail on their own beam, and won't sink if water-logged, provided that their cargo is all in casks. We'll take a look at the port side," said Mr. Brown.

"Wonder why, or what, burned all the paint off her stern," I asked him, as we went round it.

"I don't know, maybe they wanted to hide her identity. By thunder! look at that, she's been stove in all the way from the main-chains, to forward of the fore-chains. Timbers and planking all gone, from the upper edge of her sheathing down to, and several feet below, her present waterline. What under the sun could have made a hole thirty-five or forty feet long, and ten or twelve feet wide in the side of a ship, is beyond me. Broken spars didn't do it, as they would have battered her up in other places while dragging alongside. Pull up, and we'll get aboard by the main-chains," said Mr. Brown.

We climbed aboard, and made the boat's painter fast around a swifter. I noticed that she was "honey-combed" by worms wherever the water could reach the wood, and "sea-grass" ten or twelve

feet long trailed from the worm-eaten planking, where the copper had been torn away. Back and forth it swung, pendulum-like, to the swell, typifying the pulsating heart of a new life to a dead ship. Tick-tock, tick-tock, it went silently, unceasingly, impelled by the "mainspring" of the sea.

A strange odor tainted the air, and the "back-wash" coming from the great wound in her side was black.

Here and there, a frayed and rotten rope swayed idly, like a self-strangled corpse, hung on its own gallows. The abandoned deck seemed to be weeping at the desolation of its own desertion.

While standing on the rail, Mr. Brown swept her with the quick searching glance of a sailor, fore and aft, alow and aloft, and remarked, "Not a boat left, all her hatches are gone, even the booby-hatch, but the cabin skylight is all right. That's odd, I don't understand it! Main-yard squared with chain lifts and braces, single parts, no blocks, must have been a jury-rig, after she was dismasted, but I can't see why they should use all that chain, which must have been top-sail-sheet, and halyard chain, when they should have had plenty of running rope or standing rigging left. Come on! Let's look her over," he added, and as we half walked, half slid across the sloping deck, we saw a human skull, a couple of muskets, a cutlass, and some other things lying in the starboard scuppers.

Picking up the weather-beaten skull, Mr. Brown said, "By George! Here's more mystery! That skull came from Rapa-Bui, better known as Easter Island, and its owner once belonged to the Miru Clan. See that unique symbol which is carved into the forehead after death? Nowhere else in the world is that strange rite known.

"These muskets," he continued, as he picked up one and looked it over, "are the old Tower Hill type, that South Sea black-birders carried for trade with the natives."

Taking the cutlass which I handed him, he scanned it carefully, then called attention to the increased girth at the middle of the hilt, where a perfect duplicate of the face of a skull of the Miru Clan was carved on its outer surface, and carrying the strange insignia. Then with his knife he scraped the greenish corrosion off the brass, and engraved deeply, we read, "Don Benito."

"Ever heard of him, Spunyarn?" he asked me.

"No, sir," I replied.

"Well," said Mr. Brown, "Don Pedro Benito, or Pedro the Pirate, as some called him, was reputed to be one of the gayest of the old pirates in these waters, many years ago. I've heard that he raided a convict station once, ironed the guards, freed the prisoners, and took them aboard to serve with him under the Jolly Roger. This cutlass must have been an heirloom owned by some descendant, or friend of his, maybe."

"Hey! Look at this!" exclaimed Sam, who had taken a few steps further aft, as he picked up a Peruvian dollar from the deck. Excitedly, we joined him and found ten or twelve smaller coins of Spanish silver, scattered about. "Hooray!" yelled Ratlin, and yanked away a bunch of old rope that partly covered a canvas-bag lying on the starboard planksheer. But, as he lifted, it burst in half a dozen places, spilling the contents around our feet.

"This is interesting! Get that old deck-bucket there by the head-chain bitt, and put the money in it,'" ordered the mate. Bob-stay straightened up, looked from side to side across the deck and, "Say!" he yelled. "What in hell does this mean? We're almost on an even keel."

"Damned if we ain't," responded Mr. Brown, as he shot a glance aloft, then over the deck. "What the devil makes her act this way, I swear I can't imagine. We've got to watch her, sharp. I don't believe she can sink as most, if not all of her cargo, has worked out, or been

taken out, somehow. She may roll over, but we've got our boat, the ship is near, there's no wind, and almost no swell. She'll hold together anyway, for she's dry, and solid as a rock everywhere above the waterline. I think that a part of her worm-eaten bottom on the starboard side has just fallen or some heavy stuff dropped through it, which would explain the list she had before, and her coming up to an even keel now. There may be a lot of money in her yet, and we want to get it if we can," he added.

We were so excited, thinking of treasure, that we paid no further attention to the matter of lists or even keels. Just then the old iron-hoop on the bottom of the bucket burst with a snap and all the silver coins rolled over the deck again. As we picked them up, Ratlin said, "That's bad luck; everything acts so damned queer on this packet, that I'd be willing to jump overboard and swim for land if I thought I could make it."

"See if you can't find a pot, or a kettle, or something that'll hold, to put this money in," snapped the mate, becoming annoyed.

As Ratlin opened the door, he jumped back yelling, "The cook's coppers are full of skulls, just like that one," pointing to the one we had first seen.

"Come on!" said the mate to me, "We'll see what's what!" and in we went. "Ratlin's right," he continued, as we looked around. He took hold of a skull to lift it out of one of the coppers and, "Thunderation! what makes this so cussed heavy," he asked, speaking mostly to himself. Then he gave it a shake, and something rattled inside. "It's filled with money!" he cried, and so it was.

"More money, and more mystery. We'll leave these right where they are, put what we found on deck, in the coppers, they'll hold it. Now we'll divide and search her fore and aft, and when we find how much there is, we'll hunt up something to get it aboard the ship in.

"Spunyarn! You take Frank and Sam, search the fo'c's'le first, then look all around for'ard on deck, under the arches in the try-pots, and everywhere, while the rest of us hunt through things aft here." Then, "Damn my eyes! If we ain't heeled back to starboard again. What in hell is the matter with this old hulk? We'll find out later, anyway," he added, as the three of us started forward, to carry out his orders.

We stopped as we went along, to look down the main hatchway. "I wonder what makes that peculiar smell?" questioned Frank, as he sniffed the air over it.

"I don't know, never smelt anything like it before, and I can't imagine what makes the water in her hold so black. I've seen black bilge water, and it smelt rotten, but not a bit like this, and this can't be bilge-water, with the ocean washing right in and out through a twelve by forty foot hole in her side," responded Sam. "Come on! We'll go through the fo'c's'le first," said I, and we start for it with Frank leading.

As he was about to put his foot on the first step of the fo'c's'le ladder he stopped, drew back, and peering down intently, said: "The water's up to the edge of the lower bunks on the port side." Kicking off his shoes, he rolled up his pants, Sam and I following suit. We then went down to the foot of the ladder, into the semi-darkness of the gloomy hole, which looked as uncanny as the den of an Ogre.

About four feet forward of us, an old "bread-barge" hung from a rusty spike, driven into the solid oak powl-post of the windlass. On the starboard side, the lower tier of bunks were all under water. The deck was as slippery as if greased.

"This is a helluva big fo'c's'le, even for a large ship. That damned smell is getting stronger all the time, and there's a scum-like stuff floating around over there," said Frank, pointing to the after-part of the starboard side of the fo'c's'le.

"The bulkhead between us and the fore-hold is all gone, just like it had been torn out purposely. Maybe she's been a black-birder. There's no trace of any cargo, but they'd carry it in the lower hold and the slaves between decks, though with no bulkheads, there'd be nothing to prevent them from attacking the crew, unless they were shackled; it's all guesswork, anyway."

"Come on, let's get busy; I don't like it down here," said Sam, and we went at our job.

Taking the port bunks first, we found nothing but a few old clothes and blankets, with a donkey's breakfast, till we came upon a heap of rubbish in the upper forward one, where we found a small notebook, damp, stained, and rotten with mold. As I slipped it into the hip pocket of my dungarees, we heard several sharp thumps, the sounds seeming to come from the port side of the wreck, and some distance aft of us.

"What in hell's that?" asked Sam, nervously.

"Guess it's our boat, bumping alongside," returned Frank.

"Seems to me that the swell is too light to make her bump as hard as that, and besides, I haven't heard it before," remarked Sam.

"Maybe she's swung in, fore and aft alongside, and her gunnel caught on something as a swell lifted her, and she bumped as she dropped down," I interjected.

"That's it all right. Come on, we'll see if there's anything in the bunks on the starboard side, then we'll get out of here," said Frank, and as they started for the forward part of the other side of the fo'c's'le I took the bread barge from the spike on which it hung, looked in, and seeing that it was half full of cockroach skeletons, I tossed it on deck, thinking we might have some use for it later.

Frank and Sam had got to the after-end of the fo'c's'le, where the water was well up over their knees, when I heard Frank say, "It's all bones, human bones. There's a heap of them here."

Again, came that strange smell, stronger than ever. Instantly my skin began to tingle and creep. At the same time, my right foot planted itself on the lower step of the fo'c's'le ladder, with no help from me. Chills, heat waves, gooseflesh, and fevers, came in rotation, as my left foot lifted itself, hung for the fraction of a second in the air, then rested on the next step, while my palsied fingers, like bones of the dead, were beating a tatoo on the sides of the ladder, a stream of saliva welled from my lips, and *all* this, without knowing why.

That strange smell must have been an emanation of something like an anæsthetic, intended to paralyze or stupefy a victim in advance, and acting as a powerful stimulant to the salivary glands.

Then, gradually, I began to realize consciously, that I was hearing a noise, seeming to come from abaft the pile of bones, and sounding as if the propeller of a big tramp steamer, in ballast, was churning up the water.

Suddenly, it stopped, and nearer a wild scream spit the air, stabbing its way to my brain.

Instinct and reason both cursed me for a fool, demanding that I run, neither seeming to comprehend that I *could not move*. Then, "Help! Oh, my God! Help!" came a cry almost beside me, and turning, I saw Sam and Frank both gripped, steel tight, in the coils of a monster *black octupus*, jet-black arms, coal-black body, soot-black eyes, a beast of black rubber.

A fathom of the outer end of one tentacle, wound round and round Sam's neck, like a living collar, from his shoulders to his chin, with the broadened tip covering his mouth and nostrils. Held just above the water, limp, and already dead of strangulation. He'd got Frank's arms and body completely bandaged with another tentacle, and was

holding him horizontally, half way between the water and the deck above, with his head forward, while he screamed: "Help! Oh, my God, help!"

The great beast apparently sensed that he was calling for help; it maddened him, and made him want to finish Frank quickly. He swung him sternwards a few feet for leverage, and then, like a flash, he launched him forward head first, with all his strength, right against the solid oaken "pawl post," smashing his skull to a pulp. It was all over, two men and a half dead, and the half was *me*.

Somewhere a spring released itself inside of my body, and, without knowing how, I shot up and through the fo'c's'le scuttle, just as something hit or pulled at the foot of the ladder and it fell, while I rolled away on deck to semi-safety, lock-jawed with fright.

A second, or minute later, too weak to stand, yet driven by the fear of death, I crawled on hands and knees over to and along the port bulwark, heading aft.

One thought was dominant in my brain: "The boat, the boat, get into the boat, and get away." Seeing no one, by the time I got abreast of the after part of the try-works, I wondered if they had gone away with the boat, leaving me, or were they all dead, too?

Then I reached for a belaying-pin, drew myself up, and looked over the rail for the boat. She was alongside all right! Oh, yes! and with a vengeance, held by two tenacles, one around the stern, the other clamped on the "loggerhead," both trying to drag her into the big hole, right under me. The octopus had got her. He'd planned intelligently to steal the boat, cut off our escape, and thus make sure of getting all of us.

Then another tentacle came out, and it was ten feet longer than the boat. Tossing the mast, sail, boat-keg, and some of the oars overboard, it began feeling all over and under the thwarts, then another one came out, and back and forth they went, quickly and nervously, as though they were hunting for some heaven-sent human meat—both "hands" running around in a "bare closet" where food *had* been. Suddenly they became still, and the boat was drawn *inside*, out of sight, under the deck beneath me.

I knew now what it was that had made the boat bump while we were down in the fo'c's'le, and that the strange smell was due to the octopus, that had blackened the water in the hold, to conceal himself, by expelling the liquid in its "ink" sack. And I knew, too, that somewhere on, in, or near the ends of his tentacles, this black monster could duplicate all human senses.

Then I fainted. When I came to I heard the mate's voice saying: "What is it, Spunyarn? What is it? What *is* the matter?"

"How'd I get aft here?" said I wanting to be answered first.

"We'd found a box of gold in the galley, and while we were overhauling it, Ratlin happened to look out of the forward window, and he saw you fall from the rail, so we picked you up, and brought you aft here. Now, tell me, what's the matter with you? Where's Frank and Sam?"

"They're dead, our boat's stolen; I guess I fainted when I saw it go," I answered.

For a moment his keen eyes scanned me critcially. "Where did it go?" he asked.

"Inside of us," I replied.

"Hell! You've got rats in your attic! You're nutty! What we went through last night has gone to your head and put you off soundings, Spunyarn. Our boat ain't gone adrift in a calm," he asserted.

"Look over the rail. See if the boat's there, but watch out for your life! Frank and Sam are dead, down the fo'c's'le. A big black cuttlefish did it and he nearly got me, too," I said.

Leaving me sitting on deck, with my

back against the starboard side of the hurricane-house, and near the closed door to the storeroom in its after part, Mr. Brown ran across to the port rail, mounted it, glanced fore and aft alongside, then, taking hold of the "painter" that had held the boat, he pulled it aboard. Seeing that it had been "parted" or snapped in two, he dropped it, jumped to the deck and rushed aft, shouting as he came to Bob-stay and Ratlin, who were smashing the cookstove in hope of finding more money. "Get out here, and stand by! Two men killed, boat gone, escape cut off, we've got to signal for help damned quick. We're in a hell of a hole!"

He stopped, as he spoke, just forward of the open door to the cabin companionway and hooked it back. He was directly across from me, with his right hand resting on the brass hook that held the door. As both Bob-stay and Ratlin came out of the galley, Bob-stay leading and carrying a heavy hatchet he'd been using as a hammer to smash the stove, the broad tip of a sinuous black tentacle shoved swiftly out of the companionway, and, smelling or seeing that the mate was nearest, it flashed forward and wound two turns around his right wrist. As it began to pull, the mate tried to yank his arm away, but he only succeeded in unhooking the door. Crowding his right shoulder between the released door, and the side of the hurricane-house, he resisted the pull of the tentacle, till the door closed and jammed it, a foot or so from his wrist.

Bob-stay, with instant comprehension, leaped to save him, and, pushing his shoulder against the door to increase the jam on the tentacle, he hacked it off with the hatchet, and the door slammed to with a thud. Pale as a ghost, with beads of cold sweat dripping from his face, the mate unwound the serpent-like handcuff from his wrist, and let it fall. As it struck the deck, it danced and squirmed, wriggled and twisted, turned over and over, while the sucker-mouths opened and shut, gulping and gasping, and the hooked claws rose and fell, till a sharp whistle-like sound came from it, and the dammed thing relaxed, straightened out, and lay still.

"This is the devil's nest, and we're trapped in it," yelled Ratlin, as I struggled to my feet.

"Run! Run! It's coming again! Quick! All hands up the mizzen rigging, follow me," shouted Bob-stay, as he led the way up the starboard shrouds, with the mate next, Ratlin and myself bringing up the rear.

Half way up to the mizzen masthead, Bob-stay stopped, waiting for us to catch up with him, and saying as he watched: "That black devil is too big to get through the companionway, and is trying to break out through the cabin skylight. He knocked the compass down, I heard it smash as it struck the cabin floor, when I yelled to you to run."

As he spoke the last words we heard a noise of wood splitting and cracking below us. Looking down we saw the cabin skylight lifted, torn from its fastenings, and toppled over to starboard, where it fell with a crashing of broken glass, and three tentacles slid greasily out over the skylight coamings on a man-hunt.

"We're goners, we're goners," bawled Ratlin.

"Keep a-going, keep a-going; don't stop till we're in the top," shouted the mate. As soon as we got there, he peeled off his jumper, waved it in the air, telling us to do the same, and signal the ship to send a boat to our aid.

Watching the deck, while doing this, we saw one tentacle nosing around in the galley, another going down the companionway, and the third one, half way up to us, feeling its way along on the inner side of the starboard shrouds, as though it was smelling out our tracks. Soon this one was joined by the one that had been in the galley, while the one in

the companionway withdrew itself, shot upward some thirty feet above the deck, and coiled around the mizzen-mast, leaving half a fathom of its extreme tip end free to sway and "make faces" at us. All of them then tautened, contracted, and the black devil started to pull himself out through the skylight coamings.

"We're done for! We're done for!" bellowed Ratlin, and the rest of us thought the same.

"Up! All of you! Up! For the cross-trees," roared the mate. And, as we got there: "Wave your jumpers for all you're worth, we've got to make them see us. If that devil gets into the lower rigging and starts to come up after us, our only chance will be to slide down the mizzen-topmast stay, and land in the main-top, but even if we got out on the main-yardarm and jumped overboard, he'd follow and get us. We're in a damned bad fix, anyway you look at it."

"Say!" he yelled to Bob-stay, "he's dropping back, he can't pull himself through; he's too big."

It was true. The taut tentacles relaxed, one by one, and then altogether they slid back, down into the cabin, out of sight, and we breathed more easily.

"Wonder what in hell he'll surprise us with next," said the mate to me.

"Cussed if I know; I hope he'll stay where he is, and give us a chance to get away, if they'll only send a boat from the ship," I answered.

"He won't give us any opportunity to leave, if he can help it, he ain't built that way," replied the mate.

"It's dead calm, almost no swell, the ship ain't over a quarter of a mile from us, and if you'll say the word, sir, I'll slide down a backstay, drop overboard from the starboard-quarter and try to swim to her; I think I can make it, if that devil don't chase me," said Bob-stay.

Mr. Brown glanced toward the ship, then looked gravely at him, and said: "Bob-stay, you're all right, but I can't agree to you doing that, at least not yet. We're still alive and safe as long as that black devil keeps quiet. What'll happen next, or what the outcome will be, I don't know, but you've saved me once, and I thank you for it, so that will do for a while. I don't want you or any one to take further risks, unless absolutely necessary. It's clear weather now, and I can't understand why they haven't seen us waving. Perhaps they have, and, knowing that we came to this hulk in our own boat, they're probably wondering why in hell we don't come back in her. They never dream what's taken place on this wreck already, or that she's the nest of the same devil that got Patsy and the Old Man. We've got to keep waving till we make them come. If a breeze springs up, they'll sail away, and leave us to catch them as I ordered. But we can't get our boat and, of course, they'd come back, or heave to and wait, if we did not put in an appearance. In the meantime that damned thing might get us."

Suddenly Bob-stay stopped waving his jumper. "See!" he shouted. "We're heeling back to port. That cussed beast is moving around, and I'll bet he's coming out."

"I hope to God he isn't," said Ratlin, shaking his head gloomily. But his face brightened a bit, as he added: "There's plenty of cutting spades in the spade rack, under the boat bearers. I noticed them before we went into the galley. They must be pretty rusty, although some of the long-handled ones might help us, if we're cornered. It would be too risky to get them, I suppose."

"That's a good idea, and worth trying," said the mate.

"I've got it, and here's how. We'll go down to the mizzen top, let Mr. Brown stay there, to receive and hold them, Ratlin further down in the mizzen rigging to pass them along, Spun-yarn about ten feet from the deck, to take them from me, and pass them up to

Ratlin. I'll get them, and you can all watch sharp while I'm doing it," snapped Bob-stay, as he swung to a backstay, and went to the deck. I followed, down the mizzen-shrouds, till about ten feet above the deck, while Mr. Brown and Ratlin came down to their appointed stations.

Nimble as a cat, Bob-stay yanked the spades from the overhead "rack." Turning and withdrawing them from the "box" like lightning, he handed them up to me two at a time. He did this twice, I handing them up to Ratlin, and he to Mr. Brown. "That's plenty; it's one apiece. Come on!" I yelled to him, but he grabbed two more, and, as he handed them to me, the old hulk gave a lift and rose to port. Bob-stay jumped for the rigging below me. Mr. Brown roared, "He's out! I see him *outside!* Get up here, all of you!" And that we did.

Gathered in the mizzen cross-trees, armed with six long-handled spades in good condition, except for some rust, and seeing that big devil outside, we felt much better, hoping that now he would swim away from us, or sink.

"Out with your knives and scrape the rust off those spade blades, as soon as you can. We don't know yet whether we'll have to use them, but the cleaner they are, the better they'll cut," ordered the mate.

While we were doing it, the monster lay floating on the surface, about three fathoms from the after-end of the hole he'd come out of, facing toward the stern, and holding to the wreck with two of his huge arms.

"Holy Cæsar! What a monster!" exclaimed Bob-stay. Then, "What do you think he'll weigh, sir?" asked the mate.

"Ten or twelve tons, maybe," Mr. Brown replied.

Occasionally he'd turn a loose tentacle inward, and rub the top of his head with a few feet of the end of it. "What in hell does he keep scratching his head for?" says Ratlin to Bob-stay.

"Either he hurt it, trying to get through the cabin skylight, or he's thinking of a plan to get us. I don't know which," answered Bob-stay. Two or three minutes later, a fifteen-foot shark came idling along, circling the stern lazily from starboard, then heading forward on the port side, apparently failing to notice the perfectly quiet devil, which we were all watching. When about four fathoms distant from the devil, the shark rose, went ten feet upward from a small swirl in the water, held, head and tail, by two of the devil's arms. Done right before our eyes, so quickly that we saw nothing till the shark was held in the air. Instantly, the tentacle around its head shifted, clamped on the tail, with another, when they both swung the twisting shark horizonward for a leverage, and banged him against the mizzen chains with a sickening thud, let go, and the shark dropped into the sea. Amazed we stared, dumfounded we wondered.

The black devil raised himself partly out of the water, gave vent to four distinct, separate hisses, each of a different length and intensity, while we shivered.

"He's spitting a warning, in each hiss of hate, or he's just cursing every living thing, not of his own species, on sea or land," said Bob-stay.

"That's how he snapped Patsy and the Old Man, and no one saw anything," said Mr. Brown, with a note of sorrow in his voice.

"He's too fast for us. We'll be no match for him if he crowds us. If he'd only go astern, we might get forward to the main hatch, shove our boat out through the hole in the side, and, with good luck, get away, but it's too risky to try, so we'll stay here till something new develops.

"I'd like to know if he has some unknown, peculiar power to make his arms, or all of him, invisible at will, or if it is only due to the rapidity of movement," he added.

"If we could only dart a spade into

his neck and cut his spinal cord, it would finish him. I'd like to try it, if you'll let me, sir! I'll take one to the cross-trees, slide down the stay into the main-top, get out to the end of the main yard, where I'll be almost over him and can steady myself by means of the lift, then let him have it. It's an even chance whether I'd get him, or he'd get me, but I'll take it, if you'll let me, sir," said Bob-stay to Mr. Brown.

"If we could be sure that he wouldn't move till you'd darted, I'd say yes. As it is, it's a toss-up whether he could reach the mainyard from where he is, but if he jumped for the side, and climbed up a few feet, just as you get almost to the end of the yardarm, he'd have your retreat cut off, and if you dropped overboard as a last chance, he'd probably follow, and erase your name from the list of live men. You're spunky enough, but I don't want you to try that yet, Bob-stay," said Mr. Brown.

"Hooray! They've lowered the waist boat! Mr. Folger's coming!" shouted Ratlin.

"I'm mighty glad of it. He'll surely be useful," grimly commented Mr. Brown. With a smooth sea and no wind, they were coming at a good pace, and in a few minutes were within hailing distance. Waiting until they were about one hundred feet from us, Mr. Brown yelled. "Hold up! Keep your boat headed away from us, your oars ready to pull for your lives, and your eyes peeled, while I tell you what we're up against."

And in a few short, crisp sentences he gave Mr. Folger a sufficient outline of what had happened, to enable him and his crew to grasp the situation pretty thoroughly. He continued: "I want you to help lay out what is the best thing to do. We must get away safely if we can, because I'd like to save the money we've found and left in the galley, and to search for more if possible; get our boat, and the bodies of Frank and Sam in order to give them a decent burial. Now what do you think best?"

"We're here to take and follow your orders, and trust to your judgment, sir," answered Mr. Folger.

"All right," said Mr. Brown. Then, turning to Bob-stay, he said: "Bob-stay, if you still want to dart a spade into that devil, you can have a chance, now that Mr. Folger is here to help us out, as I can send him round to the port side to lay a safe distance away, while standing by to pick you up, if you have to jump. But remember, it's a damned risky job, even with a boat handy, as he may get you, or you and the boat together. I'd almost rather you wouldn't try, but either we or that devil have got to start something soon, if anything is to be done."

"I'm ready, sir," says Bob-stay, looking as pleased as a kid.

"I'll take another spade, go with him, and stay in the maintop, as it's a good place to make a dart from if that octopus tries to come up the side after Bob-stay has darted," said I, ashamed to have him go alone.

"Good! But wait a minute," ordered Mr. Brown. Then: "Have you got your bomb gun and any line with you, Mr. Folger?"

"Yes, sir!" he replied.

"All right! Shove a bomb in the gun, and the stern in close enough to heave us the end of your small tub of lines; measure off ten or fifteen fathoms, then tuck the 'bight' through the open breach of the gun and up over the muzzle, push it down till it's back of the hammer, and haul the 'bight' up taut. That'll hold the gun. When we get the end of the line, we'll haul in, while you pull ahead and keep enough strain on it, as you pay it out, to hold the gun above the water so we can get it aboard dry, and you can then let go. And we'll haul in what line we need, cut it when we've got enough, and you can haul your end in," ordered Mr. Brown.

"Aye, aye, sir," said Mr. Folger.

Bob-stay had already gone down to the starboard sheer pole, to stand by to catch the line, with me just above him to take its end, when thrown, and hand it to Ratlin to give to the mate, while Bob-stay hauled the gun and the rest of the line aboard. In a few minutes it was all done, and we had the gun and some fifty fathoms of line in the mizzen cross-trees.

Cutting off a three or four-foot piece, for "rope yarns," we divided the remainder into three equal lengths, and with a couple of turns and a splice fastened them to the neck of the iron socket on three spades, seized the lines to each pole near its end with the "yarns," and we were then ready.

"Don't be surprised if I fire at any time. He's so soft that a bomb will go right through him without having time to explode, but it may hurt enough to stop him for a moment if he tries to come after you. I think you will do as well, be just as safe, and more out of sight, if you go down the rigging to starboard, then over the 'bearers' to the main rigging, and up that way to the main yard, instead of riding down the mizzen topmast stay, where he can see you every minute, from the time you start," said Mr. Brown to us.

"That's right, sir; we'll take the lower route," replied Bob-stay, for both of us.

"Mr. Folger! Pull around to the port side, lay off and on, about a hundred feet or so away with your stern toward us. Be ready to work quick, and, whatever happens, watch that devil and these men," ordered Mr. Brown.

"Aye, aye, sir!" he answered, and round they pulled, as we went up the main shrouds.

Whether or not the devil saw us as we got into the maintop, I don't know, but he had seen the boat, and was "tuning his muscles up," as you've seen the ripples run along a snake's body.

I made the end of my spade line fast around the head of the mainmast, Bob-stay, barefooted, balancing himself with the coil of towline in one hand and the spade in the other, ran out to the end of the yard, just as the devil shot the end of one of his nearest arms to the rail.

"Look out for yourself, Bob-stay!" I said in a low tone.

"Be careful, men!" cautioned Mr. Brown, as Ratlin handed him the heavy bomb gun.

Bob-stay, steadying himself as well as he could against the lift, straightened, aimed his weapon, and darted with all his strength. Simultaneously, the devil shoved himself several feet farther away from the side, using the tentacle clutching the rail to push with, and the spade merely cut through the "webbing" between two arms, where they joined his body. Instantly he reached over his own back with two tentacles, from opposite sides; one grasped the neck of the iron-spade socket, and the other grabbed the wooden pole about three feet higher up. Each yanked against the other, and, as the pole snapped off, he drew the spade out, dropped it in the sea, and snatched at the line that Bob-stay had previously made fast to the lift. Then, as he pulled to lift himself from the water, the old hulk commenced to careen rapidly to port.

"Cut, for God's sake, cut, or he'll capsize us!" yelled Mr. Brown, and the big bomb gun bellowed, but its deadly missile went wide, and disappeared in the deep, as the black devil reached up ten feet higher, and the increased weight heeled us farther and farther, till Bob-stay got his sheath knife out and drew it across the straining line. With a loud snap it parted, and we slowly "righted."

Running in, along the yard, Bob-stay joined me, white as a sheet, and saying: "He's got more than human cunning. We'll be lucky to get away with our lives. See! He's working aft toward the stern. Now we all ought to get to the deck, and escape over the starboard bow, after

first telling Mr. Folger to be ready to take us in there."

As I started to make some reply, a loud pandemoniumlike crash sounded from forward of us, so unexpectedly that I nearly jumped from the top.

"What the hell! Good Godfrey, look! Over the try-works! There's another one! Trying to get out of the forehatch!" yelled Bob-stay, and at the same time the mate shouted: "Come up here, come back here! Never mind that spade!"

A quick glance forward showed what the trouble was. Two big black tentacles coming out of the forehatch laid across the try-works, reached aft. One had come over the cooper's bench, clamped on its underside, and, contracting, it had turned the bench upside down, emptying all the old tools out on deck. As soon as the tentacle had brought strain enough to break its rotten old "lashings," the other tentacle, reaching farther, had taken a turn around the "belly-chain bitt" just forward of the main hatch, and while I stared, transfixed at what I saw, the other released its suction grip on the bench and wound its end round the "bitt" with its fellow. Steadily they contracted and slowly all of the head rose from the forehatch, till it laid with its tentacles on the forward edge of the try-works, and stopped.

"It's a female! It's that black devil's mate! Her body is so much wider than his! It's in the hatchway, and can't come at us that way!" yelled Bob-stay, with instant comprehension.

"That's true, but we're cut off from the forward part of the deck entirely, and there's the first one right now, hanging to the port quarter, ready to come aboard, or to stay in the water and wait for us, according to which may suit him best. We're worse off than ever now, and no one can tell just what to do.

"If Mr. Folger is sent to the ship to call the other boats to help us, it might turn out that he could be the means of saving us. They might send another boat, if we signaled, as before, but that would take time that would be wasted, if they got suspicious about such unusual actions and refused to come," I said.

"Come on! Get up here! Twice I've told you now!" shouted Mr. Brown.

"Aye, aye, sir! We're coming!" I answered, and as I spoke another tentacle lifted up forward, and, grabbing the mainstay, it came crawling along toward us.

"Cut the line off, and gimme your spade. I want to take one try at this new one, and we'll leave, or you go now, just to pacify the mate," said Bob-stay coolly. Taking it, he sent it with all his force straight for the tentacles lying "fore and aft" on deck, between the try-works and the bitt, where their ends had coiled. It went clean through one, parallel with it, and entered the soft pine deck planking. The tentacle uncoiled, lashed back and upward, carrying the spade with it, whipped to the deck, cutting the other tentacle deeply on one side, as the spade fell out from the wound in the first. Then the air seemed filled with writhing black "snakes," and the she-devil lifted her head and hissed twice: "Uh si-i-ih! Uh si-i-ih!"

Instantly responding to the call, the black he-devil answered, "Uh si-i-ih! Uh si-i-ih!" and tried to climb aboard on the port quarter.

"Hurry or you're lost!" roared Mr. Brown, while Bob-stay and I shinned up the mizzen-topmast stay. As we reached the crosstrees, the mate and Ratlin joined us, bringing the four remaining spades.

Handing one of the two he had brought to me, Mr. Brown stood up with the other, and darted it at the devil coming up on the port quarter. It struck him edgeways, fair on the middle of his head, just back of the eyes, making a wide gash, an inch or two deep, as it

went on and into the water. Maddened, he stopped tossing his living serpents about, reared his head, opened his menacing beak, and two hisses, each scalding with hatred, came from it again.

Mr. Folger started to pull in closer, but Mr. Brown waved him back, saying: "For God's sake, don't start anything yet, as long as he's still; there's another one trying to get out from the forehatch, and there may be more in this Devil's Nest. We'll be lucky if we get away with our lives. Let the money go to hell. I don't know what to do next. We ought to have left when you first got here."

"I can go back to the ship, get the other boats and all the guns, but those devils might force you to a finish before we returned," said Mr. Folger.

"That's true," assented Mr. Brown; then, "Look out! Pull ahead! He's dropping down again, and maybe wants to get you!" he yelled.

"The ship's signaling, sir; there goes the blue flag up at the main, down goes her flying jib; they've raised whales ahead of her somewhere!" yelled Bob-stay, as he decoded the signals.

"To hell with 'em! If they have, we've got no use for whales," snarled Ratlin.

"There he is, a mile ahead of her," Bob-stay sung out.

"Headed this way, coming fast, all alone, and a damned big one. Must be making a record passage, for he's shoving junk at a twenty-knot clip. He'll pass us in less than three minutes," said Mr. Brown.

"Mr. Folger! There's a big lone bull heading right for us, a mile off, coming at the double-quick. Get fifty fathoms farther away from us, lie still, and don't you move without my orders. If any one makes a noise, kill him!" he snapped.

"Aye, aye, sir!" answered Mr. Folger, as he started to carry out the order.

"That whale has got a large lump, or something like a big knob, right on the end of his nose, or spouthole, sir," I said to the mate a moment later.

Mr. Brown looked critically for a few seconds, as the great giant came on majestically. Then he said, low but tensely: "By Godfrey! You're right! And if that's Old Smokestack, he's a lord of the sea, and a king of the deep; the biggest sperm whale I've ever seen, and he's homeward bound, asnoring."

"Oh, Spunyarn!" he added delightedly, as he wiggled his toes and slapped me on the back so hard that I nearly fell off my perch. "If he only stops, if he only stops, he'll soon have hell's tea kettle aboiling in the Devil's nest."

"Aye, sir! They're deadly enemies," I said understandingly.

Then the he-devil on the port quarter commenced to wriggle all over. Next he hit the surface sharply with the wide, flattened ends of two or three tentacles. "Tap t-a-p, tap tap t-a-a-p," they went.

He was in the water, and so could hear better, and he had scented danger first, and was warning the other, thinkink perhaps that it was in the water down in the hold. But its head and all its delicately sensitive "feelers" were still out of the forehatchway, so there was no response.

Again, he rained his blows on the surface, much louder, and more insistent. Instantly the female sent two tentacles high into the air, rapidly turning the wide, tipped ends back and forth, from right to left, with edges "cupped," trying to catch and locate the sound of the approaching danger the male had warned of. Then one stopped still with its "palm" toward the oncoming whale, the other stiffened, with its "palm" held the same way. Slowly each one turned toward the other; ripples ran along their edges; then each bent its very tip toward the other, like an affirmative nod when an agreement has been reached, and promptly the big she-devil dropped back into the forehold,

dragging eight forty-foot black snakes in behind her.

Old Smokestack stopped not over three hundred feet away, and acted as though he were nervous, spouted once, sunk his mighty head, and went under; a minute later he shoved his monstrous junk skyward from the sea, till his eyes were clear above the surface; then, turning halfway around to get his "above-water bearings," he slid back, straightened out, started for the ship, went a little way, stopped, turned excitedly, and then, as he'd found that he was losing the scent, he came back toward us with a rush.

When he was within two hundred feet of the starboard bow, the he-devil outside got inside so damned quick that we hardly saw him go, and we "heeled" to starboard some, while Old Smokestack rushed round us once to size things up to suit himself.

Finally he stopped on the port side, laying "off and on," heading for the wreck, and about twenty fathoms distant. Then he came ahead slowly, for us, till his huge junk bumped the hull at the waterline just abaft the main rigging, barely moving, yet it went two or three feet through the honeycombed, worm-eaten wood, and so easily that it hardly jarred us.

Deliberately he backed off, turned, went round the stern to starboard, and, swimming easily lengthwise with the hulk, he bumped his head lightly against the side two or three times as he swam forward, apparently testing the comparative resistance, in different places, or trying to scare the black devils out of the hold. Then he came around the bow, and, just as he took up his old position, four tentacles flashed upward out of it, two seizing the davits, while the others swayed, writhing aloft. "Uh si-i-ih, uh si-i-ih," came the cough-like hisses from the he-devil, as four more tentacles shot out. Two laid their length forward, and two extended aft, all four clamping on the side of the wreck, level with or just above the edges of the hole. Then, contracting the tentacles clasped around the upright davits, he raised himself quickly till his head was above the rail.

Again the hisses, "Uh si-i-ih, uh si-i-ih," shorter, sharper, and more venomous.

Simultaneously Old Smokestack came for him, slowly, almost indifferently. "My God! Why don't he rush him? That whale's a damn fool," whispered Bob-stay, while I stared spellbound, and made no answer.

Twenty feet away Old Smokestack stopped. Instantly the hissing he-devil sprang, landing squarely on his spout-hole, covering it completely with the upper, while the middle and lower parts of his body hung like an inverted balloon, over, and in front of Old Smokestack's enormous junk, with every tentacle lying full length along his back and sides, each clinging tightly in a death-like clasp, and holding the devil's head and body, solid where they were, and out of danger from the whale's jaw or flukes.

Bob-stay whispered: "I told you the whale was a damn fool. That devil had charmed him, like a snake does a bird, and made him come up near enough to be jumped on, and now he'll blind or suffocate him. He's done for, anyway."

"Old Smokestack knows his own plans better than we do. He's had enough experience to enable him to reason just as well as humans, and he can go an hour and a half without breathing, you know," I replied.

Slowly, easily, as if not wanting to disturb his "passenger," and apparently satisfied with the situation, Old Smokestack "milled" and went ahead, past the bow, twitching occasionally as the devil's beak tore at his spouthole wrathfully, while the hooks on the tentacles clawed at his eyes.

About fifty fathoms off he swung

round, and, with increasing speed, headed straight for the starboard bow and side, striking it a long, glancing blow, jamming and rasping the tentacles clinging to his right side between himself and the hulk, tearing them to a frazzle as he shot sternward, while the hissing black devil drew his lacerated "snakes" upward as soon as he could, and laid them lengthwise in the middle of the whale's back, safe from a further scraping. Again Old Smokestack turned, and, shooting forward, he repeated the same tactics, with similar results on his left side. Thus insuring noninterference with his vision, he then started off, as if bound away for good.

"He's going to hunt for a nice place to lay down and die in," said Bob-stay in a low tone.

"He's going to do the same with that devil, as he would if he had met him on the bottom of the sea," said Mr. Brown assertively.

About five or six hundred feet distant, Old Smokestack swung around with his burden, pointing straight for the starboard bow, and came for us "full speed ahead," while a solid sheet of water shot over him from the balloonlike body in front.

"Hold hard! Hold hard! For your lives!" roared the mate, anticipating what was about to happen, and every man's hand gripped tight. There came a loud p-lop as the he-devil's body, caught fair between the whale's rushing head and the bow of the hulk, exploded, scattering its contents high in the air, coupled with the resounding crash of splintering wood as Old Smokestack's mighty junk smashed through till it brought up against the foremast.

We only felt a very heavy jar; the hulk could not "list" or "heel" to any appreciable extent with the forty-ton head of a monster cachalot inside, and his body outside, to prevent it.

Kicking with his flukes, and "backing" with his fins, Old Smokestack worked himself loose, grabbed the dying black devil in his jaws, and, taking it a hundred feet or more away he laid there, slatting it about this way and that way. Gripping the middle of a tentacle or two, he'd sling him to the right, then with all his might to the left, releasing his grip and letting him go hurtling through the air, and at or after him again as soon as he'd struck the sea, almost but not quite dead.

"He is playing with him just as 'a cat does with a mouse'!" yelled Mr. Brown.

In a few minutes the devil was dead, and Old Smokestack bit, crushed, and tore him into junks, pausing only now and then to swallow a huge morsel of the body or several fathoms of a tentacle, leaving the remainder to the sharks already coming. "Now that he's killed that he-devil things look better for us; but there's no telling what'll come next, so we'll stay here, where we can be safer and see better."

He had hardly finished speaking before Old Smokestack shook himself, started up, made one complete circle around us, and shoved half of his huge head into the hole, which he had previously made in the starboard bow. Nothing happened. Then he began striking the sea with his flukes.

"He's either telegraphing to the other whales, or trying to scare the female out, I'll bet," said Mr. Brown.

"By Christopher! You're right, sir! See!" yelled Bob-stay, pointing to the port side, as two, four, and finally six tentacles slid outward from the opening, wriggling with nervous agitation. The head followed, and we could see that the two tentacles, previously out of sight, were still mostly within the hulk. Then came the great body, and the female devil started away, a writhing mass of apprehension as it went ahead, drew back a little, went ahead still farther than before, drew back again, as if afraid to leave, and yet afraid to stay, slowly drawing the two tentacles still

remaining inside of the hulk outward; yet apparently retaining a hold on something inside, so that it could pull itself back instantly, if need be, I thought.

Some ten or fifteen feet of them had emerged from the wreck, and then: "Look! Oh, my God! Look! She's got our boat, and is dragging it away with her!" screamed Ratlin, and as we watched, half bewildered, out from the hold in the hulk, and following behind the she-devil, came the head of our boat, clasped tightly by a tentacle on, over, and along each side of the bow, both coming over the gun'els and inboard at or abreast of the bow thwart.

Bob-stay tried to speak, but all that he could do was bleat like a frightened sheep. The mate's fingers bit into my arm, deep enough to make me yell, and I tried to, with no results, as neither of us could make a sound. Ratlin covered his eyes with both hands, while the rest of us stared, stupefied.

Gathering speed, the female now swiming away, drew more of the boat out after her, and we saw a five-hundred-pound black baby octopus lying on and over the center-board box, with all its shining tentacles coiled circularly around itself, looking like a monstrous ebonized egg laid in a nest of giant black straws, with the broadened tip ends of two of its tentacles, palms upward, tightly held in the very tip ends of the two tentacles that its parent towed the boat with. "Cuss me, if it ain't holding hands with its mother!" said the mate, in an awed tone.

"Mother love, and childish confidence in her ability to escape from the very jaws of death, not forty feet away," an unseen voice spoke softly to me from somewhere. Just then the stern of our boat passed outward from the hole, heading for the horizon, in tow of the female.

Our hate grew faint, and resentment weakened as we saw that sight. "Mother love" don't cut much ice in the struggle for the survival of the fittest that curses every living species, but, remembering that the same causative factor that gave us the desire to kill everything that we want for food, gave it equally to the mother of that child in our boat, so all must take whatever fate decides, and call it "Heaven-sent."

Rome, with all her Cæsars, at the topmast pinnacle of her pride and power, could not have staged such a spectacle, nor could such titanic contestants have been obtained or managed. Nero never dreamed its equal; showmen have ever used superlatives to describe to us their comparatively midget spectacles, such as tigers, lions, elephants, et cetera, but words could not do justice to the vast panorama spread out before us. Ahead to the left a mighty mother, a fifteen-ton ogress, terrible, yet shivering with fear, not for herself, but for the safety of her only child. To the right, a monster cachalot of more than one hundred tons, tearing a wreck to shreds, to get at and to rip them to ribbons, while four microscopic human beings hung, trapped at the masthead, watched the conflict, and trembled for their lives.

"She's made a baby carriage out of our boat, to protect, conceal, and save her offspring in, and stupid shore folks think they've got a mortgage on all the brain matter," said Mr. Brown, as the female moved cautiously off with our boat in tow.

"There's something under that young one, in the bottom of the boat, but I can't make out what it is," Bob-stay remarked.

Meanwhile Old Smokestack was bumping his great junk around inside the hole in the starboard bow, and flapping his ponderous flukes on the sea, outside, with Mr. Folger keeping a few hundred feet away on our port quarter, awaiting orders.

The octopus with the boat in tow had hardly gone twenty fathoms when Old Smokestack drew his massive head from

the hole and gave a suspicious snort as he backed away, "milled" suddenly, shot forward, made a short turn around the bow, swung toward the octupus and boat, then swerved from them, lunged ahead for a hundred yards, stopped, sunk his head, lifted his flukes, and went under.

He changed his mind when he saw our boat held by the devil, and, not understanding the new combination, he went down to think it over and study it. He knew what it meant when a boat got into the game with him, but he may have been mystified over the fact that there were no men in her, and tackling a big octopus and a whaler's boat at the same time presaged a job that was worth thinking over well in advance.

"I'm thinking he wouldn't have killed the other cuttlefish if he hadn't had this hulk to smash up against. That he-devil had things well planned for his attack, but he didn't figure on a chance of being crushed to death between this wreck and the whale," said Bob-stay.

"Maybe that whale has got his bellyful of both food and fight, and decided to let well enough alone; I think he's gone for good, but I hope he hasn't," said Ratlin.

"If you think that, you've got a lot more to learn about a big sperm whale," said Mr. Brown.

"Stand by! There's trouble coming. Something's the matter with that cuttlefish; it's stopped. Look!" shouted Bob-stay, as he pointed, and then we saw that it had slacked up, and quit swimming. It's two "towing" tentacles hung in a "bight," as it reared itself up backward, closer to the boat.

Instantly all of its six forward tentacles flashed furiously upward and over its head, as "Uh si-i-ih, Uh si-i-ih," it hissed ferociously. Simultaneously out of the calm, unruffled water rose the huge junk of Old Smokestack, three or four hundred feet away, and coming for the octopus at top speed, lying on his left side, with his jaws wide open. When forty feet away, the mother-devil jumped for him like a huge tarantula, but either miscalculating the distance, or not figuring on being "brought up" somewhat by the "drag" of the boat, when the towing tentacles tautened, it fell short and dropped on the sea. At the same instant Old Smokestack swerved, and synchronously he rolled, sweeping his tremendous jaw in a lightning half-circle through the air, smashing it downward like a bolt from the sky, striking its end clean across the back of his antagonist, at the junction of its neck and body.

Badly hurt, almost paralyzed, the octopus released its hold on the boat, and at the same time wound the ends of several tentacles around the outer part of the whale's jaw, just as it started to shut, and so was dragged away from the boat, as the giant jaw closed and crushed them, before Old Smokestack could check his own rush.

The mother was weakening rapidly. In a few seconds Old Smokestack shook her loose; then, almost leisurely, he backed off, made a short turn, slid his jaw over her body, bit just once, and relaxed his grip. The crushed "bag" of flesh slipped out and floated in the ink-blackened spot on the sea. Again he pitilessly pounded it, "side-swiping" with his twenty-five-foot jaw, till he'd beaten it to a pulp. Then he lay still, as we watched.

"That side-swiping trick was what that whale used when he killed the mate of the old *Golconda*. It isn't strange at all, after you've seen how he does it, that no whaleman has ever got Old Smokestack," said Mr. Brown.

"Well, it's all over, but giving three cheers for Old Smokestack," Bob-stay broke in.

"Not yet! Not by a damn sight! See what's coming! By Godfrey! That's some kid! Listen!" snapped Mr. Brown.

Rising on the gun'el of our boat was

the baby octopus, angrily waving its shining tentacles aloft, and, hissing at the whale like a maddened young fiend, sprang overboard and went for him. "Ye Gods and little fishes, that is some child," I heard myself say, as on went the plucky little fellow. Father and mother both dead, thrown on his own resources, and "digging water" for all he was worth, he headed straight for the motionless monster cachalot, a spiritualized epic of revengeful desire and hatred. At six or seven fathoms from the whale he stopped short, shoved two of his chubby black arms straight upward, full length, then rolled or curled their broadened tips into solid balls and shook them fiercely with all his childish strength, at the whale, while he hissed his infantile hatred.

"Blast me, if that spunky little cuss ain't shaking his fists at that big whale!" said Mr. Brown.

"Cursing him, too, while he's doing it," I added, as the baby lowered its tentacles, and started ahead, directly for the whale's great junk.

"My hat's off to him. With his parents dead, it looks as if he expects to die, and intends to do so bravely facing his giant foe," said Bob-stay, and as he spoke Old Smokestack forged ahead slowly, swinging as he went, and keeping clear of the baby, till, just at the right distance, his massive flukes rose skyward, hovered like a pall of doom, and then he sent them roaring down on the baby, bursting its soft body open, and scattering its entrails on the sea.

A deep hush fell over us, as the mate with lifted hat bowed his head, and said softly: "Amen! It's all over. I hated to see Old Smokestack kill that child, but it had to be."

Then, "Mr. Folger! Give that whale a wide berth, and come alongside," and to us, "Throw those spades overboard, and lay down from aloft. We're a lucky lot of men. We owe that whale a vote of thanks, and a resolution never to molest him as long as we live, because he's cleared a family of man-eating devils from the sea."

Down to the deck we went, and all so excited that we were hardly rational. Mr. Folger was already at the port mizzen-chains. "Jump in, quick! We'll get our boat and pick up what we can find that belonged to her," ordered Mr. Brown.

"Pull ahead!" Mr. Folger sang out, as soon as we were in his boat. Off we went, with Mr. Brown standing in the bow, and, as we reached our boat, I saw his eyes bulge and his face turn white, while he murmured brokenly, "My God! My God!" and a second later we all saw the dead bodies of Frank and Sam, lying on the bottom of the boat.

Turning to me, Mr. Brown said: "Spunyarn, you told the truth. They were killed, just as you said. Their corpses prove it, and I thought you were nutty." He drew the back of a sun-cooked hand across his eyes. Then he ordered Bob-stay, Ratlin, and me to get into our boat with him, and with Mr. Folger's help we picked up the drifting oars, sail, mast, and boat keg, using the jib to cover the faces of the dead.

All this time Old Smokestack had been lying right where he'd killed the baby, and from time to time he munched away at a tender tentacle, as coolly as a cow in her stall chewing a mouthful of timothy hay, and now he "paddled" gently over toward us, till he was about one hundred feet off. Then he stopped, turned on his side, and lay there flapping himself gleefully with his upper fin.

"He's either trying to shake hands with himself, or wants to do so with us," said Mr. Brown.

"Shall we strike, or lance him?" rasped Mr. Folger, his cupidity fired by the mate's apparent indifference to a chance for a hundred and fifty barrels of oil.

"Not unless you'd strike your own mother, or put a lance into me. Think

of what he's done for us? He's entitled to our lasting friendship, a-a-nd if I could get my arms around his neck I'd like to hug him," answered Mr. Brown quietly. Then, "If I catch anybody so much as darting a toothpick at that old boy, I'll put a lance right through him!" he roared. "Give way for the ship!" he snapped, with shining eyes.

"But how about the treasure, sir?" asked Mr. Folger, quite subdued.

"Thunderation! I'd forgotten all about that. We'll board the wreck and get it, of course," replied Mr. Brown, and, as we returned to her, he ordered one man to the maintop, to keep watch fore and aft, inside and outside, to warn us instantly if necessary, while we got the box of gold and the silver that had been left in the galley. As soon as this was done, Mr. Brown ordered the lookout down from aloft, and said: "We'll go right aboard of the ship, and explain things to the others as we're getting something to eat. Then we'll return here to make a further search, while the rest can be getting the bodies ready for burial while we are gone."

As we started for our ship, Old Smokestack sunk out of sight, reappearing in a minute or so, and his big head shot upward till his eyes were well above the calm sea. He turned deliberately from right to left and back again, then stretched himself at full length on the surface, and lay still.

"I thought he was going to give chase to us," quietly remarked Bob-stay to the mate.

"No, he just wants to keep track of what's going on, that's all, and I'm betting that he'll be here when we come back to the wreck," said Mr. Brown. As soon as we got aboard the *Banshee,* the bodies of Frank and Sam were laid out on the main hatch and covered with the ensign.

After a hasty meal, Mr. Brown ordered the treasure we had found to be counted in the presence of all hands. The silver amounted to nearly eight hundred dollars, face value. Then he opened the box, and this in itself was a wonderful thing, made of sandalwood, with mortised brass lock and hinges, entirely sheathed on the outside with tortoiseshell of the very finest grade. Each corner was bound with silver, pounded out by hand, from old Spanish dollars. The keyhole was in the center of a shield of silver, and a similar shield on each end was set into the beautifully mottled tortoise shell. On top of the box was an oblong piece of absolutely black tortoise shell. Again, in the center of this black piece, was set a similarly shaped piece of pure milk-white mother-of-pearl shell. The four upper corners were inlaid triangularly with the same material, and everything fastened to the wood with tiny rivets of pure silver, sixty-eight of them being used alone to secure the oblong piece of tortoise shell to the top.

As Mr. Brown lifted the cover, we saw that it was filled with a wealth of rare shells, and I recalled wonderingly that he had said that they had found a box of gold. There was nothing to be seen but shells, beautiful "moss rose buds," glorious orange cowries, glistening leopard cowries, gleaming blister pearls, magnificent maoa's, red, brown and purple; "God's Eyes" the South Sea traders call them, as the natives use them to make eyes for their gods; two of the deadly "Pata" shells from the Paumotus, one small pair of the golden-yellow pearl shells, from the southern Phillipines, and more besides.

As Mr. Brown finished pouring out the shells, he looked at me inquisitively, and said: "You think I lied when I told you we'd found a box of gold, Spunyarn?"

"No, sir! But I suppose you've got an explanation up your sleeve," I answered.

Then, holding the box closer, he said,

smilingly: "You'll notice that the bottom, inside, is made of a different wood from that on its outer side. The inner one is 'Tamano" wood, found mostly in the tropical Pacific. Its grain running in every possible direction, makes it difficult or almost impossible for it to be split or planed, so it has to be sawed, and made smooth on a grindstone and polished with sand."

This box had a false bottom, and with the point of his knife he pried it up, revealing fifteen "double eagles" in American gold, each lying its own depth in a circular hole, separately cut for the purpose in the sandalwood beneath; three rows of five holes each; three hundred dollars all told. "I'll see that each man gets his proper share of what we've found, when he is paid off," he added, and carried the box down into the cabin.

When he returned, he gave orders to Mr. Folger about sewing the bodies up, each in a separate canvas shroud, with a sack of sand at their feet, and saying further: "Start 'Beelzebub' to work on the job; he's the best hand we've got with the palm and needle, and we'll give them a true sailor's slide from the gangway board at eight bells sharp, to-night."

"We won't get any wind before that time, and I doubt if we do then. That bank of clouds to the north'ard hasn't risen any since this morning," remarked Mr. Folger.

Beelzebub set to work by the main hatch, with two assistants, and I thought as I watched how well his name fitted him. Slender he was, with clawlike hands and long nails, deep-sunk eyes, sharp nose and chin, narrow, pointed ears, their tips reaching up to a level with the top of his head, so that he wore a cap by compulsion. Wearing a hat with a brim would have necessitated his tucking the apex of his ears under the inside band. Shiny, jet-black hair he had, in spite of his fifty-five years. He was, as the mate had said, "the most expert man in the ship with a palm and needle."

Then I happened to remember the dirty, mouldy old notebook I'd found in the fo'c's'le of the wreck. Pulling it out of my hip pocket, I started looking it over. Most of the entries were penciled, but a few in ink; all in Spanish, short and jerky, undated, and so disjointed that I could not make much out of it at first, and the pages were soiled, stained, and torn.

"What you got there, Spunyarn?" asked Mr. Brown, coming up to me, and I told him.

"That may give us the key to much of this mystery. We'll sit down here on the booby hatch and see what we can make out of it, as we both know Spanish. You read and I'll write it in English."

He then ordered the steward to bring paper and pencil from the cabin, and, while we were waiting, a faint puff of wind stirred the air, but not enough to give us "steerage way," but causing us to drift toward the wreck some. Then it died out.

The steward came back, gave Mr. Brown the paper and pencil, and tossed a hunk of bread into the parrot's cage hanging under the forward edge of the bearers just over our heads. "Go to hell! Go to hell!" said the bird, by way of expressing his gratitude, as we started the job of translating, making deductions, supplying missing or obliterated words and letters, as best we could. And this is what we got:

"Diario del viaje del barco Gallenazo, de Tumbes, Peru."

Diary of the voyage of the bark *Vulture*, Gallenazo, Spanish, of Tumbes, Peru.

"Intramuros Muchacha hermosura. La reina de Sampoloc vaya paseando."

The walled city in old Manila; beautiful girl; the queen of Sampoloc goes walking. Sampoloc is the red-light district in Manila.

"Zamboanga, Que bullangueros Con la querida de Don Romaldo, Todos son borracho."

Zamboanga, Mindanao. Southernmost of the Philippine Islands. What rowdies, with the sweetheart of Don Romaldo. All are drunk.

"Isla de Pascua Craneos, Craneos de lost 'Midu's' Descubrir mucho plata escondido en 'ana Kai Tangata' circa el pueblo de 'Hanga Roa'."

Easter Island, Rapa-nui. Polynesian. Skulls, skulls of the "Miru's." Discovered much silver hidden in "Ana Kai Tangata," cave of the Polynesian man-eaters, near the village of "Hanga Roa," Long Bay, Polynesian.

"It should have been 'Hangi Roa,' which means 'Long Oven,' where the man-eaters cooked their human meat for food," Mr. Brown interjected.

"Dos cientos esclavos abordo ahora; ay mi Dios."

Two hundred slaves aboard now. Ah, my God!

"Don Pedro el capitan, es muy furioso hoy, y mata dos con su espada."

Don Pedro, the captain, is very furious to-day, and killed two with his sword.

"Escapamos anoche del crucero Chileno, pero ahora somos estropeado lleno de agua y espatos perdido."

We escaped last night from the Chilean cruiser, but now we are crippled, full of water, and spars lost.

"El Asesino de la Noche. Todos scn espantado; A que? Nosotros no sabemos."

The assassin of the night. All are frightened.. At what? We know not.

"Perdido dos; Ellos se fueron anoche, pero como? Ninguno sabe. Dios salvamos!"

Lost two; they went last night, but how? None knows. God save us!

"Todos se fueron; Estoy solo; Peridido, Adios."

All are gone; I am alone; lost. Farewell.

"That's all I can get clearly, sir," I said to Mr. Brown.

"Well, I wish we could make out more, but there's enough now to convince me that she was a Peruvian Black-Birder on her last voyage, though she surely was a whaler previously.

"What they were doing in Manila, or Zamboanga, or why they went there, I can't say, but it's plain that they had slaves aboard, probably intended for sale to work at the Chinchi Islands getting guano. They may have taken a previous load to the Philippines and disposed of them.

"Easter Island was practically depopulated by these devilish slavers, and, as it belongs to Chile, it shows why a Chilean cruiser was after them, and she probably shot that big hole in her, and knocked her missing spars away, and it seems as if sooner or later those black devils finished them unless some got away in the boats, if she had any boats left.

"How they escaped from the cruiser, or how they got wind of the treasure in the cave of the man-eaters may never be known. Whether some got away in the boats or what became of them, if they did, or whether the black devils got them all, can only be guessed at. But that big pile of bones in her fo'c's'le proves that those devils must have made a masacre of many men."

"If she had slaves aboard when the cruiser crippled her, they probably shot and threw or drove them all overboard, to save food and water for themselves, and because dead men tell no tales," Mr. Brown replied.

"I think that was about the way of it, sir," I remarked, as eight bells struck.

"By George! I didn't think we spent so much time. Call the boat's crew, and we'll make a final search of the wreck at once," he ordered.

Off we went and made it, thoroughly ransacking the steerage, hurricane-house lockers, and cabin quarters, finding noth-

ing of importance, except a small bag of English sovereigns, with a few more scattered around loose in the same drawer in the after cabin, about forty of them, all told.

By this time it was nearly sunset, and Mr. Brown said: "We'll set her afire—get that hatchet, and knock down the lockers in the galley, split some boards up for kindling, make some shavings, touch a match to them and we'll go back to the ship."

In a few minutes the fire seemed to be doing well enough to insure her destruction. "Come on," said Mr. Brown, and we got into our boat. And as we did so, Old Smokestack went under, and then came up perpendicularly till his eyes were above water. He then dropped back, turned flukes, and sounded.

"That's his sunset dive, guess he's leaving for good now," remarked Bobstay.

"No, not yet. He'll be back again," said Mr. Brown.

By the time we got back to the *Banshee,* and had supper, it was almost sunset.

"That fire seems to be going down; it acts as if it might die out, and it will soon be dark," remarked Mr. Folger to the mate.

"Tell Mr. Long to take my boat, some kerosene, a couple of axes, and go over there. He'd better start another fire, in the bo'sun's locker this time. There's some old paints and oils in it to help make a sure job, and he can stir up the one we made in the galley, if he has time," ordered Mr. Brown.

This was done, and they returned as darkness fell, with the wreck now burning brightly, about six hundred feet away, lighting things up all around us as tongues of flame shot skyward.

At seven bells all hands were ordered to attend funeral in the waist. The gangway board was removed and placed athwartships, one end projecting outboard beyond the gangway opening in the bulwarks, with its inboard end resting on a block of wood on the deck tub. The ensign was lifted, revealing the canvas-shrouded bodies lying on the main hatch, and lashed back to back.

"They died together, and death shall not part them; place them on the gangway board, feet outward. At eight bells, on the last stroke, my raised hand will drop, as a signal to tilt the board. Spunyard! Stand at the head. You were with them when they died. Bobstay at your right, and Ratlin at your left. Be prepared to lift for the slide, and fail me not," said Mr. Brown solemnly.

Two more of the crew started to take places at the sides of the "board" to assist in lifting it when ready.

"Back! None but their boat mates may stand so close to the sacred dead!" boomed the mate's deep voice.

"Mind your work, and stand by!" snapped Mr. Brown, as he looked at his watch.

Mr. Brown then began the ritual for the burial service, but became hopelessly tangled. "It's too much for me. Come here, Beelzebub. You can do it, and we's got no time to lose," he said chokingly.

Slowly, steadily, without a break, in tones of silver, Beelzebub's voice sent the ritual throbbing into the night. He had almost reached the last lines, when "Ch-o-o-oh-oh" sobbed the voice of Old Smokestack, not fifty feet from the gangway, as his great head rose dripping out of the water, like a granite tombstone of titanic size, till his right eye was above the sea, looking straight at us. He then slid down, and lay at full length on his back, rolled to his left, with wide-open jaw. It was a breath-snatching moment.

At a look from the mate Beelzebub resumed: "And we now commit their bodies to the deep." As he finished the ship's bell spoke.

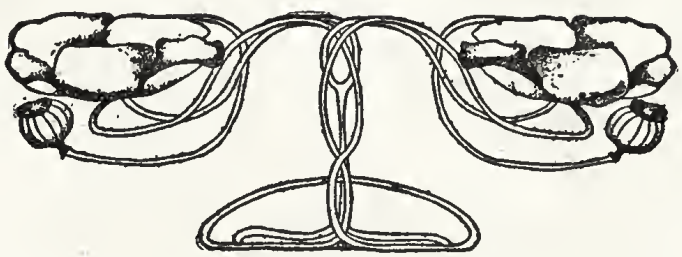
As the eighth stroke pealed out into the tense silence which hung over the ship, the mate's raised hand dropped slowly to his side. We silently lifted the board and let the remains of our shipmates slide down into the deep with a quiet splash.

Old Smokestack, who had lain motionless throughout the ceremony, slowly sounded, and went down, a majestic escort for our dead shipmates.

When the last ripple marking the passage of our shipmates and their regal escort disappeared from the surface of the sea, the masts of the derelict fell with a crash, sending up a shower of sparks, which hissed and died. Soon the face of sea was clear of the awful "Devil's Nest," which had been for so long a blot upon it.

As though the passing of the wreck had released us from the influence of some evil spell, a fair wind came up and our hearts leaped with joy as we heard the mate, now the captain, sing out: "Square the main yards; brail in the spanker!" We jumped to do his bidding as, it is safe to say, no crew on the old *Banshee* had ever jumped to an order before.

And a solemn hush of heartfelt thanksgiving spread over the ship as our new captain walked aft and gave the course to the man at the wheel. A great weight seemed to have been lifted from the ship, also, for she sped on into the fine clear night, with a joyous lilt in her stride as though she, too, shared our relief at leaving that accursed spot forever.



VOYAGES TWO MILLION FIVE HUNDRED THOUSAND MILES

CAPTAIN ANTHONY CADOGAN, commodore of the Lamport & Holt Line, on the completion of a voyage from Buenos Aires, recently, retired from active sea service, which he had followed for forty-six years.

Captain Cadogan was born in County Kilkenny, Ireland, sixty-three years ago, and went to sea when seventeen years old aboard the full-rigged ship *Lord Canning*. At this time his father was mayor of Waterford.

Forty-four years ago he joined the Lamport & Holt service as fourth officer and has covered over two million miles in its ships. He crossed the equator 320 times, and in his long career at sea has covered approximately two million five hundred thousand miles.

He was a friend and ardent admirer of the late Colonel Theodore Roosevelt, taking him in the steamship *Vandyck* on the first leg of the famous trip in search of the River of Doubt.

He was captured by the German raider *Karlsruhe* in 1916, while in command of the *Vandyck*, which was sunk later. It is reported that the young lieutenant in command of the boarding party remarked to Captain Cadogan: "I'm sorry for all this, but you must know that it is war. We have tried to treat you and your passengers and crew in a humane way." The lieutenant requested Captain Cadogan to shake hands, which he did, saying, "I may tell you that you have done a mean, dirty job in a clean, gentlemanly manner.

The Thousandth Man

Clinton H Stagg

When "Greek meets Greek" is a mild diversion compared with the conflict which ensues between two 'down-east" Yankee brothers who meet, after many years, to decide the question of supremacy between them.

Granite-hard, cold-blooded and without compunction, the test takes the form of the younger brother attempting to accomplish what eight men had failed to do, and the outcome determines which of the two shall be the one in a thousand to live

This is one of the most gripping yarns placed before our readers in many moons.

NINE hundred and ninety-nine men die. The thousandth lives. In the Orient, a man lives only because he is the thousandth of the thousand.

If your thoughts have given all the white men in China silk shirts and linen, and filled the poppy-laden air with the sound of tinkly temple bells, it is because you have Kipling mixed with your geography. Or it may be that your thoughts have never got above the parallel where Singapore sticks its nose down toward Australia.

But up in Shanghai, the winter wind kicks up the old Kiao-chau till even the tubby *tonghangs* dance on their beams, and the junks, with their inch-thick-rattan sails, keep the *llaing* joss burning from one end of the China Sea to the other.

Perhaps that is why Simeon Thatcher picked Shanghai, when the devil sent him to the Far East and whispered into his ear that money was to be ground out on the millstones. And Simeon Thatcher did grind it out. Between the devil and the deep blue sea he made a fortune that men only guessed. The devil was ever at his elbow, directing. His ships were on the four seas, collecting.

The Orient had never changed Simeon. Nothing could. He was cold and hard as the coast cliffs of his native Maine. He was tough and wiry as the steel cables that dropped his ships' anchors in a hundred ports. At sixty his back was as straight as his conscience was crooked; and his back was bent neither for man nor god.

In his godown office, near the quays where his ships had crowded out the Dutch traders, he sat in his straight-backed chair and fingered the reins of his hundred pack animals that plowed the ocean. In the center of that bare house, and his house was as bare as his heart—a blue-flame German oil

stove filled the air with the stench of Yang-lang petroleum. The windows were tight locked. Over his head, the big palm fan waved back and forth, pulled by the string aroung the big toe of the Manchu coolie who squatted outside the door.

The door opened softly, and the squat German clerk, whose eyes stared out fishily behind the thick lens of his spectacles, entered. He choked a bit over the stifling atmosphere. Outside, he had a window open. But Simeon Thatcher did not believe in fresh air. It might get into his soul. When the clerk reached the side of the desk, Simeon raised his eyes, blank eyes that held neither light nor shade. In all the years the German had entered that office softly, he had never seen emotion of any kind in those eyes. They never changed.

"The Japs have taken the *Agatha,*" he said in his heavy German. "Vincent tried to escape. He iss dead. Ten thousand pounds' worth of seals."

The blank eyes lowered to the rice-paper sheet, with its jumbled Chinese marks. The German clerk knew that signal of dismissal. But for three years he had been silent when he had made these reports. He spoke again, very slowly, and with shakes of his head that seemed to make the big eyes blink. "That is the eighth in thirty-five months, Herr Thatcher."

The eyes raised. "Let nobody through the door. I am busy." Simeon's voice was as devoid of expression as the eyes.

The fat German clerk shivered, though the room was oven hot. The door closed behind him, and at the open window he sucked in great gulps of the cold air from outside, as though purging himself of the unclean air he had breathed in that inner office. And outside, with no blank eyes to see, he shook his head slowly. He spoke softly, almost wonderingly, to himself.

"Eight ships in three years the Japanese patrols have taken. Eight ships that were filled to the hatches with furs of the seal. Eight ships and five captains, who fought for the extra money he promised. Always when the holds were filled. Always the Japanese patrols. And he says nothing." Shrugging his shoulders, he went back to his desk. "Perhaps in his silence he prays to the devil to send him more of the devils of the sea who are willing to take the chances for the money he offers—but never gives. The seal furs do not enter the Kiao-chau. It must be true that the Japanese, too, have devils to guide them. Always when the holds are filled!"

Inside, Simeon Thatcher had taken a thumbed book from a drawer. He opened it to a page. A stub of pencil plowed heavily through a name. It was the fifth of a list—the last. He turned to another page, then another. At the last page in the book he stopped. That page was dirtier than the rest, but it had no entries, as had the other pages. Only the name showed at the top. It was Jonathan Thatcher.

For an instant, only a single instant, the blank eyes seemed to glow and flame. Then the fires back of them were quenched. The granite-gray hardness came again. Minutes passed. The waving fan overhead swayed the thin rice paper in his hands as he studied it. The book lay under his elbow. The door opened softly.

Simeon Thatcher looked up as the little German stood beside the desk. The clerk was staring at him; staring as though he would assure himself that this man whom he had seen in this chair for years was a being of flesh and blood. His mouth opened. A stammered syllable came through the stuttering lips. The voice of the seated man sounded:

"Send him in." That was all; just three words.

"You—you——" Even a greater thing than those staring eyes which bade him go now compelled him to speak. "It is you—you who wait out there to see Simeon Thatcher. You—out there!"

"Send him in."

There was no more change in the voice than there was in the words, but the German's face paled, and his hand shook. Never in his years of service had the man at the desk given him a second command. Other men had been given second commands in that never-changing voice—and they had ceased to be other men.

The clerk stumbled out of the room, and between his shoulder blades he seemed to feel the eyes of Simeon Thatcher. He almost fell over the half-asleep coolie, whose toe waved the fan. Then he beckoned to the man who waited. Not until the man had passed through the door, and it had closed once more, did the clerk force his trembling lips to words.

"Two!" he choked, and the sound of his own voice seemed to frighten him. "The devil has given the world *two!*"

Simeon Thatcher rose as the man entered the room. Once more his eyes gleamed and glowed; just as the fires burned in the eyes of the man whose stare matched his. Simeon Thatcher might have been gazing at himself in a mirror. The same eyes of granite-gray, seething like molten stone now, met his. There was the same thin nose, with its turn of cruelty; the gash of mouth; the squareness of chin. For twenty years, Simeon Thatcher had not seen his brother; yet he had known how he would look. Jonathan Thatcher always looked the same—the twin of the man whose hundred ships sailed the four seas.

The flames died, and their light left the eyes of the two men cold and gray. The newcomer spoke.

"I will take your next poaching ship above the Aleutians. I will bring back the skins." Simeon Thatcher might have uttered those two sentences. His twin brother's voice was as flat and dead as his own.

"Eight of the best captains on the seas have failed," Simeon Thatcher said in his monotoned voice. "The Japs seem to know just when to strike. It is piracy they practice, of course, waiting for the full ships instead of patrolling their grounds. But they have the law. I will get the skins from under their very noses if I have to lose every ship! I will not be beaten."

For a second the flame leaped to his eyes again; only that seemed to make of the last words a challenge. The voice had never changed.

"I will bring back the skins." Jonathan Thatcher repeated his statement without any sign of the eye gleam. "I do not send men out with orders. I do the thing that is to be done."

The lips of the man who had not shown emotion of any kind in twenty years curled back from his teeth in a sneer. "I am the one who has done things. I have my ships! You—you have your master's certificate, just as every rum-swilling hound in the South Seas has." He stepped nearer his brother. "Why did you leave the South Seas?" he demanded harshly.

"To bring back the skins." The brother's eyes were still blank. "Twenty years ago, I opened the Manchurian trade to you when you had failed. I was the one man of the thousand."

"Bah!" It was a snarl. "The thousandth man! A captain, like a thousand other captains! It is Simeon Thatcher who is the one man in a thousand; the one man who has fought his way to the front; who lives and rules!"

Once more stare met stare. "The nine hundred and ninety-ninth man may live a long time, but in the end he dies." Jonathan Thatcher still gazed

steadily. "Have you a poaching ship ready?" he asked.

Simeon walked back to the desk. Under cover of its top, his hands knotted and unknotted as he fought back the rage and hatred he had shown for the first time in twenty years. No man on earth but this one before him had ever changed a line in his mask of a face. In a second, he had won his victory.

"The *Brixton* will be ready within the week," he said.

"A fast ship," nodded his brother.

"You will never return." Simeon Thatcher picked up the book at his elbow.

"I will bring back the skins. I am the thousandth man."

Jonathan Thatcher turned on his heel. The door opened and closed softly.

The man inside had opened the book to the dirty last page. Beneath the name of his brother he wrote: "*Brixton,* sailed——" His eyes were blank, but his dead soul was being fired with the pit fires of his master.

Captain Thatcher stood on the quay at the end of The Street Where Fish Rot and watched the three-funneled *King Fisher* limp out toward the China Sea for its annual trading trip among the Dutch East Indies. He knew the *King Fisher,* just as all the South Seas knew its long deck house, its dirty white sides, with the great splotches of rust showing through the paint that had been put on years before. Some day that ship would go to the bottom, but Simeon Thatcher would collect the insurance.

In her berth, the *Brixton* lay, taking the last tons of coal. Her sides showed unbroken surfaces of fresh white paint. Her two funnels were dark gray, and the short deck house was spotless white. Even now the painters were coiling their ropes and preparing to leave.

Captain Thatcher's eyelids lowered slightly. No other sign of emotion showed. His sampan was waiting. As the coolies rowed him out to the ship, his eyes never left the slow-moving *King Fisher* as it steamed out slowly, rolling heavily as it caught the first sharp winds of the China Sea. He swung up the side of the ship and jumped lightly to the deck, to face the stocky Scotch engineer, Monkitrick.

The engineer fell back a step, staring. "Ar-r ye goin' with us, master?" he stammered

Captain Thatcher's level eyes stared at him. "I am Captain Jonathan Thatcher," he said quietly "We sail at midnight."

The engineer shook his broad shoulders, as though the physical action would make his mind comprehend more easily the miracle his eyes saw. "Captain Thatcher, of the South Sea trade?" he finally stammered. "Th' br-other?"

A nod answered him.

"Then we ar-r goin' to the south routes?" The Scotch engineer's voice was eager.

"Above the Aleutians," corrected Captain Thatcher evenly.

The black tan of the engineer's face lightened. "God, man!" he almost shouted, so great was his amazement and disbelief. "Poaching in the *Brixton?* A bright, white ship, and with Japs in the stokehold! Death it is, sir! Death!"

"We sail at midnight!"

Captain Thatcher turned on his heel and went forward. The engineer leaned heavily against the rail, and his tongue licked his thick lips. Then words formed in his throat, and, curiously enough, they were the words the little squat German had voiced in the outer room of Simeon Thatcher's godown office.

"Two! The de'il gave the world two of them!"

In his cabin, back of the bridge, Cap-

tain Thatcher's gash of mouth tightened so that it became invisible. He stood at the port and stared out over the waters of Kiao-chau. A freshly painted white ship. Japs in the stokehole. And the Aleutians! It was suicide to take such a ship on such a trip with the waiting Japanese patrols ready to pounce when the holds were filled. Captain Thatcher could see the eyes of Simeon Thatcher gleaming and glowing with the twenty years of stored-up hate. A bigger thing had come than beating the Japanese. The *Brixton,* fastest ship of all the hundred, would be sacrificed —but Simeon Thatcher would know that he alone of all the East was the thousandth man. Jonathan Thatcher would not turn back. Brother knew brother.

Captain Thatcher glanced at his heavy German-silver watch. He walked to the deck and ordered the cockney second officer to lower a boat. For three hours he plied the stink holes of Shanghai. In the sampan that took him back to the *Brixton* was a great roll of canvas, a dozen big cans. Asprawl on the sampan bottom, under the feet of the rowing coolies, a dirty little white man, with tangled, matted hair, slept off the effects of the opium that reeked in the rags that covered his body. And behind came another sampan, with bundles of long bamboo poles lashed together.

At midnight, the *Brixton* sailed. Captain Thatcher was on the bridge. Beside him, the little cockney gripped at the bridge rail and whispered prayers to the God he had deserted for many years. Back in his cabin, the third officer, a North Sea pick-up, cursed his curses to the devil he had followed all his life. The *Brixton* was an instrument of revenge; the trap of brother for brother.

The little cockney shifted his eyes, to stare at the man who looked steadily ahead through the darkness.

"It's a 'ell of a note!" he said, and there was a note of helpless, plaintive complaining in his voice. "A 'ell of a note!"

"We'll bring back the skins." Captain Thatcher's black eyes made his second officer shiver, then he turned and went to the fourth cabin of the nest behind the bridge.

The stench of stale opium filled the small, white room. The man he had picked up in Shanghai lay like a log on the bunk where he had been tossed. For seconds Captain Thatcher stared down at him. Then he picked up a grimy hand that dangled limply over the bunk edge and examined it closely. He dropped it, and straightened up.

"We'll bring back the skins!" he muttered slowly.

For days the *Brixton* plowed steadily ahead. On the second day, the opium-dead man had come alive. There had been a long talk in his cabin. The little cockney had heard cursing in every dialect in the Far East. He had heard the ever-even voice of Captain Thatcher. Then the opium smoker had gone down to the forward hold. After him had been lowered the canvas, and the big cans. A dozen lanterns filled with petroleum had followed. And for the days of the journey following, the third officer sat on the open hatch with a revolver, and kept the slant-eyed crew from that hatch.

Down in the engine room, the Japanese gaffir sat on his little stool on the boiler bridge and kept his men steadily at work. Once the captain had come down into the hot depths of the ship and watched the brown, naked men at work.

"Satisfact'?" asked the Japanese gaffir mildly, with a wave of his lean brown hand toward the men below him.

Captain Thatcher had not answered. The granite-gray eyes hardened a bit more, then he climbed the iron ladders to the open air and the deck.

Monkitrick followed him. "The imp will see that the steam falls when the patrols gi'e us th' run!" he warned. "An' there's no work to be got from the dogs if he is not in his chair. Kill them all, an' they'll fair smile at ye. But 'tis only the gaffir in his seat puts the fear of their heathen gods in their breasts. They ha' a thought of him as a god, too, ye know, up here in the North, just as the Malays ha' of their *zangzai.*"

"We'll bring back the skins!"

That was all Captain Thatcher said; that was all he ever said. His eyes and face were as cold as the arctic winds that were beginning to freeze the spray on the bridge rails; his chin was as hard as the steel plates under his feet.

On the deck, the sealers—Japs, all of them—were getting ready. The boats were being prepared. The red-and-black seal buoys were lined along the deck with their anchor sheets. There was no sign of the Jap patrols. They were waiting, and were careful not to frighten a poacher. On the forward hatch, the third officer stared glumly out at sea. Beneath him, the fifth white man on board did his mysterious task away from the sight of eyes.

This is not a story of seal catching. Eight men before Captain Thatcher had caught their seals. For two months the *Brixton* roved above the Aleutians. Sometimes she was near Kamchatka and the rocks of Cape Lopatka, dodging the Russians a dozen times. Almost to Dutch Harbor her course took her, where the United States patrols were vigilant.

The aft hold was filled with the green skins. A great roll of canvas had been lifted from the forward hold, and was lashed to the deck under many coverings of tarpaulin.

On the wide, open stern, the opium smoker, clear-eyed and with hands that were steady, spent the days in cutting the long bamboo poles and lashing them together. The Japs scowled at him, just as they scowled at everything they did not understand. But he never spoke.

When Captain Thatcher was on the bridge, the three white men in the cabin talked in whispers, and with many shakes of the head.

"A de'il that's silent as the de'il up front!" muttered Monkitrick. "Doin' his child's play when there's work for a mon."

The third officer shook his head. "Painting!" he growled. "Painting! That's what he was a-doing! Painting pictures!"

"It's 'ell!" sighed the little cockney; then his voice rose in bitterness: "Wot good's the hunder' pun extra the old snake offers. Nobody ever gets back! An' wi' a ship painted corpse white, an' a crew of yellow monkeys."

Monkitrick shook his head. "'Tis hate behind it all. The South Sea fair bristles wi' stories o' Captain Thatcher, an' there's hate in th' hear-rt o' the mon in Shanghai. He wants only one Thatcher in the East!"

"It's 'ell!" groaned the second officer. "An' a little south China girl a-waitin' fer me, back there!"

Forward, on the bridge, Captain Thatcher paced back and forth, back and forth, his lips tight shut, and his eyes sweeping the sea.

The forward hold took its share of the green skins. The sealers' boats were lashed on the deck. The nose of the *Brixton* turned south with the first spring winds.

"Full speed!" ordered the captain, and the big engines sent the ship toward Shanghai and the blank-eyed man in his godown office by the quays. On the wide stern deck were piled many square frames of bamboo that had been lashed together.

When the last pole was cut to its length and had gone to make the design

the rag-clad man's fingers fashioned he went up to the bridge.

"Can I have a smoke of hop now?" he whined. "It's all done, all ready to be put up."

Captain Thatcher looked him over from head to foot. "You've got it out of your system now," he said quietly. "Straighten up, and go back home, where your brush can make a man of you."

The eyes of the man blazed. "Home!" he snarled. "I've got no home! I never had any since you needed me in the South Seas, for just such another trick like this. I was rotting comfortably in a Shanghai opium joint till you dragged me out and gave me a few more cursed years to live! You always drag me out. You always find me when I've forgotten that I ever could wield a brush, when I've forgotten everything but the opium dreams! Why can't you let me alone?"

"I needed you," Captain Thatcher said evenly. "I get what I need." He turned away from the man and toward the sleepy-eyed Chinaman, who was keeping the ship on its course. He spoke over his shoulder:

"In my cabin, you'll find enough to keep you going two days. I'll not want you after that!"

For two days the ship plowed steadily. For two days the man who spoke to nobody but the captain lay on his bunk while the sickening smell of burning opium was constantly in the nostrils of the other white men in the near cabins.

Over the *Brixton* had suddenly come a tension. It was in the attitude of the crew, and the slant-eyed sealers who loafed around the deck. It got down to the engine room, and Monkitrick cursed the steam gauges.

On the third day, a speck on the horizon, came a smudge of smoke.

"'E's comin'!" complained the little cockney. "The hatches are a-coverin' of the skins, an' 'e's arfter us. 'E'll catch us, too, with them dorgs down below solgerin' the fires."

Captain Thatcher did not answer. He stared down at the forward deck, with its rows of red-and-black seal buoys that lay alongside of the rail. Apparently he did not know that the second officer was on earth. He raised his voice and called:

"Yosi!"

The slant-eyed first sealer sidled from under the bridge and stared up insolently. Astern of them, a ship filled with his countrymen was crawling up steadily. To-morrow, or next day, his brothers would come over the rails, and he would get his share of the green skins under the hatches. He had gotten his share in five of the eight ships the Japanese patrols had taken from Simeon Thatcher.

For a second, Captain Thatcher stared down at the slant-eyed sealer. Then he spoke quietly, almost sleepily. "There were twenty-one buoys along the deck when we left the last grounds," he said.

The Japanese looked down at the long row of read-and-black floaters. Then he turned anl shrugged his shoulders. "Eight-ee', now," he murmured softly, with mocking respect.

"Yes," nodded Captain Thatcher. "I see there's only eighteen." He swung around slowly and walked to the bridge ladder that led to the deck.

The cockney sucked the air in between his broken teeth with a loud hiss. His breath had seemed to stop at the captain's first quiet word. The even question had seemed suddenly to make the air heavy and unbreathable. Its sinister significance was at once apparent to the second officer. He knew where the three missing buoys had gone, just as he knew the captain knew. They had been tossed overboard in the wake of the speeding ship: a signal to the waiting patrol that the hatches cov-

ered full holds, and that the course of the ship was south.

The cockney had expected an explosion of some kind. Yet Captain Thatcher had seemingly dismissed the whole thing. He had left the bridge, to go to his cabin.

Again came the hiss of the sucking breath. Captain Thatcher was on the deck below. The Japs slouched forward from the shelter of the fo'castle. The chief sealer stared at Thatcher with slant-eyed insolence.

"Bind Yosi's arms with that buoy anchor rope," ordered the captain.

The crew hung back, looking at the chief sealer. He shrugged his shoulders, and his lips twisted in a sneering grin. Captain Thatcher's hand went to his pocket. A revolver flashed in the sunlight. Very slowly his fingers twisted the nickled cylinder, and the snapping clicks sounded loud in the stillness that had come over the *Brixton*. With the same calm deliberation the pistol muzzle raised. The report sounded crashingly. The Japanese chief sealer crumbled to the deck with uncanny lack of sound.

"Gawrd!" gritted the cockney on the bridge.

"Bind Yosi's arms to that buoy anchor rope," ordered the captain. The crew huddled back against the fo'castle. For the first time in the twenty years that the cockney had plied the China Seas did he see fear in the expressionless face of a Jap. But only for a second did the tableau hold. That order came again, cold, icy. The huddled rats broke, with the fear of the blank-eyed captain gibbering on their lips. The arms of the dead chief sealer were bound to the anchor rope of a buoy.

"Overboard!" said the captain shortly. "We'll make the course marking plain for the patrol."

He turned his back square on them. The second officer's gun slipped from his pocket as the huddled crowd swayed forward; then a hysterical laugh sounded in his throat. Captain Thatcher needed no pistol to protect him from the men.

"'E's a devil!" stuttered the little cockney, and with the back of his hand he wiped from his eyes the warm perspiration that had streamed down from his forehead. He shook himself as a dog shakes itself on leaving the water. "But 'e'll bring back the skins! Gawrd, yes!"

As the hours passed, the black smudge of smoke on the horizon grew to the low outlines of a Jap cruiser. Every minute it showed more plainly over the curve of the sea. On the bridge, Captain Thatcher paced slowly, eyes sweeping the waters. In the cabin, the second and third officers shivered in the hot closeness, and drank many drams of rum and water.

"Yosi was a mighty big man!" declared the third, with heavy shakes of his head. "When they catch us, it won't be a pleasant death!"

"Never a word 'e said!" muttered the little cockney. "Just shot 'im like a dawrg!"

"To kill a Jap chief among a crew of Japs!" murmured the third wonderingly. "I've seen men torn to pieces for less!"

Early in the afternoon, Captain Thatcher summoned the Scotch engineer to the bridge.

"Speed?" he asked curtly.

Monkitrick shook his head, and under the black tan a lighter shade was showing. "Th' steam never gets above a hunder fifty. We need two-ten!"

"I'll fix that." The captain turned to the bridge phone to summon the second officer. Monkitrick's hand fell heavily on his shoulder.

"God, mon!" The engineer's voice shook with the fear that was in him. "Ye'll no be killin' the gaffir? Not an ounce of work we'll get if ye do! 'Twill be like shootin' the entire boiler crews

—an' the de'il back o' us is creepin' up fast."

Thatcher turned on him slowly. His thin lips curled back, to bare his teeth. "No wonder the skins were never brought back!" he said contemptuously, and that was the only sign of emotion a man on the *Brixton* ever knew him to show. "The blood of you North Sea men is ice water." He looked the engineer over from head to foot. "Have you a spare Gerhardt spring pop valve?" he asked, and the quiet evenness was back in his voice.

The engineer nodded his surprise at the question.

"Reverse the spring, so that it will open to let out its stream of steam if the pressure falls below two-twenty!" ordered Thatcher.

"But I dinna——" The Scotchman scratched his head.

"Are you competent to do that?" The blank eyes held just a hint of gleam.

Monkitrick did not answer. He touched the peak of his cap and went below. The second officer came on the bridge, and Captain Thatcher went back to the small white cabin, where the smell of opium was heavy, and the man he had picked up in Shanghai slept his drugged sleep. The captain's fingers raised the eyelids, and he bent down and examined the eyes closely.

"Another day," he nodded in satisfaction. He went to his own cabin and took a pair of steel handcuffs from a drawer, which he pocketed.

From the bridge end, the second was watching the Jap patrol astern. He turned as the captain came back.

" 'E'll catch us in the morning," he said gloomily. "We're only makin' three-quarters speed, an' losin' every minute!" His voice became a complaining whine. "Why can't we kill the gaffir wot's sittin' down there with a divil's grin on his face lettin' the steam drop?" He whirled on the captain in sudden, hysterical fury. "Why didn't you stay down in th' South, where you belong? 'E on'y wanted the skins! But you killed Yosi, an' now 'e'll rip us to pieces!"

"We'll land the skins in Shanghai!" said Thatcher icily.

The first long rays of the setting sun were aslant the Japanese Sea when Monkitrick came up to announce he had fixed the valve. Thatcher followed him to the engine room. He tested the Gerhardt that had the spring reversed so that any pressure less than two hundred and twenty pounds would release the plunger and send forth a jet of steam that would rip an hole through an inch board.

"Bring your Stillson to the stoke-room," he ordered, and with his own hands he tied back the spring with a chain.

Monkitrick followed silently.

On the gaffir's bridge over the boilers the Jap eyed them mockingly. Below him, the coalers moved slouchingly, sleepily to their passing. The engineer cursed as he saw the gauges.

"Hunder twenty!" he snarled.

"Satisfac'?" sneered the Japanese gaffir, but under his loose shirt his fingers were fumbling at a knife handle. He hissed a word in his own language. The men below dropped their shovels and stood looking up, their slant eyes gleaming threat.

Thatcher paid no attention. He was examining the great pipe that went across the boiler fronts, on a level with the bridge.

"Cut off the steam here!" he commanded..

Monkitrick almost dropped the wrench. " 'Twill kill a boiler!" he gasped.

"Cut off the steam!"

The engineer went to the end of the bridge and turned the great wheel of the gate valve. The men below had grouped together at the foot of the

narrow iron stairs. The gaffir eyed Thatcher with death in his stare. His fingers fumbled at the knife. But Thatcher's broad back was to him, contemptuous, ignoring the death that waited to spring.

"Take off this waste cock!" ordered the captain. "It's the same size as the pop, isn't it?"

"Yes, sir." Monkitrick, past questions now, did as he was told.

"Screw in the Gerhardt!"

It was done. The releasing valve stuck its nose out over the bridge. Thatcher tightened the chain that held the spring back. Then he whirled on the balls of his feet like a cat and pinned the gaffir to the iron rail, ripping the knife from his shirt and sending it clattering to the steel floor. A sudden movement came below. A shaking of the iron stairs. With a swing of his arms, Thatcher lifted the gaffir over the edge, and held him above the heads of the Jap stokers.

"Another step, and I'll throw him down!" he said. "I'll break him to bits so his body and soul will never get together in the hereafter!"

The Japanese screamed a command. The men below moved away from the foot of the iron stairs.

"Turn on the steam!" Captain Thatcher lifted the Jap over the rail and set him down. Monkitrick's hand shook as he turned the big wheel. If there was a single weak link in that chain on the valve a jet of boiling death would leap out at the captain's chest. The steam hissed back in the pipes. There came a warning clink of the chain that seemed to press all the life out of the engineer's lungs. But the valve held.

Once again Thatcher swung the Jap around as though he was a bag of meal. He held him tight with one arm that crushed the gaffir's ribs. His hand darted to his pocket. Came a flash of handcuffs. Two clicks, and the gaffir's arms were tight behind him, hands held to the iron upright of the bridge rail in front of the valve with its chained steam.

His quiet voice sounded in the silence. "Tell the stokers to make two-twenty pounds!" he said slowly to the gaffir. The Japanese snarled something, and writhed. Thatcher went on in his blank voice: "In fifteen minutes I am going to take the holding chain off the valve. That steam will eat its way through you in a second, unless there's two hundred and twenty pounds' pressure to hold it closed."

"God, mon!" Monkitrick staggered back against the rail, and his face was green with the sudden nausea. The gaffir writhed and twisted so that the bridge shook. Then a screamed command sent the shovels clattering. For fifteen minutes the stokehole was filled with the noise of work. The Japs shoveled as they had never shoveled before. The steam rose in the gauges. Hundred and seventy! Eighty! The *Brixton* under them pounded and throbbed with the leaping speed. Two hundred! The gaffir was screeching, and drool was showing on his white lips. The engineer, against the rail, was calling on his deity, over and over. Two-twenty! Two-twenty-five!"

Thatcher stepped quietly over to the gauge and took off the chain. An instant's hiss, and click of the spring sounded like the roar of a big gun. Then he faced the gaffir once more.

"The instant the gauge falls below two-twenty, that steam will rip you to pieces, and boil you while it does!" He spoke to Monkitrick: "Stay here and shoot the first man that tries to come up that ladder. Though every one you shoot will make the others work harder to keep this dog alive. I'll send the third down in a minute."

The engineer's tongue moistened his dry lips. "Yes, sir!" he muttered through his clenched teeth, and he kept his eyes away from the Jap and the

valve, while the shudders shook his body.

The captain went back to the bridge and ignored the wondering glances of the little cockney second. Behind them, the cruiser was receding fast. There came a futile puff of smoke from a gun as the Japs behind realized that something had gone wrong.

"South-southeast!" ordered the captain of the Chinese helmsman, and the *Brixton* shifted toward Guam, and away from China.

Through the long hours of the night, the *Brixton* pounded its way south. In the stokehole, a pasty-faced brown man clawed at the steel floor of the bridge with his feet, and stared into the inch hole of the Gerhardt valve, screaming his orders in a voice that was cracked and broken. Beside him, the third officer shivered, despite the heat of the boilers, and edged away every minute to the other end of the bridge, only to go back sheepishly. And the valve held pent its living steam.

Morning came on the open sea. There was no sign of the pursuing Japanese. Simeon Thatcher had made his one mistake of giving his brother the fastest of all the hundred ships.

Only the cockney shook his head. "The wireless!" he complained bitterly. "'E'll wake every Jap boat on the islands, an' we'll have to round them to get into Kaio-chau! 'E won't gi' us a chance!"

The northern point of Japan was two hundred miles abreast of them when Thatcher routed a heavy-eyed man who was in his cabin.

"Get busy!" he ordered curtly. "There'll be a thousand boats on the lookout for the *Brixton*. And no ship ever got around those islands and into Kiao-chau when the wireless has been working."

The opium smoker cursed the blank-eyed man, but he slouched astern to his piles of lashed bamboo poles. The Japanese crew, whimpering dogs now because of the fear for the gaffir below that would be ripped to pieces with red-hot steam if they failed to obey the devil on the bridge, obeyed the commands of the cursing man. The bamboo frames were lashed into position along the deck at the rear of the short deck house. A great frame was reared at the deck-house end, abaft the stack.

Steadily the *Brixton* kept her course away from Japan and the watching patrols that were scouting the sea. At midnight, she turned in toward the Chinese Sea. At dawn, the great rolls of canvas were unslung, and the second officer rubbed his eyes and gasped as the opium smoker and his Japs swung them over the frames. They were painted to represent a long addition to the deck house, and a third smokestack! He watched the thing grow as the lashings were made fast.

"Gawrd!" he muttered a hundred times. "It's the *King Fisher,* the balliest ol' tub on the line! The *King Fisher,* that everybody knows in the North and South Seas!" He looked at the broad back of Captain Thatcher, who stood at the other end of the bridge. "'E'll bring back the skins!" His voice made it something between a curse and a prayer.

For half a day, the *Brixton* plunged on through the warm seas. Then a splotch of smoke showed ahead. Thatcher went into the stokeroom once more. He wasted no glance on the pitiable figure that was handcuffed to the iron rail. He chained the Gerhardt valve tight, and the red-hot steel burned great welts in his hands and arms, to which he paid not the slightest attention.

"Bring the steam down to a hundred!" he said quietly. The gaffir screamed an order. The shovels were laid aside. And when the boat ahead came close enough to use glasses, the *King Fisher,* notorious tub of the

Thatcher ships, was wallowing and limping into port. The lookout did not bother to come close. It sheered off, to dash northward.

In its lame way, the *Brixton* picked a course around the southern island. A hundred ships were sighted. A hundred ships took one look, and scouted northward and westward, for the unmistakable *Brixton,* the first of nine ships that had eluded the vigilant patrol up north.

Back in his cabin, the opium smoker was again dead to the world, and dreaming of the death that was coming in the stink holes of Shanghai On the bridge, the little cockney sang snatches of a coster song, and planned things for his south China girl. Captain Thatcher's blank eyes looked ahead, always ahead, toward the quay near The Street Where Fish Rot, and the little godown office.

Where the yellow waters of Kiaochau begin to mingle with the blue-green of the China Sea, the captain ordered the canvas and lashed poles thrown overboard. The *Brixton* steamed in, triumphant, with the green skins under the hatches.

In the godown office, the little German clerk rubbed his hands as he left the inner office, after reporting the sighting of the poacher. The fan waved slowly, with its string around the big toe of the Manchu coolie.

Simeon Thatcher turned to the last dirty page in his little book. He filled out the return date with a stub of pencil, and laid the book methodically back in its drawer.

From a little box he took two white pellets. For a fractional instant his eyes gleamed and glowed; then his tongue lifted the two pellets from his steady palm. His head went forward very slowly, until it rested on the rice-paper sheet, with its squat Chinese characters.

His mode of death was perhaps easier than the one he knew was speeding toward him on the *Brixton.* The question of the thousandth man was settled.

THE PASSING OF THE *GLORY OF THE SEAS*

WHEN the famous old *Glory of the Seas* was burned on the beach in Seattle on Sunday, May 13th, it marked the close of one of the most romantic chapters of the history of the American merchant marine. As her builder was the famous Donald McKay of Boston, it also ended the last of the long line of well-known ships turned out by this man.

The burning of the *Glory of the Seas* marked the close of a great era; as a consequence of this the event entailed considerable comment both in the daily press and shipping circles. Several well-known men in the shipping world endeavored to form a syndicate to purchase her, restore her to all of her original glory, and moor her in Boston Harbor as a permanent exhibition of the greatness of the American merchant marine during the clipper-ship era.

As the famous British clipper ship *Cutty Sark* had been restored for a similar purpose it was thought that if the project to restore the *Glory of the Seas* had been successful a race might have been arranged between these two ships. It is doubtful if a race such as this would have had any practical value, however, all efforts to preserve the *Glory of the Seas* failed, and she was burned as she lay on the beach.

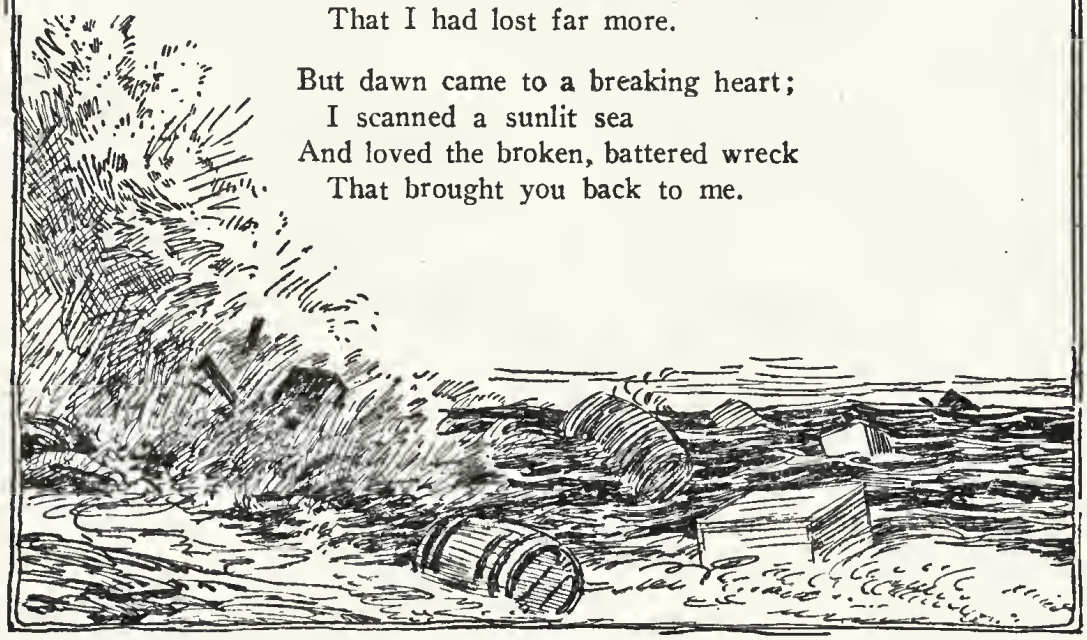
Driftwood

By Cristel Hastings

THEY sent your ship to distant lands
For silks and spice and gold;
You were to bring a cargo of
The riches that men hold
Above all else; and yet I felt
No joyful pride to see
You in command, though hope ran high,
They took you far from me.

And then one night the shore was strewn
With bits of wood and sails;
And some one said, as in a dream,
You had encountered gales
And jettisoned the cargo that
The tides had washed ashore.
I knew no matter what the loss
That I had lost far more.

But dawn came to a breaking heart;
I scanned a sunlit sea
And loved the broken, battered wreck
That brought you back to me.



Jury Rig

By A Hyatt Verrill

All sailors are aware of the conscious air of superiority with which the man who has spent all of his time in the deep-water trade looks down upon the man whose life has been spent in steamers, or upon the coast. Much can and has been said about this, pro and con; much of it we are forced to admit is con. Captain Asa Weaver, however, was one man who proved his superiority by deeds. After reading this you will admit that, in spite of his bluster, Captain Weaver was every inch a sailor.

"HUMPH!" snorted Cap'n Asa Weaver as he tipped back in his chair and puffed at his short black pipe in the smoking room of the Seamen's Club. "Humph, I tell ye, as long's a ship'll float there ain't no 'arthly excuse fer desartin' on her or bein' towed inter port."

Lem Perkins flushed a deeper shade of red under his weather-beaten skin. "Meanin' you're referrin' to me, I s'pose," he remarked.

"Not pertick'lerly, not pertick'lerly," rumbled Cap'n Weaver. "But I'm sayin' that I've been to sea—man an' boy—nigh onto twenty-five years an' I ain't never asked nor took help from any blasted steam tea kittle yit. No, sir, long's the ol' *Orion* ain't stove an' don't spring a leak what the pumps can't keep under I'll git her into port, by gum."

"Like to ha' seen ye git the *Sachem* in," muttered Lem. "All four sticks gone plum outen her lessen ten foot above decks. 'Spect ye could ha' done it o'course. Mebbe ye'll be willin' to offer a bit o' advice, seein' as how ye're such an all fired better seaman than I be."

"I don't aim to be l'arnin' seamanship to others," replied Cap'n Weaver hotly. "But ye don't catch me payin' salvage to no towboat robbers these hard times. No, sir, bad enough to have to pay 'em for towin' out an' in port."

"'Spect ye'd have fitted her with sweeps or sculled her in," retorted Lem sarcastically.

"Might ha' put jury rig onto her," declared the other. "Though I don't 'spect cap'ns o' fore'n afters could do sech things."

Lem burst into a hearty laugh. "Jury rig!" he cried. "Sure, set up the crew's breeches an' a couple o' han'kerchiefs an' get into port 'bout a year later. Y're forgettin' time's money these days."

"Wall, ain't I jury rigged with this here timber leg o' mine?" exploded old Asa. "An' I calc'late I get about as

lively as most on ye. An' I'm sayin' again," he continued, "that any skipper what'll give a line to a towboat 'slong's his hooker'll float's no deep water seaman. By Godfrey! I could slam a jury rig onto the *Orion* what'd shove the ol' hooker along better'n that there tub o' your'n could make under full sail." Knocking the ashes from his pipe, the old skipper arose, stretched himself and stumped off.

Two days after this verbal set-to with Cap'n Lem, the one-legged old mariner stood upon the broad and spotless quarter deck of the bark *Orion* as, in tow of a fussy tug, she dropped down Boston harbor. To the rousing chantey of "Whiskey Johnny" the great topsail yards rose slowly from the caps, sheets were manned and one by one the huge sails were spread. Then, as with a parting toot of her whistle, the tug cast off the line, the men tallied on the braces and under a lofty pyramid of snowy canvas the *Orion* headed for the open sea.

She was bound for Matanzas, Cuba, and Cap'n Asa expected to see the hazy coastline of the Pearl of the Antilles rising beyond the soaring tip of his flying jibboom within ten days after passing Provincetown light. The wind was fair, the weather perfect, the sea a vast crinkled sheet of glue, and everything promised a quick and easy run. But the Atlantic, even in mid summer, is capricious, and fate had other plans for the *Orion* and boastful Cap'n Asa. Two days after rounding the Cape and heading southward, the barometer dropped rapidly, an ominous swell came out of the south, the sky became overcast, brownish-gray scud drifted in ragged wisps from below the horizon and the air took on a curious sickly-yellow tint.

Cap'n Weaver had been too long at sea and had made far too many voyages to the tropics not to realize what was in store. He knew that a West Indian hurricane was racing up from the Caribbean and while he did not possess the latest types of instruments and scoffed at scientific theories and government publications on hurricanes, yet he realized that the *Orion* was in for a "rip snorter" as he put it.

Sharp orders were bawled out, rapidly sails were furled and made snug, movable objects on deck were secured with double lashings, and soon the bark was wallowing along under lower topsails, jib and close reefed fors'l. There was little wind, and the sea ran in long oily rollers, the *Orion,* without enough canvas to steady her, rolled horribly. But old Asa was not one to take any chances or carry sail until too late. He was owner as well as master of the *Orion,* all his savings of a lifetime of toil, hardship and danger were invested in the bark, and he believed in shortening sail while the shortening was good.

"Derned sight easier to put canvas onto her if it don't blow than 'tis to shorten if it does," he remarked to his mate, a young Gloucester man named Haskell. "An' looks to me like it's goin' to blow fit to take the whiskers offen ye."

And had any of the *Orion's* crew worn such facial adornments, Cap'n Weaver's remark might well have been verified, for blow it did with a vengeance. Out of the west it came, a screeching, howling, maniacal blast, a savage, roaring eighty-mile gale that picked up the sea and flung it in tons of green water with the force of a battering ram upon the bark and, catching the heavily laden ship broadside on, forced her over until her port rail was buried in the hissing seas, and green water surged over her decks to the hatches. For a space it seemed as though she would go on her beam ends, as if she would never right, and then, with a crash like thunder, her main lower topsail split and was instantly torn to ribbons. Relieved of the pressure the *Orion* slowly staggered

up, shook the cataracts of water from her decks and with two men straining at her wheel, swung on the crest of a huge comber and tore off before the hurricane.

She was a stanch, well-built Yankee ship, a fabric of good white oak and Maine pine, a ship of whom her Boothbay builders might well have been proud and Cap'n Asa had no fear of her weathering the fearful storm sweeping up from the Antilles and driving the bark eastward with the speed of a liner. Great, curling green seas reared to half the height of the crojack yard, their crests sheared off by the terrific gale that was now blowing nearly one hundred miles an hour. Equally great combers reared ahead, but as long as a stitch of canvas held, the *Orion* would outrun the seas, the captain felt sure, and even if the bits of remaining canvas were torn from the boltropes he had little doubt that his ship, under bare poles would drive fast enough to avoid being pooped. The mizzen topsail had long ago followed the main and only a bit of jib and fore tops'l showed, sodden gray, and hard as sheet iron against the flying scud and murk. But no canvas ever woven by man could stand the awful strain, the onslaught of the hurricane for long, and within an hour from the time the gale had burst the fore tops'l flew, like some huge frightened bird, into the turmoil, leaving a few streaming, snapping shreds of canvas attached to spars and mast. Quickly the jib followed and the *Orion* drove on under bare poles that bent and strained and swayed like whips to the wild pitching, staggering motions of the bark. There was nothing to be done. No human being could move across the wave-swept, tossing deck. The few men above hatches had lashed themselves fast, and Cap'n Weaver and his mate had secured themselves to the mizzen rigging to port and starboard.

For hour after hour the *Orion* raced on, but gradually the wind fell, it came in screaming, uneven gusts, the sky lightened, and while the seas ran even higher than before, their crests curled and broke less spitefully.

Apparently the worst of the storm was past and late in the afternoon the skipper went below for a hasty meal and a quart of steaming coffee. Then, having smoked and after roughly calculating his position by dead reckoning, and knowing by the motion of the bark that she was making as good weather of it as could be expected, he turned in for a few hours' rest.

He was aroused by being rolled unceremoniously from his bunk on to the floor. Instantly wide awake and with all his faculties on the alert, he clawed his way across the room to the door which seemed, somehow, to be near the ceiling. He half crawled, half scrambled through the main cabin and gained the companionway. That his ship was in dire straits he knew the moment he rolled from his bunk, for the slope of the deck told him she was practically on her beam ends. Dimly through the thick planking came the roar of the wind and the thunderous pounding of seas, and as he gained the companion stairs there came a muffled, rending crash, a blow that shook the bark from stem to stern, and with a jerk that all but threw the skipper from his feet the bark heaved herself up to a nearly level keel.

"Some gosh-dinged thing carried away," was his mental comment, and the next moment he was straining, tugging, exerting all his great strength to open the companionway doors. As he did so he staggered, grasped the casings for support and ducked his head as a demoniacal blast of wind and brine struck him with the force of a solid thing. It was impossible to stand upright, and dropping on hands and knees he literally dragged himself against the wind onto the deck as the doors slammed to with a resounding, splintering bang behind him. Hold-

ing for dear life to the skylight gratings he peered about. It was inky black, the noise was deafening, great white masses of roaring foam rose on every side and vivid lightning split the night incessantly. By its glare he could see the men, drenched, buffetted, but straining, at the wheel. He caught a glimpse of Haskell, half buried in swirling water against the starboard rail, and he took a swift glance forward. Beyond the main mast no spars loomed black against the lightning's flash, only a tangle of wreckage strewn across the deck remained of the foremast and its rigging, and above the roar of wind and seas there came a dull, echoing, crashing sound at regular intervals. The mast, still fast to the bark by stays and shrouds, was driving like a battering ram against the ship's planking, and at any instant the hull might be stove. To cut free the wreckage, even to cross the decks, seemed an utter impossibility and yet it must be done; must somehow be acomplished if the bark was to be saved.

Waiting until the ship poised on a wave crest, the skipper, with a sudden rush, gained the mate's side and quickly passed a bight of rope about his own body. Then, bending his head, he placed his mouth to Haskell's ears and bellowed his orders.

"Got to clear away that spar," he roared. "Kin ye get for'ard to the men?"

"Don't know. I'll try," screamed back the mate.

Rapidly uncoiling a line from a belaying pin, and making the end fast about his waist, the mate grasped the mizzen rigging, worked inch at a time around it, secured a grip on the rail and slowly, watching his chances, taking advantage of each momentary lull in the bark's mad plunging, edged forward. Safely he gained the main rigging and was about to start on the most perilous part of his journey when a huge comber burst over the bulwarks, tore him from the rail, and hurled him with a sickening thud across the slanting deck against the port rail. Instantly the skipper began hauling in the halliards, dragging the inert body of the mate through the streaming brine across the decks, until he could reach down and raise him to his feet. He had regained his senses, but his face was covered with blood from a deep gash across his forehead, and he staggered uncertainly. He was in no condition to attempt the hazardous trip again, and Cap'n Asa, without hesitation, lashed the befuddled man to the rigging, knotted the line about his own waist and started forward. He was no young man, and was handicapped by a wooden leg, but grim determination was in his set face. He was strong and powerfully built and the safety of the bark, the lives of the men and the savings of a lifetime, were at stake.

A dozen times he was all but wrenched from the rail; seas broke over him, beating him to his knees and half smothering him. A bit of broken spar, hurled by an onrushing sea, struck his shoulder and, like a javelin, tore through his garments and left a jagged, bleeding cut in his flesh. Ropes and rigging whipping, coiling, writhing like serpents, as the water surged back and forth across the decks, tripped him and all but threw him down, but still he kept doggedly on.

And at last he triumphed. He reached the tangled, rent and broken forestays; gained the shelter of the break of the fo'c's'le, and with a belaying pin pounded loudly on the fo'c'sle door. Cursing the men under his breath for cowards, he kept up his crashing blows until at last the door opened and in the flickering light a man's head appeared.

"Get on deck!" bellowed the skipper. "All hands on ye. Fo'mast's gone an's a-stavin' o' the plankin'. Get axes an' tumble out."

Knowing their lives depended upon obeying, realizing that if the skipper could be on deck so could they, although

the watch had been swept overboard as the bark had careened ere the mast gave way, the men hurried to do the skipper's bidding. Armed with knives and choppers they came crowding out, the bo'sun leading.

"Where's the secon', Mr. Johnson?" roared the captain.

"Gone!" screamed back the bo'sun with his mouth to the captain's ear. "Went overboard fust thing, along with four of the men."

"Get busy," yelled the skipper, lashing himself to the bitts. Then, under the old seaman's eye and bellowed orders the crew, risking life and limb each second, working like madmen, hacked and cut and slashed at the tangled ropes and twisted rigging. It was fearful, desperate work. The seas rushed at them, broken spars seemed possessed of a maniacal, fiendish desire to slay and the wire rigging, as it parted, lashed viciously with razor-edged strands at the men's bodies. But, one by one, the shrouds and stays that bound the fallen spars and mast were severed, the wreckage was clear of the ship, the massive sticks no longer pounded cruelly at the planks and only the steel wire backstays bound the tangle to the *Orion*.

"Don't cut no more," bellowed the skipper. "Get out a three-inch cable an' bend it onto that there stay. Take a turn o' cable 'round the fo'must and pass it 'round the capstan. Then cut away the stay an' pay out 'bout fifty fathom o' cable."

Quickly his orders were carried out. The huge hempen cable was bent onto the straining stay, a turn was taken about the stump of the mast, it was led about the capstan and through the forward chocks and, snubbing it, the men braced themselves as two of their number cut through the wires of the stay. Then, as the strands parted, and the full weight of the drifting, floating spars and rigging, with the tons of wet furled sails upon the broken yards, came upon the hawser, they slowly paid it out until the skipper ordered them to make fast. Already the bark was riding easier, taking less water on board, and as she swung slowly to the drag of the improvised sea-anchor her bow came into the wind and waves, and the weary, exhausted, panting men breathed a sigh of relief. Unless the wind increased or shifted suddenly the bark would ride in safety as long as the cable held and there was nothing to be done save wait for the storm to blow itself out.

"Get below if ye mind to," roared the captain when he saw that everything possible had been done. Then, as the men gladly did so, he freed himself from the bitts and worked his way aft. Dawn was now breaking, and half carrying, half dragging Haskell, the skipper entered the companionway, first gruffly telling the men at the wheel they were no longer needed and could shelter themselves in the lee of the deck house, but to keep watch and notify him if the sea-anchor broke loose or anything went wrong.

A nip of brandy and a cup of coffee brought Haskell around and, having bound up the mate's and his own wounds, the skipper filled and lit his pipe. "Take a rest," he advised the mate as he started once more for the deck. "I'll call ye if I want ye. Mr. Johnson's gone—went over with four hands."

When at last the dull day dawned across the wind-swept, tossing sea, and Haskell came on deck, he glanced about and uttered a short laugh.

"Looks like a pretty good wreck," he remarked.

Cap'n Asa wheeled. "Wrack!" he exploded. "Ain't no wrack about it. Soon's ever this gale lets up a mite we'll be gettin' erlong."

Rapidly the wind fell, the second gale had been but the outer edge—the back kick—of the hurricane, and by noon the sun was shining brightly, the bark was riding the long oily waves easily, and

Cap'n Weaver ordered the men to heave in on the cable and bring the wrecked foremast under the lee of the bark. Then, for hours, the men toiled and sweated, rigging tackles, whipping up the huge foreyards, the foretopgallant mast and foreroyal mast and following the orders of Haskell and the skipper. From the salvaged spars, shears were rigged; by dint of herculean labors the foretopgallant mast was raised and secured to the foremast stump; it was stayed fast and rigid, and as darkness fell the useless wreckage was cut adrift and the *Orion* rode to the wind and seas by a trysail on the mizzen.

At daybreak the tired men were at work once more. The foreroyal mast was run up and fished and stayed in place, the yards were hoisted, sails bent on, and before nightfall the bark was ploughing slowly but steadily toward far distant Cuba under a jury foremast and with shortened after sails adjusted to a nicety to balance her dwarfed canvas forward.

Cap'n Asa was well pleased with the two days' work, as well he might be. He rubbed his big calloused hands together, cast an appraising eye at the wake and chuckled. "Wish't' Lem could see the ol' *Orion* now," he remarked to Mr. Haskell. "By Godfrey, I've seed worse lookin' hookers than she be that was rigged that way."

"Splendid job," agreed the mate, "but 'twouldn't stand much of a blow. Guess their ain't much likelihood of another hurricane though."

"Never kin tell," declared Cap'n Weaver. "I've knowed 'em to come in bunches. Course there mayn't be another for years an' then ag'in we may run slam bang into one o' the dod-gasted things to-morrer."

"Ain't makin' over five knots," commented the mate. "Guess we'll be eatin' Thanksgivin' dinner in Cuby at this rate."

"Wall, consarn it, it's a heap sight better to be eatin' of it in Cuby than to be providin' a meal for the fishes," replied the old skipper. "An' don't ye fret 'bout Thanksgivin'. We ain't but six hundred mile to the east'ard o' our course at that."

Back in Salem, the hurricane which had swept the North Atlantic had been reported and incoming ships had brought tales and vivid proofs of its severity. Shattered rails, smashed boats, stove deckhouses, were almost universal on steamers that had passed through the savage storm, and all up and down the coast there were anxious waiters for tidings of sailing craft that had been in or near the path of the hurricane.

" 'Spect Asa got a touch of it," commented Cap'n Lem as he and his friends discussed the storm.

"He'll pull through, right enough," declared Cap'n Small. "The *Orion's* a right good ship and Asa's as good a seaman as ever stumped a deck. No need for worryin'. Might ha' blowed him a bit offen his course though."

But when two weeks had passed and the *Orion* had not been reported, either by incoming ships or from any port, Cap'n Weaver's friends commenced to be a bit anxious. Cap'n Small, however, still insisted the *Orion* was safe, that she had simply been blown off her course, that she might have had sails carried away, but that she would turn up all right eventually.

But day after day slipped by and there were no tidings of the bark. Two weeks passed and she was posted as overdue. Three weeks went by and those who knew Cap'n Weaver shook their heads and when forty-five days had come and gone since the *Orion* sailed out of Boston and no word had come of the bark, or of wreckage which might have been from her, she was posted as missing, and the old seamen in the club spoke of Cap'n Asa as of one deceased. All, that is, but Cap'n Small.

"Must ha' went down with all hands," declared Lem lugubriously. "Mebbe turned turtle first time the gale hit her, or got pooped. Too bad, too bad! Fine man, Asa. Well, we all got to go some day, I s'pose."

Cap'n Small glanced up from the paper he was reading, peered over the rims of his spectacles and stroked his gray beard. "I'll bet you the *Orion* turns up right as a trivet," he declared. "Yes, sir, you'll be arguin' with Asa right here in this here room afore long, I'll bet."

"Mebbe, mebbe," muttered Lem. "By hookey, I hope ye're right, Sam'l."

The following afternoon Lem fairly burst into the club room. "By glory!" he shouted. "Seed the news? *Orion's* been spoken!"

"No!" exclaimed an old salt.

"Yes, sir, here 'tis, right in the *Herald*. Look here!"

Wrinkling his forehead, Lem ran a stubby forefinger along the columns of the paper while the others gathered about, reading over his shoulders.

"Here it be," announced Lem at last. "'Steamship *José Larrinaga*, Spanish, Captain Jimenez, Cadiz for New York, arrived yesterday. Captain Jimenez reports that on September 14th, latitude 38°-10' N., longitude 37°-15' W., he sighted the bark *Orion*, Weaver, Boston for Matanzas, thirty-eight days out, proceeding under jury rig. When spoken Captain Weaver declined assistance, stating that he would make port under his own sail. He requested fresh water and provisions, which were supplied, and asked that he be reported all well with exception of the second officer, Mr. Johnson, and four seamen, washed overboard in the hurricane that dismasted him.'"

"Didn't I tell you?" cried Cap'n Small triumphantly. "Catch old Asa taking any help from a steamer. I'll bet he makes Matanzas at that. Shouldn't be surprised to hear from him any day."

"Wall, it'll be some days yit," Lem reminded him. "This Spaniard spoke him the 14th, and he was a dumb sight closer to Africy than to Cuba then—long about the lat'tude o' the Azores an' 'bout two thousan' mile offen shore. Putty consid'able o' a voyage from there to Cuby under jury rig."

"Humph," muttered the other. "What gets me is where in blazes he's been twixt the time that hurricane hit him and the 14th. Thirty-eight days out of Boston then. Must have run into the blow 'bout four days after clearing. Smotherin' herrin's, he could most have sailed acrost the Atlantic under bare poles in thirty days!"

"Dunno," replied Lem and then, Cap'n Asa's taunts regarding seamanship still rankling in his mind, he added sarcastically, "Mebbe seein' as how he's sech a all-fired fine seaman he anchored in mid ocean an' waited fer it to ca'm down. Anyhow, I'm a takin' the *Sachem* out to Cuby nex' week an' mebbe I'll see him down there. Guess I'll git a rise outen him—his talkin' 'bout the time he kin make under jury rig."

But instead of waiting for it to calm down as Lem had jocularly suggested, Cap'n Weaver had been bucking the wildest and most tempestuous weather that had swept the Atlantic in the memory of the oldest seamen. Under her jury rig the *Orion* had proceeded remarkably well, and as the wind had dropped to a steady stiff breeze her skipper had cautiously added more and more canvas to her. Fore and maintopgallant and mizzen staysails were spread and the main-topgallant sail set and though her canvas was, of necessity, mainly low, yet the bark did very well and sailed steadily on her course at a good six knots. The fact that she was more than half a thousand miles to the eastward of where she should have been was a small matter, for on the long slant which would bring her to Cuba, the offing amounted to little and

was, in her partially crippled condition, an adavantage if anything, as it brought the wind fair on her beam, which was her best sailing point.

But, as Cap'n Asa had said, hurricanes are uncertain things, and on the fourteenth day after her jury foremast had been rigged, and with the lookout on the main crosstrees straining his eyes for the hoped-for smudge that would be the low-lying Bahamas, the wind dropped suddenly and left the *Orion* drifting motionless upon a flat shimmering sea.

"Danged if I like the look o' this," declared the skipper to Mr. Haskell, as he paced the deck in undershirt and trousers. "Glass's droppin' like blazes an' the's a dead feelin' in the air. An' look at that there sun. Jest like a' ol' copper kittle a hangin' up there. Bet ye we're in fer another blow."

Cap'n Asa was taking no chances, the canvas was stripped from yards until only a scrap of sail showed on main and mizzen, and not any too soon.

With sundown the blow came, and by eight bells it was a living gale. The skipper knew another hurricane was near and had the *Orion* not been crippled forward the captain might have scudded far enough to the east to have run out of the worst of the storm. But he dared not spread sail on the jurymast and without headsails it was a terrific struggle to keep the bark from broaching to and coming up into the wind, to say nothing of working an easting. Each time a huge sea would sweep under her counter and lift her stern soaring on a wave crest she would swing as on a pivot, and although her helm was hard over and the weight of two men strained at the wheel, the *Orion* seemed determined to take the bit in her teeth.

And this time the whirling, raging, cyclonic storm was not content with following up the Gulf Stream and blowing itself out off the New England coast. Instead, it veered eastward off Hatteras, tore off across the Atlantic as if bound to wreak its fury on the Azores and, directly in its path was the crippled *Orion*. It drove her like a mad thing, buffeted and spun her like a teetotum, hurled her plunging into the green troughs, bore her down until her yardarms were buried in the waves, overwhelmed her with tons of hissing green seas, ripped boats from davits, wrenched the greenheart rails free, battered deck houses and then, having done its worst, sped screaming, screeching, howling like a demon, on its way, to lose itself in the vast reaches of the North Atlantic.

And when it had passed, the *Orion* rose and fell heavily upon the tortured sea, a battered, sodden, broken thing—little more than a hulk—with only three splintered stumps standing above her decks where once had towered the lofty spars and maze of rigging. A hopeless wreck she seemed, a water-logged derelict. But Cap'n Asa Weaver, despite his age and his wooden leg, was not beaten even yet. The moment it was possible for a human being to stand upon the deck the pumps were manned, and while the gang sweated and worked at the brakes and the water gurgled and streamed from the scuppers, Haskell, the skipper and the rest of the crew, labored desperately to clear away the wreckage and to salvage what they could. To everyone's surprise and relief the pumps gained on the water in the hold, at last they sucked and the *Orion* floated as buoyantly as ever. Only a few spars remained this time, the greater part having been swept clear away by the hurricane, but below hatches were spare yards and royalmasts, as well as a complete suit of sails. Spurred on by the indomitable captain and by Haskell, the men worked incessantly, rigging shears, splicing rigging, hoisting spars, until at last, above the pathetic stumps of masts, rose the jury rig—low, outlandish and bizarre—but a rig that would carry sail, that would urge the bark onward and that would weather any ordinary blow.

"Dunno what ye'd call the ol' hooker now," remarked Cap'n Asa as he surveyed his handiwork. "Sort o' 'maphrodite barkentine I reckon, with them there yards for'ard an' for'naft on mizzen and main. Don' recollec' ever seein' a barkentine with lug sails though. By Judas, I'd like to have Lem here now!"

But whatever the weird rig of the *Orion* might have been called in maritime parlance, it served its purpose, and to a fair breeze and over a reasonably calm sea the *Orion* once more forged ahead toward far distant Cuba. Far to the east and north, she had driven—more than halfway across the Atlantic—and back to the latitude of Boston, and Haskell, absolutely amazed at the skipper's course, voiced his surprise.

"Ain't you puttin' into port for repairs?" he asked. "It's a fair wind for Boston or New York, and Funchal's pretty close."

The skipper slowly looked the mate over from top to toe as if studyiny some strange new specimen. "Puttin' inter port!" he exclaimed at last. "Yep, puttin' inter Matanzas. Sufferin' Jonah, d'ye think I'd be a-puttin' back to Boston after thirty-six days out an' weatherin' o' two o' the dod-gastedest hur'canes whatever took the sticks outen a ship? No, by glory! I ain't a-flyin' in the face o' Providence I hope—like the Flyin' Dutchman—but by the grace o' God an' that there jury rig I'm a-goin' fer to make Matanzas if it takes me all winter."

Haskell shook his head but said nothing. He knew the old skipper too well to argue, but he was beginning to think that Asa had taken leave of his senses. He was forced to admit to himself, however, that, barring accidents or severe storms, there was no reason why the *Orion* should not make Cuba under her jury rig, although he dared not hazard a guess as to when she would arrive. However, it was not his affair, and like a proper seaman and mate he used his best skill and knowledge in getting the most out of the plodding old bark.

Two days later a faint smudge of smoke showed on the eastern horizon. Presently masts and funnel rose above the rim of the sea and rapidly a dingy tramp steamer bore down toward the wallowing *Orion*.

Evidently she thought the bark in need of assistance and up to her masthead ran a string of bright bunting.

"Wants to know if you want help an's askin' your name an' information," said Haskell as he slowly deciphered the code flags in the thumb-worn book in his hands.

Cap'n Asa snorted. "When I want help from any greasy ol' steam tank I'll set signals," he retorted. "Reckon I'll git him to report us, though. No use lettin' the folks at home get a-frettin' an' thinkin' we've all gone to Davy Jones. An'," he added as an afterthought, "'pears like we might be some consid'able spell gettin' to Matanzas an' ye might ask him fer water an' salt po'k. Guess we've got enough else."

So, the pork and water having been duly delivered, the *José Larrinaga* once more churned on her interrupted way toward New York, and her bearded officers shrugged shoulders and made various comments on the crazy Yankees.

Three weeks after the *Larrinaga* had left the *Orion* astern a man peered forth across the indigo sea from the lighthouse at Matanzas and rubbed his eyes. Never in his life had he seen such a craft as was now approaching the harbor. Above her long, weather-beaten hull rose three short slender spars. Upon the foremast was a single square sail; upon the others rectangular areas of canvas that seemed a cross between lugsails and staysails, and, fluttering from her rigging, was the Stars and Stripes. The *Orion* had arrived.

"Reckon I bust all records fer long

v'ges twixt Boston an' Cuby," chuckled Cap'n Asa to the consul, who was also the skipper's agent. "Fifty-nine days outen Boston, but here safe an' soun'. Yes, sir, I allers did allow there wa'nt no excuse fer not gettin' inter po't's long's a ship wa'nt sinkin'."

"Of course you'll refit here," said the consul, after expressing his admiration and amazement at Cap'n Asa's accomplishment and complimenting him upon it. "I can easily secure spars from Havana or even from the States while your discharging and loading."

"Refit nothin'," ejaculated the skipper. "Look a-here. I've brung the ol' gal dumb nigh two thousan' mile under that there misfit rig an' by glory I'm a-goin' fer to take her home with it. Yes, sir, I've busted all records for takin' time a-gittin' here an' derned if I don't break another gittin' back. Sufferin' codfish, I'm a-gittin' everlastin'ly stuck on that there jury rig. Yes, sir, slow but sure, an' I'm aimin' fer to prove to some ol' shellbacks to home jus' what a real seaman kin do under jury rig."

The morning following this declaration of the captain's, Haskell glanced seaward to see a trim three-masted schooner slipping into port. The next instant he bawled down the companionway to Cap'n Asa. "Look who's here," he shouted. "The *Sachem's* a-coming into port!"

"Wall I vow!" exclaimed the skipper, as he studied the oncoming schooner. "Derned ef 'taint Lem at that."

But upon the *Sachem's* deck captain, officers and crew stood in absolute amazement as they recognized, in the weird and battered craft in the harbor, the bark *Orion*. Hardly had the anchor plunged over before Lem was being pulled rapidly to the bark and despite their differences of opinion and heated arguments the two old salts blew their noses loudly and wiped suspicious moisture from their eyes as they grasped hands once more upon the *Orion's* decks. But soon they were at it hammer and tongs again.

"Didn't I tell ye I'd git the old *Orion* into po't under her own canvas even if all three sticks was took outen her?" crowed Cap'n Asa as, in the bark's cabin, they sat smoking and chinning. "Like fer to see ye ha' done it with that there three sticker o' yourn."

"Huh," snorted Lem. "An' took fifty nine day a-gettin' here. Why, by gum, the *Sachem* could ha' drifted here without nary a stick or stitch in three months. Didn't I tell ye time was money these days? Why, ye ol' shellback, ye could ha' made a dozen v'yages back and forth in that time. Where's the savin' or the sense in what ye done? An' now ye're aimin' to temp' Providence by a sailin' back under these here contraptions. I vow, Asa, I'm beginnin' fer to think ye're plumb crazy."

Asa fairly bristled. "Dod gast ye, Lem!" he retorted hotly. "Ain't ye got no respect fer seamanship? By Judas, 'pears like all ye thought on was money same's them consarned steam skippers. An' ye're a-sayin' that there wall-sided ol' canal boat o' yourn could ha' done better, eh? I swan, I—I—by glory, I'll bet ye the *Orion* kin outsail ye right now, jury rig an' all."

Lem fairly roared with laughter. For once he had gotten a "rise" out of old Asa and he thoroughly enjoyed it. "Want me to take home a message for ye?" he asked. "I'm a-clearin' nex' Tuesday an' ye might want ter let the folks to home know ye won't be home to Christmas."

"Clearin' Tuesday be ye?" cried Asa, ignoring the other's facetious suggestion. Waal, by Judas, I'm a-clearin' Sat'rday. An' by glory I'll take any messages ye min' to send. Think that there dumb swizzled barge ye call a ship kin sail do ye? An' think I'm crazy, eh? By the etarnal, I'll—yes, sir—I'll bet ye a hundred dollars the *Orion's* into Boston afore the *Sachem* now!"

"Now I *know* ye're plumb looney," declared Lem chuckling. "But idjits hadn't oughta have so derned much money to throw away, an' I'll take ye up jus' to l'arn ye a lesson, Asa, an' I'll bet ye another hundred ye don't sight Minot's Ledge lessen two weeks arter I'm docked."

Two days later the *Orion* cleared and as she slipped seaward, Lem stood on the *Sachem's* quarter deck and cupped his hands to his lips. "I'll heave ye a towline some'eres nor'ard o' the Bahamas," he yelled. "Hate to have ye missin' Thanksgivin' *an'* Christmas to home."

But neither north of the Bahamas or elsewhere on the homeward voyage did those on the *Orion* sight the *Sachem.* With a fair steady wind and a calm sea the bark kept steadily on, and while old Asa, once he had cooled off, realized that he had as good as thrown away his hundred dollars—with a fair likelihood of losing the second hundred as well—yet he consoled himself with the thought that he had not knuckled under to Lem and that he was upholding the traditions of the old Yankee seamen. And the *Orion* made wonderfully good time considering her jury rig. Sixteen days after clearing from Matanzas she was off Monomoy, and Haskell, gazing shoreward through his glasses, described two slender masts rising above the horizon and canted at a sharp angle.

"Reckon some craft's taken the ground yonder," he remarked as Cap'n Asa came up the companionway. "Think we'd better run in a bit an' see if she wants help?"

"Humph, 'spect we might as well have a look," assented the skipper, and the *Orion's* course was shifted a trifle.

Gradually the masts of the stranded vessel grew more distinct and presently a powerful tug was standing by.

"Don't guess we can help none," announced the mate. "Must ha' struck pretty derned hard—took the fo-must outen her."

Cap'n Asa was studying the vessel, whose hull, wedged fast in the sand and canted over, was now visible. "By Judas!" he burst out suddenly. "Derned if 'tain't. Yep, I'll be eve'lastin'ly b'iled if 'tain't the *Sachem!* By glory, Mr. Haskell, I'm aimin' fer to collec' two hundred dollars from that there Lem, by Godfrey!"

Ten minutes later the yawl boat was dancing shoreward with Cap'n Weaver, his weater-beaten face wreathed in a broad grin, in the stern. Approaching close to the stranded schooner he stood up, waved a hand to the figure on the *Sachem's* after deck and bellowed out: "Want a tow line, Lem? Waal, I'll be a waitin' fer ye up to the club an' I kin use two hundred dollars fer Christmas, I reckon. Guess ye got to admit there's suthin' in seamanship arter all—an' don' fergit time's money, Lem. 'Pears like ye got a-plenty o' the fust an' that there salvage tug's goin' fer to git a chunk o' t'other. So long, Lem!"

LAST OF PIRATE GIBBET

EVER since the Federal government took over Ellis Island many years ago there has been but one tree standing on the island. This tree had an interesting history before it was cut down recently to make room for some new buildings which were being erected.

Years ago Ellis Island was called Gibbet Island, as it was here that pirates and other criminals were executed. A pirate named Gibbs was the last member of this ancient and honorable profession to be executed on the island. The above-mentioned tree was used as the gallows.

O'Shea Jettisons a Cargo

By Meigs O. Frost.

We've not had a Gulf of Mexico story on our manifest for some time. However, this one more than makes up for lost time. And, as the title implies, it has a fine type of Irish sailor as a hero. Jettisoning cargo has often been done in an emergency, but we don't think that an entire cargo was ever jettisoned before in quite the fashion described in this story.

UP in one of the small and stifling rooms of that rabbit warren of crowded humanity that New Orleans calls the Old French Quarter—though its residents to-day are chiefly Italians, Syrians, and the human driftwood from a score of Latin-American ports—sat two men.

One was splendidly tailored and barbered. He leaned back, broad-shouldered, in a precariously creaking chair, smoked a cigarette cork tipped and of superlength, and gazed through a window on the mildewed, stone-flagged courtyard beneath.

The other, at a stained and rickety kitchen table of unpainted pine, its top covered with bottles of multicolored inks and an array of pens and small brushes, worked away at a discolored sheet of paper. On the wall in front of him was pinned a section of a United States navy chart.

His long, nervous fingers handled pen and brush with swift precision. His eyes, deep set in a face on which the cynic evil of many years and many cities was graven for all the world to read, glanced from the chart to paper and back again.

"There," said he at last, pushing back from the table. "That's what I call a good job."

He lifted the discolored sheet of paper. It looked like a roughly drawn chart nearly a century old. Its edges were broken and stained from slightly yellowish to dark brown.

"Any navigator will spot the place, Skee," said he. "It's the north shore of Swan Island all right. There's the bearings, too. The big tree and the big rock and the cross halfway between on the crest of the beach. That clinches it to the average boob. And this, especially."

He pointed to the lower right-hand corner of the sheet.

In the crabbed and shaky hand of the semiliterate man of years long gone, was this inscription:

"D. Chaney. His Chart."

And the date:

"1847."

Skee Wintersohn, he of the splendid tailoring and the supermanicure, reached avidly for the paper.

"Not yet, Skee," quoth the other as with swift and nervous movement he jerked it out of reach. "One hundred berries first. Then she's yours."

"Climb down, Purser; climb down!" expostulated Wintersohn. "You're out on a high limb. Call it twenty fish and here's the sawbuck."

He pulled a bank note, folded, yellow backed, from his waistcoat pocket and held it out.

"Listen, you cheap skate," said Purser. "You said it was worth a century to you. There's the job. It's good. Come across with the hundred."

"Oh, ease off," said Wintersohn. "If it took you a week, that would be another thing. But I've seen you do it in two hours. I'm a square sport about this. Twenty fish for two hours ain't bad money."

"Two hours!" said Purser bitterly. "It took me ten years in hell to be able to do that job in two hours—and to be willing to do it. Come through with the hundred."

"The double sawbuck's all you get, Jim. Don't be a fool. You can't bluff me. Think of the morph that'll get you. And you sure look like you needed it."

Shrewdly he was watching the other's twitching lips, his burning eyes, his fingers ceaselessly moving. Few knew better than he when a man was in grip of desire for morphine.

But there was a streak of Purser's being that just then made bitterness at this petty bilking override even the yearning for the drug that had brought him to this.

"Skee," he said, "I might have known that your kind has to pay in advance. It's the hundred or nothing. And you don't get the chart without the hundred. That's final."

The purple tide of rage rose above Wintersohn's collar.

"If you think you can buck me and get away with it," he rasped, "you're fuller of hop than usual. Suppose I telephone the police that the guy who forged those cotton bills of lading is down here? How long'd you last? And there ain't no hop where they'd take you, either. Hand over that chart before I take it away from you and beat you up for luck. Get me? Hand it over!"

He rose from the creaking chair. His smooth bulk towered above the emaciated wreck in front of him.

With a nervous leap Purser had rounded the corner of the table, placing it between them. In one hand he held the chart. In the other nestled a small automatic, flat and sinister as the head of a rattlesnake.

"Stick 'em up, you double-crossing crook!"

With alacrity almost comic the manicured hands rose high. But there was nothing comic in Purser's hard, metallic voice.

"When a guy gets where I am today," said he bitterly, "a little thing like croaking you means nothing in his young life. Take down your left hand! You can't shoot with that if you have got a gun. Pull out your roll! Toss it on the table!"

His commands crackled like a machine-gun burst. Skee Wintersohn took them.

Still covering his visitor, Purser reached out one of those long-fingered hands to the table. Slowly he stripped five of the twenty-dollar bills that covered the plethoric roll.

"I ought to fine you another hundred for dirty work—or take the whole

works," he grated. "But you wouldn't understand if I told you why I don't."

His voice rose with fury.

"'Square sport!' A cootie is one of nature's noblemen alongside you. Now pick up your roll and beat it before I bore you. There's your damned chart, too. I don't know what crooked work you're up to with it. But take it from me, Skee, you're not even a decent crook. You'll try to double cross yourself some time and break your neck falling over your own feet. On your way, you louse!"

His eyes unable to face the blazing contempt of the emaciated wreck half his weight who had called his bluff, Skee Wintersohn hastily stuffed that forged "ancient" chart and the remnants of his roll into his pockets. Down the stairs he went.

"Square sport!" Those were the last two bitter words he heard. He said no word in threat. For Purser was right. Skee Wintersohn, despite his carefully nurtured reputation as one of Gangland's smooth and deadly killers, was yellow from shoes to hat. He knew it. And he knew the little drug addict knew it. The groomed bulk of him was still quivering from the sight of that automatic muzzle and those blazing eyes.

"Well," he meditated, as he walked down the narrow old street, "he'd got the chart, anyway."

Now for the rest of the big plan. Nobody had seen his encounter with Purser. His reputation was still safe. Better steady down now. It took headwork to put across the big stuff he was after.

And this game he was in now was B-I-G—big!—take it from him.

His twisted mind, turned so many years into the corkscrew channels of the underworld, was working at top speed.

"If only that crimp Schweitzer has the right dope on that boat he told me about!" he murmured to himself.

"That crimp Schweitzer," had not failed him.

Down on the New Orleans water front, at the foot of Esplanade Avenue, just past the French Market, where the great gray United States mint broods over its ancient memories and the Mississippi River sweeps past in a seething, mud-brown arc, at that very moment the forty-ton fishing schooner *Patsy* was tugging at her moorings.

She was just back from a trip to the Campeche Banks. It had not been a particularly prosperous trip.

Captain Teddy O'Shea, her master, was a philosopher of parts, however. Also, being as Irish as his name, a poet at heart.

That very afternoon, when, "greased" by the simple process of a change in ownership of a hundred-dollar bank note, Schweitzer, keeper of a disreputable Tchoupitoulas Street sailors' boarding house, had mentioned him to Wintersohn, Captain Teddy had been seated on the hatch coaming of his battered craft, puffing a black brier pipe and chivvying his crew in their preparations for another voyage.

It was a queer combination, that crew. There was Jimmie Cole, who tinkered eternally with the stout little gasoline kicker that supplemented the *Patsy's* dingy sails. There was Jack McKay, cook, steward, all-around man of the craft. There was Curly, the emaciated deck hand. Captain Teddy might swear at the others or chaff them with rough water-front jest, but he went lightly with Curly. One would go a bit easily with a fellow human who had just shaken off the chains of narcotic drugs —whose eyes still showed beneath a doglike gratitude some glimpses of those lower and unmentionable hells into which the human soul can descend—who sat at odd hours with a worn violin and played heart-breaking harmonies.

And that night, while Wintersohn

was waiting for Purser to complete the chart of "D. Chaney," Captain Teddy was making his way to the "shotgun cottage" where Mother O'Shea ruled as he ruled in his own domain. A "shotgun cottage" in certain New Orleans residential districts is one in which you "look straight down the barrel." From the front door, through a vista of parlor, two bedrooms, and a sitting room, you see the kitchen sink.

But it was a pleasant home, at that.

To it, after every voyage, came Captain Teddy, sure of his welcome, sure of the old-fashioned food, and sure that there'd be anywhere from two to six neighbors' children about the place. The O'Sheas were childless. And about children, as about battle, there were certain chords placed in the heart of Teddy O'Shea some ten or twenty Irish generations back, that started to thrum and gave the same sort of glow as four fingers of his native but now forbidden Bushmills.

"Rotten luck this trip," he called to Mother O'Shea, as he entered the cottage, "but we're sailing in a day or two, and this time we'll mop up."

"That's the beauty of the sea," philosophized Mother O'Shea. "Ye never know what it'll be next."

She didn't really realize what truth she spoke.

It was a glorious morning in April, soft blue of sky, golden of sun, with air like warm milk, when Captain Teddy strode across the wharf planking. Lightly he stepped over a mass of creosoted piling. Lightly he leaped from wharf apron to the deck of his small craft. Scoured as to wood, burnished as to metal, her galley stocked and her gasoline tanks full, the *Patsy* was ready to leave that day for the Campeche Banks and her redfish rendezvous.

Then it was that Captain Teddy learned his vessel harbored a guest. A figure clad in tailored garb, sharp contrast to the dungarees of the *Patsy's* crew, leaned idly against the foremast.

The visitor stepped forward, flipping overboard a remnant of cork-tipped cigarette.

"Is this Captain O'Shea?" he asked.

The lips of the *Patsy's* master, pursed in the unconscious whistling of that ancient ditty describing the trouserless condition of one Brian O'Lynn, widened into a grin of sheer friendliness.

"None other," said he, thrusting forth a scarred and hardened hand. "And you?"

"Wintersohn's my name," said the visitor smoothly. "Skee Wintersohn, my friends call me."

"Skee?" Captain Teddy raised quizzical eyebrows.

"Short for Whisky," explained Wintersohn jocularly.

" 'Tis a pleasant weakness of some great men," admitted the *Patsy's* captain. "And I've had my share. But I'm neither buyin' nor sellin' nor yet transportin' it, if that's what brings you."

The visitor shook a deprecatory head.

"I used to sell it wholesale in the old days," said he. "But I'm not in the bootlegging game now."

" 'Twas a fine business once for them as liked it," opined O'Shea. "But I'm thinkin' th' competition is gettin' too strong for th' health or th' profits, these days, from what I hear along th' water front."

"You're right," confirmed Wintersohn. "But let's get down to business. You're probably wondering what brought me aboard."

"I was that, since you ask me," quoth Captain Teddy. "Not that we're ever sorry to see distinguished visitors, but we're headin' out for th' Campeche Banks to-day and there's much to do."

"Is there some place we can talk privately, captain?"

"Up here in the bow is as good as any."

Hospitably the *Patsy's* master led the way past the foremast, set two buckets upside down, seated himself on one, and indicated the other with a wave of his hand.

"Shoot th' works," said he.

"I've learned on the water front, Captain O'Shea, that you're a pretty square sport," began the visitor.

"'Tis fine to get th' flowers before th' funeral," philosophized the captain. "There's many th' man has never got his bouquets till he was past bein' able to smell 'em."

"So," continued Wintersohn, smiling, "I've come to put a sporting proposition up to you."

"That sounds like th' new oil stocks," observed Captain Teddy. "They used to promise you millions. Now they tell you it's a 'constructive gamble.'"

"It's not oil stock," said Wintersohn. "It's what you can take up to the window of the First National and they take it and thank you."

"The only thing I know like that is money," said O'Shea out of the wisdom of the years.

"It's what I'm talking about."

"Are you offerin' to give it to me?"

"It comes pretty near that."

"Well, what's your proposition?"

"Captain, you could use some money, I take it."

"Always—and then some."

"There you are. You want the money. I want a boat and a captain and a crew that can be trusted. For I know where the money is. I know where there's more than a million dollars in gold, waiting to be dug up. Just waiting for me to come and get it. Here's my proposition: If we put it through and get the money, I'll give you twenty per cent of the gold we get. If anything blows up, I'll guarantee you one thousand dollars and your expenses for the trip, with the distinct understanding that I have the *Patsy* under private charter for that trip. Nothing in writing, you understand. This is personal between you and me—and the thousand dollars will be in your hands before we start. Your crew will have some digging to do. But there'll be enough in it for a bonus for 'em if they work and keep their mouths shut."

"Wait a minute," said Captain Teddy. He fished in a pocket and brought out creased envelope and stubby pencil.

"I can get you on this thousand-dollar stuff," said he. "I've handled that much money myself. But when you get-to talkin' by th' million, I want to see th' figures."

He scribbled for a moment. Then he looked up.

"You're paying me something like two hundred thousand dollars for the use of the *Patsy* for one trip?" he asked.

"If we get what we go after, yes," said Wintersohn calmly. "If not, through any accident, then one thousand fish and your expenses."

"It beats th' redfish," announced O'Shea. "But you gotta come through with more dope than this. Are you figgerin' on robbin' a bank at Havana or Vera Cruz?"

"Nothing like that," grinned Wintersohn. "Now listen. I wouldn't have come here to do business with you unless I found you were a square sport. That's me, too. I'm going to put you wise, if I've got your promise the news stops with you if we don't do business. Have I got your word?"

"You have," said Captain Teddy simply. "No man ever called Ted O'Shea a liar yet—and I've dealt with a lot of 'em."

"I know that," said Wintersohn. "I made it my business to find out. Now look here."

From his inner coat pocket he drew out a small packet of oiled silk. From it he produced an ancient, yellowed

sheet of coarse paper. He spread it before Captain Teddy's eyes for a second, and then folded it over so only a corner showed.

"You see what it is?" he asked.

"I see it's a chart of some coast," said the *Patsy's* master. But his eyes were gleaming.

"Then read this."

Captain Teddy read the brief inscription aloud.

"D. Chaney. His Chart. Eighteen-forty-seven."

"Well?" said he, straightening up on his bucket.

"That's the map that leads to a million dollars, if you're with me," said Wintersohn calmly. "The gold is buried at a spot marked on that map. It's been waiting nearly a hundred years for somebody to come and get it."

"Who put it there?" asked Captain Teddy. But the question was needless. His sailor's mind, filled with the tales of the Louisiana south coast and the old Spanish Main he sailed, knew the answer.

"Pirates, of course," said Wintersohn.

"I thought so," said O'Shea. "I've heard the stories before. But never have I seen the original maps. Let's have the story."

"Wait a minute," quoth Skee Wintersohn. "Now you know where I stand. I want to know where you stand. You've heard my proposition. Twenty per cent if we find it. One thousand dollars and expenses if we don't. It ought to take us only a week to bring the stuff to light. Let's allow two weeks at this place on the map, and three weeks sailing for the round trip. You'll not do better than a thousand dollars in five weeks' redfishing, if I know the market."

"Just one thing." Captain Teddy was thinking hard. "You could fit up a boat for a lot less than two hundred thousand dollars. It's a big share. Why do you want to pay me so much for the job?"

"It's a reasonable question," conceded Wintersohn. "It gets a reasonable answer. To begin, I know you're familiar with the spot where this stuff is buried. I've found out about your outfit before I came to you. Next, the *Patsy* is a regular fishing schooner out of New Orleans. Nobody pays any attention to her going and coming. Next, you're a navigator. I'm not. Figure for yourself whether I could buy or fit out a boat and get a captain and crew for that sort of a trip without the word leaking. We'd have a navy of treasure chasers on our tails."

"Fair enough," said Captain Teddy.

"Also get this: There are some people mighty close to where we're going to dig. The stuff isn't theirs. It belongs to the man who finds it. But we'd best slip in quietly and slip out quietly. We can do it on the *Patsy*. If we're found and any questions asked, we're a fishing schooner on the beach for some emergency repairs. There you are. It's a square sports' proposition. Are you with me?"

Now the water front is a place where swift decisions and astounding events grow commonplace. Not for it are the cynic deliberations of the region of roll-top desks.

"You're on," said Ted O'Shea. He thrust out a hardened hand for the gripping compact of its kind. The Wintersohn handshake, it seemed to him, was a trifle flabby. But if the Wintersohn handshake was flabby, the Wintersohn voice was not.

"Then here's the whole story," said that individual. "This chart shows the north shore of Swan Island. You know the place. The United Fruit Company's got a big wireless station there. In the Caribbean off British Honduras as you go through the Yucatan Straits. About a thousand miles out of New Orleans."

"Sure—I know all about Swan Is-

land," interrupted Captain Teddy. "Know that section like the palm of my hand. The island was named after old Bob Swan, one of the worst of those murderin' pirates they ever had."

"Right you are," said Wintersohn. "Well, I got this chart from old Pete Hansen up in Seattle. Gave it to me before he died. Liquor killed him. He'd always planned to get the money some day, but he was a suspicious old Skowegian, never would take anybody in with him on shares, and never kept sober long enough to save up for the trip.

"Pete got this map from his uncle when the old man died. The uncle was cabin boy on a merchant ship back in eighteen-forty-seven. They were coming up through the Caribbean when a pirate sailed up and opened fire. But the merchant ship was loaded for bear. She licked the pirate in fair fight."

Captain Teddy was leaning forward, eyes alight.

"The crew was all pepped up," Wintersohn went on. "They fought like demons. When the scrap was over the only living man on the pirate ship was the cook, a fellow named Daniel Chaney, and he was wounded."

"That's it, is it?" said O'Shea. "'D. Chaney. His Chart.'"

"That's it," said Wintersohn. An inscrutable smile was playing about the corners of his mouth.

"The cook was dying, anyway," he pursued. "All shot up and cut up. So they took him on board the merchantman when he begged them to let him die among honest folks. He told 'em he wasn't really a pirate, anyway. He had been captured by the pirates and forced to cook for 'em or walk the plank. So Pete Hansen's uncle, the cabin boy, gave him water to drink and bathed his wounds. The rest were all too busy to bother about a dying cook, anyway.

"It was lucky for us that they were. For that pirate cook, he was a square sport. Just before he died he told the cabin boy that the pirate ship had made a lot of fine raids and had buried a lot of gold coin and bullion off on Swan Island beach. He said it took seven men nine trips to carry the stuff ashore. If you figure about sixty pounds of gold to the man, you see that brings it up over a million dollars. Then the ship headed out for a raid on the settlements farther north to capture a lot of women, marry 'em pirate style, and settle down on Swan Island and live happy forever after."

"What did they want to tackle the merchant ship for?" asked Captain Teddy, as Wintersohn paused for breath and lit another supercigarette.

"I was coming to that. The dying cook said that the merchant ship was a bigger, better ship than the pirates'. Besides that, they wanted the papers on her, so they could enter ports without any trouble from port officers, and stay long enough to get their new wives.

"Well, as I said, the cook was a square sport, too. Before he died, he drew this map on a piece of paper they took from the bottom of a ship's biscuit tin. He signed it. You saw the signature. Then he died."

"Let's see the map again," said Captain Teddy.

Silently he studied it for a moment.

"So that's where the treasure is," said he. "At the cross on the crest of the beach between the big tree and the big rock, at the head of this cove on the north shore?"

"That's the place," said Wintersohn.

"The rock is probably what we'll spot it by," said O'Shea. "I doubt me if the tree has lasted since 1847 in all the hurricanes we've had."

He studied the faded, yellowed sheet once more.

"I wonder why th' cabin boy never went after it," he mused.

"You'd not wonder if you'd heard the story Pete Hansen told me," grinned

Wintersohn. "That merchantman wound up at Seattle. There Pete's uncle married one of those women that made the rolling pin famous. She never let him go to sea again, let alone hunt pirate treasure. She caught him young and treated him rough."

Captain Teddy's answering grin flashed out.

"I'm wise," said he. "They sure can boss their own deck, th' ladies."

"Well," said Wintersohn, "there you are."

He reached into his pocket, produced a roll of bank notes, stripped off ten one-hundred-dollar bills, and handed them to O'Shea.

"Render me a bill for the expenses when we get back," said he. "And be sure you don't overlook anything. I'm a square sport and I pride myself on it."

"We could settle when we get back," said Captain Teddy, "but if you wish, I'll take that thousand. Are you coming with us alone?"

"I was about to mention that," said Wintersohn. "I've got three friends I want to take with me. They're rich men—square sports like you and me. They've known about this for some time, and I promised 'em I'd take 'em with me whenever I made the trip. This year's the first time I've been in shape to go. Up to my neck in business up in Seattle. No time for luxuries like hunting pirate treasure. Only two years ago Pete Hansen died and left me the map."

"It'll crowd us a little," said the *Patsy's* master. "But if they don't mind roughing it they can make it."

"They're good sports and square sports," said Wintersohn. "They'll take what's coming. Will to-morrow morning be right for the start?"

"Fine," said Captain Teddy. "I'll have to get some tools to-day, though."

Wintersohn started.

"That's one on me," he said. "I was so interested in getting the boat that I overlooked it. Get some pickaxes and spades and crowbars—you'll know what we need."

"Sure," said Captain Teddy. "Can you be here at nine in the morning? We'll be ready to cast off then."

"Nine it is," quoth Wintersohn smilingly.

They gripped hands again. That is, Captain Teddy did the gripping.

Over the wharf side stepped the visitor, waved a farewell hand, and started cityward.

Down in the stuffy interior of the *Patsy,* Captain Teddy called his crew about him and broke the news.

"Are you with me?" he asked.

They were. To a man. And from the moment they filed out, pledged to secrecy, the little schooner throbbed with excitement.

Then, as Jimmie Cole and Jack McKay and Curly, with an unexpectedly idle day on their hands, sat on the *Patsy's* deck in the soft April air, dreaming dreams more golden than the sunlight that bathed them, while their cigarette butts flipped into the muddy river, Captain Teddy went below once more and pulled out his chart of the Yucatan Straits.

His trained navigator's memory checked against the faded lines of that stained paper marked: "D. Chaney. His Chart. 1847."

"It's the north shore of Swan Island, all right," said he to himself.

And he, too, lighting that black old brier, relaxed into dreams of what two hundred thousand dollars would mean. To Mother O'Shea. To the lads they had picked up from the streets, now making so splendid a fight for a start in life. To the neighborhood kids he loved—and that loved him. To him and to his crew, veterans of so many cruises after the redfish.

In his heart those chords placed there so many Irish generations back were

thrumming like harp strings plucked by a master hand. No liquor ever distilled could give that glow.

For the tales of pirate gold at which a modern and sophisticated world may scoff still ring with truth to the seafaring men of the Gulf. They may jest. But at heart they believe. Was it not only yesterday that Jean Lafitte and his Baratarian buccaneers swaggered down the Rue Royale in Nouvelle Orleans, scattering the gold they won?

A sudden racket of raised voices floated down the companionway, breaking through the O'Shea meditations. Up the steps he leaped.

"What's the row . . . ?" he called.

"I'm gonna knock Jimmie Cole's block plumb out from under his hat if he don't lay off'n me, skipper," growled Jack McKay. "He tells me I don't know the difference between a limousine and a coupé. He'll damn well find out when he sees me rollin' down Canal Street in me limousine after this trip, the big stiff!"

"Shut up, you blasted fool!" ordered Captain Teddy. "I'll brain the jackass that mentions money till we're out at sea!"

But his eyes were twinkling as his tongue lashed them. It had just struck him that he never had rolled down Canal Street in a limousine.

In a room whose windows gave on the dingy outlook of Rampart Street—dingy by day, though at night it flared with the tawdry glare of one of the Tango Belt's thoroughfares—Skee Wintersohn at that particular moment was talking with three men.

"So you see what a little brains will do," he ended. "You birds stick with me and this is the last time you ever have to raise a finger unless you want to. The poor boob swallowed it, hook, line, and sinker. The boat's ours for the trip. Alcantraz is fixed. Figure for yourself what about a million makes when you split it five ways. Now you've got your orders. We get aboard at nine o'clock in the morning. Then it's us for the big clean-up."

Distinctly right was Captain Teddy.

"It'll crowd us a little," he had said when first Wintersohn had told him of the three additional passengers.

It did.

To O'Shea and his men, accustomed to the rough life of the trips after the redfish, that crowding meant little. They were the sort with whom one sails or camps or fishes frictionlessly. Each had his jobs to do. Each did them. Not for them was complaint at sleep caught on moss-filled mattresses or on bare planking; at the discomforts of eight men living close on a forty-ton schooner built for four.

But the three who had come on board with Skee Wintersohn had evidently in all their sporting lives of wealth, on which he laid such stress, done little of the living in the open that trains men to get along in camp or afloat.

"Gentlemen, meet Captain O'Shea," Wintersohn had said, when first they had piled overside that morning, their heavy kitbags dumped on the *Patsy's* deck. And by name he had presented them—"Mister Fred Andrus, captain; Mister Joseph Lamantia and Mister Peter Sebastian."

Now Captain Teddy was not strong for most formalities. But he had the average seaman's belief in a man who grips you clean and looks in your eyes when he talks to you. And the greeting of this trio was singularly reminiscent to him of the curiously flabby handclasp of their introducer.

But he had been busy, then. Point by point he had made final check of water, gasoline, stores, and equipment for the two-thousand-mile round trip ahead of them. And at last, to his snappy orders, mooring lines were cast off, the engine that was Jimmie Cole's

especial charge had snorted its customary indignant snorts at being disturbed and had settled down to work—and the *Patsy* was out in mid-stream.

There, deftly threading the mass of river traffic, ducking astern of the big Esplanade Avenue ferryboat with its load of passengers, she had straightened out downstream and headed into her ninety-mile journey to The Passes, where her bow first would feel the lift of the Mexican Gulf's big rollers and the Port Eads light would sink out of sight.

Clustered in the bow as she rounded Algiers Point had stood Wintersohn and his three. They had talked low-voiced among themselves. In their city clothes they were odd contrasts to the *Patsy's* dungaree-clad men.

Jack McKay, as the captain thought it over, had been the only boisterous spirit aboard. He had looked back astern as they rounded the first curve in the river. There, above the crest of the Esplanade Avenue levee, they could barely see the gray outlines of the roof of the ancient mint.

"We overlooked a bet, cap," said Jack to O'Shea at the wheel.

"How come, Jack?"

"Got away without reserving part of that mint to put our gold in, cap."

"Get on wit' you, you levee crayfish," O'Shea had retorted. "Get for'ard and coil up those ropes before I bust you wide open."

"Levee crayfish, is it? Many's the mornin' I've waked up on the levee, watched a crayfish crawl up on it, an' said, 'Good mornin', breakfast!' to him. But after we get back this time, it's me for grapefruit and lamb chops at the Saint Charles, me lord!"

Forward he went to coil the rope, his voice rising in the mournful ballad of his happy hours:

"Frankie went to Albert's mother,
Fell down on her knees;
Says: 'Ah done kill yo' Albert,
Will yo' fo'give me, please?
He was my ma-a-a-an, but he done me wrong.'"

All this was passing through Captain Teddy's mind as he held to his course for Swan Island down through the Gulf of Mexico.

All was not well aboard ship, he conceded to himself. It needed the feel of his money belt, with that thousand tucked away in it, to comfort him. If these men with Wintersohn were wealthy sportsmen, then he was an aviator, he told himself. There had been times before when the *Patsy* had been chartered for fishing cruises. Captain O'Shea knew a gentleman and a sportsman when he saw one—and, above all, when he sailed with one.

He couldn't place his finger on the wrong spot, just yet. But the wrong spot was there, he knew. Of that he grew surer and surer.

There was the matter of Curly, for instance. Something was distinctly wrong with Curly. Since first Captain Teddy had come upon him on the water front, a cocaine-ridden wreck of a youth, had given him food and shelter and had helped him fight free of the drug, he thought he had grown to understand the youngster.

But the past couple of days, since Wintersohn and his crowd had come aboard, Curly was strangely changed. There was silence where before had been venturings of cheerful talk. There was a look on his face that O'Shea did not like.

"Well," Captain Teddy told himself, "these thing come out in the wash. All there is to do is see this job through and keep both eyes peeled."

Which he proceeded to do.

Nine days out of New Orleans they made their way, through April weather superbly glorious. At last, in the lazy afternoon hours that precede the splen-

dor of a tropical sunset, the palms of Swan Island rose before their eyes like tiny feather dusters upreared against the sky.

Through his glasses Captain Teddy spotted the tall tower that held aloft the wireless antennæ, and pointed it out to Wintersohn.

"Judging from the map," he told him, "the cove we want is some little way down the north shore. We'd best make it after dark so there'll be no more excitement than we can help. I'll skirt the coast and spot the place before sundown."

Slowly they cruised along, paralleling the beach, while Jack McKay held the wheel and Captain Teddy, after prolonged scrutiny of the chart of D. Chaney, searched the shore with his glasses.

"She's full of coves," he said. "It's the big rock I'm watching for. I don't think the tree has lasted all this time."

All eyes aboard followed the unwinding panorama of the shore as the *Patsy* rocked along at half speed.

And at last——

"There's your rock, I'm thinking," said O'Shea quietly.

There it stood, a great, gray jutting mass of stone to the right of the deep cove that opened out before them. There were a few palm trees of younger growth about the curve of the shore line, but nothing like the big tree marked on the chart of Daniel Chaney.

At a call from Captain Teddy, Jimmie Cole shut off his engine. Silently the *Patsy* swung on the big swells that brought her nearer and nearer while once more they studied the stained and ragged chart. Then the tropical night shut down on them like a curtain that is lowered.

With propeller turning at half speed, and electric torches flashing from the bow, where with line and lead Jack McKay took soundings, they nosed their way into the bight of the cove. Close by the white sand beach they anchored.

Above them slowly rose the great and gleaming circle of the tropical moon. The palms in silhouette. Jet black in silhouette the *Patsy* against a sea of placid silver. But none on board the little schooner had an eye for this. Excitement pervaded every man. Wintersohn and his men knew what it was that was burning in the thoughts of the *Patsy's* men. But they alone knew what was in their own veins, flaming like a fever.

Hasty was the supper that Jack McKay threw together. And then, after much overhauling of tackle, they stretched out for the night's sleep.

Somehow, as he lay on his moss-stuffed mattress on the *Patsy's* deck, Captain Teddy felt vaguely perturbed.

He would have been more so, had he heard the whispered passage between Skee Wintersohn and Pete Lamantia up in the bow, a short time before.

"I never thought of it before," had trickled from the corner of Lamantia's mouth, "but who th' hell figgered out that big-rock business? How'd yuh know it was there?"

"Shut up, you mush-brained stiff," Wintersohn had answered in the same sibilant undertone. "Jever know me t' sit in on a game I wasn't wise to? That's the rock where Alcantraz is headin' in to meet us. The one he told me about back in New Orleans last time he was there. That's why I had 'Hop' Purser put it on the chart."

Up out of the east a faint and tremulous light pushed its way. Dim and misty against the line where sea and sky met, the vanguard of purple and mauve skirmishers filtered through the dark. A tiny bead, glowing redly as the peephole into a furnace, climbed above the horizon. It heightened—widened—and then with a sudden leap be-

came the upper arc of a round shield of gleaming brass.

But the sunrise did not have the world to itself that morning in that particular cove on Swan Island. Down in the *Patsy's* galley the big, black iron kettle was singing as Jack McKay poured fiercely boiling water into his tall New Orleans coffee dripper. No alarm clock was needed to awaken Jack that morning.

"Come on, you scissor bills," rang his cheery call as he stepped on deck with a big coffee pot steaming in one hand, a rattling collection of aluminum cups, strung by a cord through their handles, jingling from the other. "Wake up! Come on 'n' get it!"

They came and got it.

"Shake a leg," implored Jack. "Tear into this pan of hash I've got for you and get this breakfast over. The cap says I get me a thousand-dollar bonus if I uncover the stuff first. Come on 'n' lead me to it. I got my own pet spade picked out and I'm king of the dirt diggers till we find it."

That breakfast was finished in jig-time. The dishwashing Jack arranged with masterly simplicity. Dumping the array of tin and aluminum into a sack, he tied the neck of it with a rope and swung it overboard.

"We'll let the tide of Yucatan Straits do the housework to-day," said he. "Show me where we start that hole."

They were overside in the skiff before the day was an hour old.

There was a careful survey of the cove. The big rock was not to be questioned. And there might have been a big tree at the other arm of the cove back in 1847 when Daniel Chaney made his chart, conceded Captain Teddy. There certainly was none now. But the "X" on the chart showed at the rise of the beach in the bight of the cove, midway between rock and tree. In the center of that curve, after elaborate pacings and measurements, Skee Wintersohn drove a stake. Stringing a cord to it, he marked a great circle, some thirty feet in diameter.

Hardly had that circle been completed when Jack McKay was on the job, digging like a Texas hound at an armadillo hole.

Wintersohn, standing to one side, lit a cigarette and watched for a moment. His smile was that of one amused. Beside him stepped Fred Andrus.

"I'll say you made the hole big enough, boss," said he, low voiced.

"Had to be," murmured Wintersohn. "The way that bird is making dirt fly, there ain't going to be no island if he keeps it up a week."

Jack McKay was certainly making good his boast. His self-annexed title of King of the Dirt Diggers was never in danger after the first score of shovelfuls.

All that morning the spades delved steadily. When the sun above them proclaimed noon there was a temporary knock-off, and while dinner was being eaten from the stock of tinned goods brought ashore in the skiff, Captain Teddy ranged afar. He returned with a sack of coconuts. These, their tops sliced with a keen machete, provided noble drink.

"They tell me they lace 'em with a shot of gin," mourned Jimmie Cole, as he emptied his fifth.

"Kid, we'll come back 'n' lace 'em with champagne when this cruel war is over and we've got the loot," grinned Jack McKay.

He arose, stretched himself, seized spade, and drove at his task once more.

"Come on, you scissor bills," he called to the crowd. "I smell money. Only thing I ever sweated over like this was a levee crap game."

The hole was widening—deepening. Six days had passed. In the glare of the tropical sun, digging in a mixture of limestone-rock dust and sand comes

the nearest known to digging in talcum powder. Even Jack McKay's irrepressible spirits were beginning to lag.

"D'you suppose," asked Captain Teddy, as they paused for dinner that sixth day, "that we've spotted the wrong cove? There's a bunch of 'em along this north shore. It might be worth our time to give 'em the once-over again. That man Chaney may have made some mistake. For we're getting pretty deep now, even allowing for the sand that's washed up in seventy-odd years."

"I'll say we're gettin' deep," quoth Jack McKay wearily. "I heard a sound this mornin' I swear was somebody talkin' Chinese!"

A while they debated. Then it was agreed that the seventh day be spent in resting on board the *Patsy* and that the next day they scout the shore line some more.

The search proved fruitless. There was no cove in all the line of indentations that showed anything as near the great rock of "D. Chaney. His Chart" as the cove in which now yawned the giant hole.

That night they sat by the base of the big rock, to which they had returned, talking it over. The crew of the *Patsy* were frankly disgusted. Wintersohn's crowd loafed about easily, quite unconcerned.

"I'll tell you what," said Captain Teddy. "I don't want to seem a quitter, but we can't dig up all Swan Island, and there's nothing looks better than this cove. I'm for up-anchor and back to New Orleans."

"Not yet," said Wintersohn. "If you'll recall, I paid you a thousand flat for the round trip and two weeks here. We'll fight it out for the rest of that two weeks. If we don't turn up the stuff by then—well, I'm out a thousand fish and it's my funeral."

"We'll stick," said Captain Teddy. "I'm giving each of my boys an extra hundred for their work. They've earned it.

Two days more the *Patsy's* men fought blazing sun and talcum-powder beach with their spades—and then they had to give it up. The hole was getting too big and deep for further excavation without buckets. They had dug clean from the crest of the beach's highest center to water level—and they were standing nearly knee-deep in water seepage when they quit.

That was the night Juan Alcantraz stepped into the scene.

The moon had been obscured by clouds, or they would have seen him sooner. As it was, the click of his oarlocks brought them up standing, their backs to the little fire they had lit, peering out into the darkness of the cove.

Up on the beach ran the bow of a battered skiff. Three swarthy Mexicans were at the oars. Over the thwarts stepped a small and dapper figure in white, the brown face with a wispy black mustache and swift-moving black eyes making swift circuit of the group of men as he approached.

"Good evening, señors," said he. "Juan Alcantraz is my name. Captain of the schooner *El Isleo,* veree much in distress. Whom have I the honor of meeting?"

The rites of introduction were completed.

"The schooner *Patsee* of New Orleans?" repeated Alcantraz. "Are you by any chance filled with cargo?"

"That we are not," said the *Patsy's* master. "And it's happy I'd be if we had forty tons of redfish under our hatches this holy minute."

"Why, captain?" spoke Wintersohn to the Mexican. "Why are you interested in the *Patsy's* cargo? Do you want to do some business with her? I have the boat under charter."

"That," said Alcantraz, "by the providence of God, seems fortunate."

And he launched into his story.

The *El Isleo,* it seemed, was laden with a cargo precious to science, though commercially valueless. She was out of Puerto Cortez in Spanish Honduras. Certain scientists exploring far into the interior had gathered specimens of great value to them. These, cased, they were shipping to New Orleans on the *El Isleo* because of that schooner's extraordinarily low rate for freights.

"These men of science, señors, as you doubtless know, are rarely men of great funds."

El Capitan Alcantraz, it appeared, had guaranteed delivery at New Orleans wharves at a specified date. There at the seaport would be waiting other men of science to take over the specimens.

But misfortune had followed close upon his heels. Coming up toward the Yucatan Straits the *El Isleo* had known naught but trouble. Trouble with her gasoline engine. Trouble with her seams. Even now in her hull was more water than was comfortable.

Coming to Swan Island, El Capitan Alcantraz had made a decision. He would beach his schooner, with his men he would do the best job of calking that could be done outside a shipyard, and would proceed to New Orleans, taking his loss for late delivery. That was his misfortune. But no capitan worthy the name, solicitous for his men and his craft, would venture from Swan Island crippled as was the *El Isleo.* Men came ever before profits in the heart of the true mariner.

"El Capitan O'Shea, as one mariner to another, will confirm me to a certainty."

El Capitan O'Shea duly confirmed him as to the traditions of the sea in such cases.

However, observed El Capitan Alcantraz, the fates were with him for once. Here on Swan Island he had seen their fire. Here they lay with empty hold.

So, he continued, if the *Patsee* could only see her way clear to taking on that transshipped cargo and delivering it to those men of science awaiting in New Orleans, his reputation as a mariner who kept agreements would be maintained. Also there would be profit for the *Patsee.* Not much profit. But still some profit. Would El Capitan O'Shea consider such a proposal?

"It's up to Mr. Wintersohn," Captain Teddy informed the Mexican. "He has the *Patsy* under charter for the rest of the week on Swan Island and for the trip back to New Orleans. This transshipping cargo in mid-voyage is a bit irregular, my friend. But I guess it might be handled if you're as full of water as you say you are. You're certainly in distress."

Alcantraz turned to Wintersohn.

"Shall we talk business, señor?" he asked.

"We sure will," said Wintersohn. "This is what you sailors call an act of God, I guess," he added, grinning at Captain Teddy. "Here's where I make a stab at covering part of that thousand I paid you."

"More power to you," said O'Shea, stuffing his pipe.

Side by side, Alcantraz and Wintersohn walked down the beach a short way, talking earnestly. They continued to talk earnestly as they seated themselves on a sea-bleached log. So earnestly that they did not notice a form scretched in the sand a few feet away in the darkness.

Curly, alone in the body as so often he seemed alone in the spirit, had wandered from the fire earlier in the evening. Sprawled on the warm sand, he had been turning over bitter thoughts. Suddenly to his ear came the low voices of Wintersohn and Alcantraz, exchanging staccato sentences in the "talky-talk" Spanish of Gulf port and Mexican border.

It was old stuff to Curly. Familiar stuff. For in the days before "the hop"

had fastened its talons on him, before he had "done his hitch" in San Quentin, Curly had been an active figure in a fantastic world. He had known memorable months by the gateway of Calexico, where the running of drugs across the Mexican line and up the Imperial Valley of California had flourished in a bizarre battle of brains and speed between the drug runners and Uncle Sam's inspectors.

Silent in the sand, Curly lay and listened.

Romance had gilded the flying shovels as that empty-yawning hole on the beach near by had been dug. But there was no gilt of romance about the task of transferring wooden boxes from the *El Isleo's* hold to the *Patsy's*. That was plain work. And they went to it, while Wintersohn and his trio, who had done little labor during the digging, now sweated with the *Patsy's* men at their task.

"And to think," quoth Jack McKay as he labored, "if we'd found that blasted gold we could have sat pretty and watched the rest of the world work a while. If I could only get hands on the lad who drew that chart! I hope he's in a hotter place than this."

But they saw the job through. After two days of labor beneath a searing sun, it was accomplished. Stacked evenly beneath the *Patsy's* hatches was that cargo of scientific specimens. Some were of unusual weight. Others were light. But all were firmly nailed in wooden cases.

Trim and shipshape at last, the *Patsy* was ready for her voyage back across the Gulf. All was set for starting in the morning. There had been little sleep in the nights while the expectations of the *Patsy's* crew had been that every morning would reveal buried gold. But this night, limp from long exertion, they lay about the deck fathoms deep in slumber.

With the dawn they were away. Alcantraz, from the strip of white sand where the *El Isleo* was beached, waved them farewell. A fine full breeze bellied taut the foresail and mainsail they spread. And with Jimmie Cole's gasoline kicker working sturdily, the *Patsy* bored into the long, blue rollers, New Orleans bound. There was a nine-day stretch of straight going for her before she would sight the twinkle of Port Eads light, wind in through South Pass, and so make her twisting way up the Mississippi to New Orleans.

Wintersohn stood beside Captain Teddy at the wheel.

"I don't expect we'll have much trouble with the customs men about this transshipment business," said Captain Teddy. "It isn't like a straight commercial cargo."

"No," said Wintersohn, "that'll all be attended to."

He smiled a bit ironically. He had arranged it. It *would* all be attended to. But hardly as Captain Teddy thought.

And then——

"It's a wonder to me there weren't some men from the wireless station around to see us," said O'Shea. "We went in quietly enough. But we were there pretty long to pass unnoticed.

"It's a sizable island, you know," said Wintersohn. "And they stick pretty close to their station. I don't think they knew a soul was on the place."

"Probably you're right," said Captain Teddy. "It sure would have sounded foolish to try to explain that hole to 'em. We'd have got a glorious ha-ha handed us when we quit. The story'd have swept the Gulf in no time."

Probably it was just as good for the contentment of both Captain Teddy and Wintersohn that neither of them knew the message that on that very morning had gone flashing through the open spaces above the Gulf, in the company code.

"Simmons, General Manager, United Fruit Company, New Orleans," ran that message. "Fishing schooner *Patsy,* out New Orleans, slipped into north-shore cove Swan Island two weeks ago. Kept her under observation. Men worked like horses for week digging hole in beach big enough for foundation Woolworth Building. Joined later by schooner *El Isleo,* home port unknown. Transshipped cargo *El Isleo* to *Patsy* in two-day job. *Patsy* sailed north this morning. Suggest you advise customs authorities Gulf ports. *El Isleo* went south four hours after Patsy sailed. What shall we do with hole they left?

"FRANK RYAN,
"Chief Wireless Operator,
"Swan Island."

But nobody on the *Patsy* knew of that message. Nor of the answer that flashed back before Swan Island had entirely vanished from the horizon:

"Frank Ryan, Chief Wireless Operator, Swan Island. Thanks for information. Customs authorities Gulf ports advised. In regard hole left in North Cove beach suggest you and rest of station crew fill it up in spare time now devoted to shooting crap. Otherwise pull it up by roots, ship to New York, and sell to some contractor. Use own discretion. If sold, keep profits with company's compliments.

"SIMMONS."

Knowing naught of this, however, the *Patsy* sailed serenely on. There was, however, a puzzled nest of lines growing on Captain Teddy's brow. This episode, ran his hunch, certainly must contain a woodpile with a nigger in it. Or a bug with a chip above it. The thousand dollars in his belt was real. But something was wrong somewhere. He wished that he knew exactly what it was.

It was two days out from Swan Island that light came to him.

Supper had ended—a dull sort of meal with Wintersohn and his men talking among themselves on topics shrouded with unfamiliar references to the rest; with the *Patsy's* crew still in the slump of reaction from dashed hopes.

There was the hour of cigarettes on deck, the desultory and casual chatter. Presently, save for Captain Teddy at the wheel, the men sought their mattresses. Far forward on the deck Skee Wintersohn and his trio were stretched out in the full sweep of the breeze.

Soon there sounded the mingled chorus of snores that told of heavy sleep.

Then it was that Curly crept back to the wheel, stood close to Captain Teddy with warning finger upheld, and whispered long and earnestly.

"You told us about coming home with a million dollars in gold," he ended. "You're heading home with a million dollars, all right. But it ain't in gold. It's in hop."

"Curly, are you lyin' to me?" asked Captain O'Shea tonelessly, without heat.

"Open up a box below and look. Any box'll do," whispered back Curly. "Only don't let any of those four see you do it. There'll be murder on this boat if you do."

"Why didn't you tell me about this before?" whispered O'Shea hoarsely.

"I've been figuring it out in my own mind," said Curly. "I'll tell you straight, captain, I didn't know whether you were kidding Jack and Jimmie and me, or whether you were being kidded. I told myself I was taking a chance when I came up here to see you this time."

"Are you sure you're right, Curly?"

"Sure?" Curly's tone was bitter. "Captain, I knew him from the minute I saw him step out of that skiff. 'Juan Alcantraz' my eye! He's Rafael Cal y Mayor, with a dozen monakers up and down the border. Back in the old days in Calexico he was one of the busiest

men in the game. You know I've been out of it since you helped me lick the hop. But it looked to me like you'd gone into it."

"Boy, I'm damned if I blame you," admitted Captain Teddy. "But it ain't going to look like that for long, I'm tellin' you. What I can't understand is how they expect to get past the customs with it."

"Get past the customs!" Curly's smile was mirthless. "Didn't I tell you you I got their whole plan when they were talking down on the beach at Swan Island that night? If they weren't such a double-crossing bunch, I'd have known what to do then. Now get this straight.

"Rafael would be a millionaire if he wasn't a nut on gambling. I've heard of his dropping fifty thousand dollars a night—gold, not pesos—in that Juarez keno game alone. Well, here was where he was planning to make his clean-up. That was one of the big drug cargoes he was running up to the Louisiana coast. And he had the thing fixed with Wintersohn in advance. The drug-ring gang were to meet Rafael down near Grand Isle with three big express cruisers and take off his cargo. They know when he left Puerto Cortez. They'll be cruising off shore looking for him. He couldn't take a chance on slipping past 'em. So he and Wintersohn had to get a boat that the cruisers wouldn't recognize when they saw it, and get the *El Isleo's* cargo in that boat. They had a fellow named Hop Purser up in New Orleans fix up that fake map to put it over on you. For they had to have you down here in time to meet Rafael after he left Puerto Cortez. Can't you get it through your thick Irish head? There never was any gold. They're using you as a cat's-paw."

"But how'll they get the stuff past the customs in the *Patsy?*" persisted O'Shea.

Curly looked at him pityingly.

"Why do you suppose he's got those three gunmen with him?" he asked. "By the time the customs crowd get to the *Patsy,* if they take the trouble to look at a fishing schooner they've known for years, she'll be empty and you'll have a fine story to tell. The minute you get up to the coast they're going to round us all up at the point of their guns and take the boat over themselves. And you'll have a hell of a fine time finding the stuff once they get it out of the *Patsy.* Wintersohn has some launches waiting down by Pointe-a-la-hache and when you and the rest of us come to, we'll have nothing but the memory that they've made damned fools out of us. Not that I blame 'em. The opium, cocaine, morphine, and heroin they've got in this cargo is worth enough to drive any dope runner crazy, let alone a double-crossing bunch like Rafael and Wintersohn."

"So that's the game," mused Captain Teddy softly. "I've been wonderin' somewhat, since first we started. And I've been wonderin' more since I first lamped that greaser schooner. They did a poor job getting that water in her. A poor job. And the boy who picked some of the oakum out of her seams was too careless about the marks he left."

"Before you start anything, captain," whispered Curly. "Watch that boy Lamantia. He's the hardest-boiled gunman of the lot. And get this straight, too. I'm not putting you wise to this on account of any reform stuff. That kind of gang was more or less my gang, once—though we weren't quite so good at double crossing—till the stuff got me. That game'll go on long after you and I are dead. But you're the man helped me get on my feet when I hit New Orleans down and out. I don't want you tangled up in anything that ends in the Federal pen. Atlanta's a pretty place, all right, but not when Uncle Sam's paying your board."

"Forget it," said Captain Teddy.

Silent again he sat for a space, his hand gripping the wheel spokes. Headed for New Orleans with a million in drugs aboard! And a double-crossing drug runner and his three gunmen. The *Patsy!* An honest fishing schooner whose captain and crew would be the butts of water-front jest for years to come, if anybody knew. Treasure hunting for pirate gold. Made a fool of by a smooth city slicker of a dope-running crook!

Well, it was six or seven days yet before he'd sight the Port Eads light. The city might be Wintersohn's home grounds. But here was O'Shea's private back yard, out here in the Gulf of Mexico.

Through Captain Teddy's being stole once more the glow that flamed with the dawning of some event beyond life's redfishing routine.

"Hold her as she is, Curly," he whispered.

Softly he slipped off his shoes and socks. Softly he stepped down the aft companionway, where slept Jack McKay. One muscular hand clamped firmly over Jack's mouth, while another gripped his shoulder and a whisper sounded in his ear.

"Not a sound, lad. It's me, the cap. Are ye awake?"

Jack nodded vigorously against the muffling hand.

"We're goin' to give these highjackin' crooks aboard the time of their young lives, Jack," husked the whisper in his ear again. "It's too long a story to tell you now, but we've been double crossed, me boy. Just you come with me and make no noise and follow your orders."

From brackets above the bunk Captain Teddy softly slipped the pump shotgun of his winter duck-hunting forays down the coast. Always he kept it aboard, oiled and loaded, for pot-shots at sundry floating targets that were his delight. From the shelf near by he took an electric torch. Then, his bare feet and Jack McKay's making no sound, they went up the companionway like twin shadows of a dream.

Forward they made their way.

A sudden flare of light bathed the faces of the four who slept on the forward deck.

"Wake up, you crooks! Sit up and stick your hands up!" rang Captain Teddy's call.

Through the mists of sleep of three of them it penetrated. The four figures stretched on the mattresses snapped up like marionettes at the jerk of a string. But one had stayed awake —by order.

From the mattress that had held Lamantia stabbed a flash of flame. He had lain with his automatic by his side. He sat up, shooting.

One with the crack of the pistol was the roar of the shotgun as Captain Teddy pulled trigger, while a searing pain of a steel-jacketed forty-five's passage racked his ribs. Lamantia's howl rose high. His pistol clattered to the deck from a mutilated hand.

"Th' next man gets it in th' bread basket," roared O'Shea. "Who's startin' somethin'? Come on!"

But nobody was answering his plea. Nobody else was starting anything, just then.

"Over there by the bulwark, Jack," ordered Captain Teddy. "Frisk 'em, one at a time. You, Wintersohn, step over first. Keep your hands up! Shut up your trap! You're lucky you're alive."

Wintersohn stepped over.

Leaping to the deck at the sound of the shots came Jimmie Cole, flash light and pistol in hand.

"Keep your light on 'em, Jimmie," called O'Shea. "You can chuck your gun overboard as far's it's needed. All it takes is one fightin' Irishman an' a

popgun t' handle these cross-bred double-crossin' hard guys. Watch 'em step lively."

While the converging beams of the two torches kept the quartet in sharp relief, Jack McKay went happily about his job of frisking. Eight heavy automatics he brought to light in hip and shoulder holster, and three knives of vicious point and length of blade.

"It's a fine bunch of gentleman sportsmen we have with us," quoted Captain O'Shea bitterly. "Get a length of rope, Jimmie. Tie up the three of 'em while I keep 'em covered. Jack, dig out a first-aid kit and bandage th' hand of that yelpin' yellow street cur."

Triced up with expert hand, Wintersohn, Andrus, and Sebastian lay presently on the forward deck. Beside them, his wounded hand bandaged and his feet tied by a rope that looped up around his uninjured wrist, sat Lamantia.

Their positions remained unchanged throughout the night. Captain Teddy, Jack McKay, Jimmie Cole, and Curly took their turns at standing guard.

Thus the morning found them.

Through the breakfast hour Captain Teddy was ominously silent. His silence held while the four were fed, as the *Patsy* surged ahead through a sunlit sea. Then, with the ending of their meal, he went forward to give a look-see to the prisoners.

"Captain O'Shea, I've got a proposition to make you that's worth the whole two hundred thousand I first offered you," said Wintersohn as their eyes met.

"You have, have you?" O'Shea's tone was low and bitter. "You're in a hell of a fine position to be makin' propositions to me now, ain't you? You're through wit' makin' any kind of a proposition till we're through wit' you, me bucko."

And then he called his own men aft around the wheel. While the *Patsy* forged steadily ahead, the four of them held counsel.

"Bring up a case of those 'scientific specimens' from below, Jack," ordered O'Shea.

It was on deck a few moments later. Ax and crowbar worked on the wood. The lid came off. There, packed in orderly array, lay tin after tin of those "five-tael" cans of the poppy's gum that every narcotic-squad man knows.

"Look at it, lads," said Captain Teddy. "Here we stand with a cargo of hell's own dope aboard, fit to ruin a few thousand good men. Curly can tell you what it did for him before we took him aboard and he broke loose from it. From all I can find, it's worth about as much as the gold we came to get, chasing with a forged chart that's made a fool of me. I've got me own ideas of what to do. But we've sailed the *Patsy* on shares a long time. I'm not talking as a captain. I'm talking as a man to man. I want to know if you're wit' me to th' limit an' willin' to let me have my own way in this?"

"Are you goin' t' turn 'em over to th' police, cap?" asked Jack McKay.

"That I am not, if you're wit' me sight unseen," said O'Shea. "Th' only use an O'Shea ever had for th' police was to join 'em or fight 'em."

Up spoke Jimmie Cole.

"Play the game your own way, cap. We're with you to the finish."

"And then some," said Jack McKay.

"It's your show, captain," said Curly. "Go to it."

"Fine," said Captain Teddy. "Jimmie, your engine's runnin' sweet enough. She'll go without attention for a while. Curly, you keep the wheel. Jimmie and Jack are comin' for'ard with me."

Forward they went.

"Unfasten that Wintersohn rat's ropes, boys," said O'Shea. In a moment the job was done, and the prisoner stood on deck.

"I hope you're willing to listen to reason, captain," said he.

"There's no reason in me this mornin'," grated O'Shea. "It's pure sentiment I'm talkin' now. I've shaken hands wit' you, you dirty scum. I've talked to you like a friend. You've made a fool of me and double crossed me in a dirty trade. Now I've got to do somethin' t' take th' bad taste out of me mouth."

"What's that?" asked Wintersohn, paling suddenly. There was a gleam in the little Irishman's eyes that looked like bad news.

"You've got forty pounds on me," said Captain Teddy calmly, "if you've got an ounce. You've got the shoulders of a stevedore. You call yourself a square sport. It seems to me you advertise it a bit too much, but that's your business."

"What's that got to do with it?"

"It's got *this* to do wit' it, you dirty crook: I'm goin' to take a chance wit' you. We're goin' to mix it right here on deck, you and me. If you lick me, the cargo's yours an' th' boat's yours to run it in wit', if you can get away wit' it. My men won't butt in. They've given me their word. It's good, even if yours ain't. But if you don't lick me, you slimy whelp, you an' your gang are tossin' every box of this cargo overside with your own hands five minutes after the fight is over. There's good odds for you, me 'square sport'"—and the biting contempt of Captain Teddy's voice would have left its mark on rhinoceros hide—"an' I'm ready when you are. Hop to it."

Stark fear shone in Wintersohn's eyes. Big as he was, the streak of yellow in the core of his being shivered at the sight of the little fighting Irishman with the blazing berserker eyes, standing there calmly, offering him a chance at a million dollars—a fortune placed at the mercy of a few minutes' fight on a fishing schooner.

His share of a million dollars! All it would give of the freedom of the cities of the world; the fawning of the men—and the women—of the only life he knew or wanted.

Suddenly the rage of the terrified and cornered rat surged through him. And the craft of one.

"See here, captain," he began placatingly, as he stepped forward, hands hanging loosely at his side, "can't you and I get together on——"

In mid-sentence he struck.

Had that uppercut landed with the snapping weight of the man behind it, a knock-out had been the only answer. But even ahead of Jack McKay's shout of warning, Captain Teddy's eye had seen the tensing of the man as he advanced.

Wintersohn's fist barely brushed his chin as the little seaman's head snapped back. Before the bigger man had recovered his balance from the blow, O'Shea was on top of him.

There was little science of the ring about Captain Teddy. But he was hard from heart to hide. And the bundle of steel wires that was his tough little body was white hot with the flaming spirit of battle. Only one strategy he knew —to keep at his man, to hit and hit and hit again without let-up—never to let his foe get set. He went to it like a whirlwind.

One wild swing to the body Wintersohn got home. The sheer impact of it felled O'Shea to the deck. Like a rubber ball he bounced to his feet again. Like a blazing comet he shot in once more, beneath the bigger man's guard.

The belt of fat that soft living in cities had placed about Wintersohn was the target for his driving punches. Home he hammered at it, again and again and again.

And then Wintersohn, panting, in distress, seized him about the body in the grip that precedes the foul and deadly drive of swift-raised knee.

"Watch it, cap!" roared Jack McKay, himself a veteran of water-front rough-and-tumble, who saw what was coming.

There is only one defense for that smash of knee at close quarters—and it must be lightning quick. Captain Teddy swung into it automatically. His own hands gripped the shoulders of his foe. With tensing muscle he jerked his body to one side, free from foothold. The twisting pull of his weight as Wintersohn's knee rose threw them both to the deck.

Up like a striking snake whipped Captain Teddy's fist, a knot of wire. Squarely it cracked against Wintersohn's jaw, once, twice, thrice. The big body relaxed.

To his feet scrambled Captain Teddy.

Before him danced Jack McKay, his arm rising and falling, as in mockery of an invisible referee he counted the "ten" of the ring's knock-out. But no count was necessary.

A moment O'Shea stood there, gulping great breaths of salt air. Then——

"Sluice a bucket of water on him," he ordered. "He's got some work to do."

With a grin of sheer boyishness he looked at Jack McKay.

"'Twas a fine fight while it lasted, was it not?" he asked.

"I'll tell the cock-eyed world it was!" whooped Jack. "Will you give *me* the other three, cap? I'll take 'em one at a time."

His face fell.

"No," said he. "Only two. But I might tie a hand behind me to even it with the guy you shot."

"Not a chance, Jack. They're just the hired men. We've handled the boss," said O'Shea.

And then he shook himself, tucked in a flapping shirt, and drank hugely at the water butt.

"I feel cleaner," said the *Patsy's* master.

Not a hull was in sight in the whole circle of the blue horizon. Which was just as well. For there would be maritime curiosity at the sight of three sweating men, shotgun guarded, breaking out the cargo of a forty-ton schooner in mid-Gulf and pitching it overside in a day of calm and sunshine.

One by one those cases of "scientific specimens" splashed into the Gulf of Mexico. Hundreds on hundreds of those five-tael tins of opium, those cartons of tablets of morphine, cocaine, and heroin, came to light as with ax and crowbar the lids of wooden cases were pried open.

Driving his gang to their task, with a look of calm and holy joy on his face, stood Jack McKay. With fist and boot and happy oath he sped them to their work.

"And you're the babies who stood around soldierin' and watched me dig halfway to China on a fake chart," he scoffed. "Sweat, you terriers! Sweat!"

They sweated.

At last the final case splashed overside.

Empty as she left, the Patsy was coming home.

Amidships Captain Teddy lined up the quartet. Into the western horizon the sun was sinking, the sky a riot of splendor.

"I'm minded to be far more decent to ye than ye'd ever be to me," said he. "Presently we'll be sightin' the Louisiana coast. I'm puttin' ye into the skiff, wit' food and water for a couple of days. And ye can row for land. Ye'll find some fishin' village or a boat somewhere. Tell 'em you're city fishermen if they ask questions. I'm thinkin' ye'll not be wantin' any more publicity than most crooks."

He stood for a moment, stuffing and lighting his pipe.

"Ye're a fine lot of the scum of the earth," said he. "The dirtiest fo'c's'le ever I saw would be insulted t' have ye dumped in it. Up for'ard, the lot of

ye. Jack McKay, tie 'em up. We'll feed 'em and give 'em water—but we ought to use an ax on 'em and let 'em give the sharks indigestion."

Over the Gulf the *Patsy* plowed her way that night. Below, worn out with his battle, slept Captain Teddy. The snores of Jack McKay and Jimmie Cole rose high. At the wheel was Curly, sleepless as so often was his wont.

Thick scud sped across the sky, obscuring the moon for long periods. But now and then, through a rift in the clouds, the long, bright shafts of radiance poured down on the heaving waters. Sharp black shadows they etched, touched with silver splendor, along the *Patsy's* deck, from Curly's station aft at the wheel to the huddle of figures forward, where, bound hand and foot, Wintersohn and his three gunmen lay on deck.

It was in one of these intervals of clear light that Curly saw movement forward. One of the bound men was struggling to sit up.

Hastily he lashed the wheel and made his way toward the bow. It was Lamantia who was trying to raise himself.

"Curly," he said, speaking low, "can't you ease up this cord on my right arm? It's hurtin' like the devil with that wound in my hand."

For a moment Curly considered. Should he awaken Captain O'Shea?

From the lips of the gunman came a feverish plea. Only loosen that bond for a little while. That was all he asked. What could he do with one hand practically shot to pieces? He'd go crazy if there wasn't some relief soon.

And at last Curly consented. For a moment he worked at the knots Jimmie Cole and Jack McKay had tied. Lamantia lay back with a deep sigh of relief. Curly resumed the wheel. He'd keep an eye on them, he told himself.

But even Curly's vigilant eye was not proof against the moments when those flying banks of cloud temporarily overcast the moon. In those moments he could not see the efforts Lamantia was putting forth. The sweat of sheer agony stood out on the gunman's forehead as he stretched and reached with the wounded hand. But at last he made it. He reached a weapon the searchers had overlooked.

Hung by a thin leather thong about his neck and down his back, beneath his undershirt, lying flat between his shoulder blades, was a slender knife. For the man who wields and throws one of those deadly blades, that position for a weapon was supreme strategy. It could be reached without suspicion of movement for weapon, even by those who watched. It rests concealed, undreamed, when all other possible places of concealment have been searched.

And at last Lamantia worked it free, though at the price of agony incalculable.

For a space he rested, while the moon, peering out through a rift in the cloud banks, bathed the whole scene with light. But hardly had the scud once more obscured the deck when he was feverishly at work. And at last the four lay there, all cords that bound them severed.

"Curly!"

Lamantia's call was not loud. But it reached to where the steersman stood. Curly went forward, his wheel lashed again.

"Can you get me a drink of water?" Lamantia asked. "I'm getting fever from this shot in my hand."

And in that he spoke no more than truth.

To the water butt by the mainmast went Curly, filled a tin cup, brought it back to Lamantia, and stooped to raise his head.

An arm curved stranglingly around his neck. Three figures leaped upon him.

"I'll take his gun," he heard, as fingers fumbled at his waistband, where protruded the butt of one of the captured automatics Captain Teddy had given him when he went below.

One strangling cry choked in his throat—and then things went black for Curly.

He did not see what followed.

He lay limp on the deck as the towsled head of Teddy O'Shea thrust cautiously above the hatch coaming. He did not hear the little Irishman's rasping command: "Stick 'em up, you dirty murderers!" He did not hear the crack of the automatic pistol in Wintersohn's hand that followed, or the thud of the bullet that splintered the coaming a few inches from O'Shea's head.

Nor did he hear the roar as Captain Teddy's pump gun swept the deck with whistling charges of lead.

Seconds was all it lasted—that series of stuttering explosions. But they were hot seconds, when streaks of flame belched forth and curses and shrieks rose high.

It was ended before Jack McKay and Jimmie Cole came tumbling out on deck, pistols in hand. They had no need for weapons.

"Have they hurt you, lad?" shouted O'Shea as he rushed forward. Disregarding the four figures sprawled in crumpled awkwardness where they fell, he swooped down upon Curly. And his joyous oaths of praise rang as under sluicing water his deck hand came back to consciousness. Beyond a black and swollen throat, where the garotter's grip had bruised the flesh, and a fine assortment of bruises, Curly was uninjured.

But about him lay grim tragedy.

Poor Hop Purser, back in New Orleans, had made true prediction. Skee Wintersohn had tried one double cross two many.

Awakened by Curly's strangled cry, leaping to the hatchway, shotgun in hand, Teddy O'Shea had written the last chapter in the life of that crook and his three gunmen—and the little Irishman had written it in red.

By the light of electric torches the captain and crew of the *Patsy* labored the night through, in those intervals when the moonlight was obscured by the rack of flying clouds. By dawn the deck was decently clean. And in the bow, where they had slept on the voyage, covered now by a sheet of canvas, the four of the underworld slept their last sleep.

"There's no keeping it quiet from the authorities now," said Captain Teddy. "It's me for the custom house the minute we land."

But he did not have to wait for arrival at the custom house, that repository of so many strange tales in the years its gray walls have risen at the head of Canal Street.

Entering South Pass soon after, the *Patsy* was boarded by the men in blue and gold.

And there the story was told in fullest detail.

It was too much for any inspector to handle.

"This goes before the chief," he said.

To authority, enthroned on swivel chair behind a broad, flat-topped desk, the tale was told again, with Jimmie Cole, Jack McKay, and Curly, questioned separately, confirming the last detail.

Even authority can be human.

"My hat's off to you, Captain O'Shea," spoke the chief, "even if you're the most quixotic damned hero I've ever met. You've mopped up a gang the narcotic division has been battling a long time. I wish we could dump all the dope that Wintersohn has brought into the United States where you dumped that last cargo of his. If it was war time I'd decorate you. Be-

yond seeing you through the legal complications of these four dead crooks you've brought into port, is there anything I can do for you."

"There is," said Teddy O'Shea. "There's two things, for that matter. You can come home with me this night and explain matters to my wife. If I told her this, she'd never believe me in a million years. And you can make it clear to me what's the meanin' of that word quix—quix—whatever it was—you just called me. I'm good at cussin', myself, and it sounds like a two-dollar word to me."

And the chief did both.

DEAD HORSE

THIS is a custom of the days when the old-fashioned sailors' boarding house was the curse of the merchant sailor's existence during his short periods of living ashore.

At one time owing to various circumstances, conditions were such that all of the crews for ships were furnished by boarding-house keepers, and a captain in need of a crew went directly to the boarding house where he would make arrangements for as many men as he required.

The keeper of the boarding house got the men by having his runners in the shipping office while a ship was paying off. As soon as the men were paid the runners inveigled them to their respective houses. Here they were kept until their money was gone, at which time the keeper of the boarding house would find another ship for them, sign them on, and outfit them for their coming voyage, by allowing them credit on their advance notes.

This "advance," is what gave rise to the expression which is the title of this article. In those days it was customary to give the boarding-house keeper, the sailors' wages for the first three months of the voyage, for which he had just signed. Out of this three months' pay the boarding-house keeper was supposed to have furnished the sailor with an outfit of clothing and the material for a final spree before he joined his ship. The seaman was never allowed a cash advance, but was simply given credit with the boarding house to the extent of three months' wages. As the keeper of the boarding house was rarely an honest man it meant that the sailor was generally cheated very badly. The result of this was that he spent three months on his new ship before he was credited with any pay.

This period, which was spent in working off the advance to the boarding-house keeper was called "working off the dead horse," and on some ships when it was all worked off, an interesting celebration was held.

When the day arrived on which the dead horse expired, a few of the leading lights of the crew, aided by "Sails" or "Chips" constructed a fearful and wonderful effigy of a horse. This was escorted aft at noon by all hands, and the old man was serenaded by the assembled crew singing the old song which was sacred to the occasion. Lack of space prohibits our giving the entire song, but it opened up about as follows:

Oh, we say, old man, your horse must die, and we say so, and we know so,
Oh, we say, old man, your horse must die, oh, poor old man.
We will salt him down for sailors' use, and we say so, and we know so,
Oh, we say, old man, your horse must die, oh, poor old man.

The Rum Runners

By Ernest Haycox

Mutiny, piracy, and shipwreck all figure in this tale of adventure up to date. We say "adventure up to date" because we have seen several articles in the newspapers recently which make us believe that all of the above-mentioned crimes against the maritime laws are common occurrences on our coasts to-day. It is true that "the old order changeth," but this generally is taken to mean that it advances. However, in the case of the waters surrounding this country it seems to have gone back for several hundred years.

A TWO-PART STORY—PART I.

CHAPTER I.

"KEEP YOUR MOUTH SHUT TIGHT."

THIS story opens in a Prince Rupert saloon and the beginnings took place under the eyes and beneath the noses of two of Canada's prideful Northwest Mounted. Such was the audacity of the whole thing; and such was the desperation of the men involved. For necessity prompted the performance, else the life of one man would not have been stricken from him in the next forty-eight hours and a good ship set adrift in the open sea.

It was started by the second officer, a sturdy, broad chested and insolent looking chap with a blue-visored cap pulled low over one ear. He had been standing at the bar with one elbow propped on it. Draining a glass of beer he swung around and surveyed the men in front and to one side. The two troopers of the Northwest Mounted Police were gazing mildly on the scene, tarrying the moment while on their round of duty. The second officer looked full at them. In passing, their eyes fell on him and for an instant something like a spark of animosity flared from his eyes in return. The cast of his face became still more insolent. He cleared his throat with a defiant rasp and bellowed out in a heavy voice:

"Hey! I want two able seamen. Two able-bodied men to sail to-night. Step up!"

A sudden hush fell on the place and the second officer became the focus of attention. The second officer toyed with the empty beer mug and looked about him; the troopers were indifferently watching. The sacred law, and the omnipotent force to guard it! The second officer turned his square, rugged face from them in patient scorn, waiting for a reply, but the room still watched him, silently.

"Come on!" said he, impatient of the result. "Two able-bodied men. If you ain't sailed before you know what the sea looks like, anyhow. A couple of able-bodied men. Step up! A short trip and good found."

Over in the corner two men shifted their chairs back from a rickety table, rose, and came toward the mate. Both were stocky-looking chaps, not overly tall, but with thick arms and a capable swing to their shoulders. One, leading the way, was red-headed and the fighting heart of the Irishman displayed itself from every angle of his countenance. The other, dark of features, carried a silent, hard-bitten appearance; his whole body gave the air of his having passed through some recent, desperate ordeal.

"I guess," said the red-haired one, coming to a halt in front of the second officer, "that's our ticket."

"Sailors?" queried the mate scornfully.

The room grew noisy and left the trio to themselves. The bartender resumed his inevitable polishing. The red-haired volunteer answered the question. "Able-bodied you said, wasn't it? That's us. But we been to sea."

The mate twirled his empty beer mug again and looked them over. "Well," said he in a grudging way, "I guess you'll have to do."

"No force about it, matey," replied the one of the flaming locks. "You ain't compelled to take us."

That straightened the mate up. A tug of irritation jerked at his voice. "Oh, you'll do. I need the men. Come along." He gave the red-haired one a hostile look and shoved toward the door.

The troopers followed the trio with mild eyes. The mate rolled by and gave them a belligerent stare; the two policemen looked bored and turned away. This forced the mate's lantern jaw forward a bit more and he kicked his way through the swinging doors to the street, followed by the two volunteers.

"Damned skuts," said the mate. "I ain't got any use for them skoovies."

The volunteers plodded along in silence. The mate went down the street a half block from the saloon and turned into a lodging house. Climbing a flight of creeking, illy lit stairs, he followed a still darker corridor down to the very end, and again kicked open a door, swaggering inside.

The room into which they came was poorly illuminated by an oil lamp. A damp, musty smell pervaded it. In the center, seated at a small round table, a huge, glowering man, with dark whiskers, gave them sullen attention.

"Here y'are," called out the mate, jerking his thumb over his shoulder at the men.

"I'll trouble ye not to kick the door down, Mr. Lowry," returned the seated man.

The mate shrugged his shoulders. Walking to the table he helped himself to the whisky glass and bottle. "Your skipper," he informed the volunteers between gulps.

The man in the chair turned to them. "Seamen?"

"Yes, sir," said the red-haired one.

"Names?"

"Bender," offered the red-haired one again.

"Waycross," replied the other.

"Want to ship?"

"Yes sir."

"All right," The captain turned on the mate. "Mr. Lowry," said he in an aggrieved fashion. "Why didn't you get me real seamen. These fellows never saw a boat."

The mate went into a rage. "What do you want? By Godfrey, you must think I'm an employment agency! I did the best I could. Want me to shout in the middle of the streets what we're after?" He gulped down another glass of whisky. "We ain't exactly choosers of what we want. Got to take what we can get. Anyhow," he suggested in a

significant tone, "they'll do for what work we've got."

The captain swelled in his chair. "Keep your tongue in your head," said he, "or I'll break your neck! I've had all the lip I'm to take from you!"

The second mate turned away and rolled to the window.

"All right," continued the captain, speaking to the new seamen; anger still flexing the muscles of his face. "Get your gear and be at the dock below the main wharf at eight o'clock to-night. There'll be a yawl waiting. Mind, now, be on time."

"Yes, sir," said Bender touching his cap. The two left the room as the captain poured himself a glass of whisky.

At eight, in the black of the evening, Bender and Waycross stumbled over the planking of the dock and found the captain and mate waiting. A half fog covered the channel-like harbor, being whipped thin by a raw wind coming up the roadstead.

"Storming up," remarked the captain shortly. "All right, let's go down." He disappeared over the side of the dock, going down the ladder. The mate followed after, and the two men descended in turn, dropping into the yawl. Two of the ship's crew were at the oars, and both newcomers noted that they stared through the smudge of the night, trying to make out their features.

Bender had been packing, in addition to his dunnage bag, a light, elongated cage in his left hand. As he set this down in the bottom of the boat, something from within gave a sudden rustle, flapping loudly and giving vent to a low and mournful coo.

The mate gave a start, nearly falling out of the boat.

"What's that!" he cried.

"Just a pet bird of mine," answered Bender. "Always pack him with me."

"God! That thing gave me a scare! Why didn't you say something about it?"

"Didn't know as you asked," replied Bender.

The mate swore. "That's enough," he growled. "I'll have no more of your sass. You're going to have some of it whaled out of you, soon enough, too."

Bender said nothing.

"Pull away," ordered the captain.

The yawl slid down the channel, being buffeted now, by the short swell and chop of the water. A drop of rain fell, and shortly the fog evaporated into a steady drizzle. The lights of the city faded and were lost. Now and then the boat passed a steamer anchored in the roadstead, and for a moment the blur of the lights streaming through the portholes came to them, soon to die away again in the darkness. The two new men could hear the heavy, labored breathing of the captain nearby. The chill of the night cut into them.

The hulk of a boat reared up through the rain that now came pelting down; they drifted alongside. Different from the other boats lying in the harbor this was bathed in darkness, save for the solitary glimmer of the riding lights; a curious, uncomfortable stillness blanketed everything.

The second mate hailed it in a low voice: *"Welsh Castle,* 'hoy!"

A noise above them announced the coming of some one to the side. The yawl bumped; the captain seized the ladder and went up, followed by the mate. Waycross and Bender struggled after, bearing dunnage bags. Bender had the bird cage hung from his neck, making his ascent the more difficult. From below he heard the echo of harsh chuckles; cursing softly to himself he abored to the deck.

The captain and mate were talking to a third person nearby. Some low, tense conversation had been in progress, but it ceased the minute the two new men appeared. The three moved farther down the deck and began once more. A quarrel seemed to develop in a flash, for

suddenly the captain flamed up and his heavy, sullen voice boomed out.

"Hear me! I may be bound, as ye say. But I'll take no more o' that talk from any one. Not even if I hang for it!"

Came a curt reply and they disappeared aft. Behind, the two men heard the crew of the yawl climbing up. Suddenly Waycross, the silent one, leaned close to Bender and gripped his arm.

"Keep your mouth shut tight!"

Bender swore again. Together they made for the fo'c's'le.

CHAPTER II.

THE FIGHT IN THE FO'C'S'LE.

At midnight the anchor chains came clanging up through the hawsepipe; the rumble of the engines woke the frame of the *Welsh Castle* to life and set the deck members to protesting; slowly the boat moved down the channel. From the bridge came the heavy voice of the skipper calling to the mate, and the latter's answer from the foredeck sounded clear. On the edge of the bridge one of the crew heaved the lead. The depth grew less and for a time hung steady, then fell away again. "No bottom!" was the cry. "Pull your line aboard," ordered the captain. The *Welsh Castle* picked up speed, emerged from the harbor channel, and found its way toward the straits setting out to sea.

From the starboard beam a heavy wind sighed through the shrouds and a strong chop caused the ship to roll heavily. The rain fell steadily, pattering on the decks; they were on the edge of a squall. The boom of the surf on the rocky isles nearby was borne up on the wind, and occasionally the shrill cry of a gull mingling with it added an eerie sound to the night. The *Welsh Castle* turned a point north and the wind drew ahead, buffeting the bow with heavy seas, causing the ship to pitch badly.

Bender drew the second mate's watch and went aloft to the crow's nest. All that he could see on either side of him was the tortuous procession of water, with occasionally the faint outline of the jagged and black island shores closing in and retreating from the boat. The foremast rose directly in front of the bridge. Long ago the captain had gone in, leaving the first officer tramping back and forth in the darkness. The red-headed one saw just the faint bulking of that figure, standing now by the port rail, now to starboard.

It was bitter cold work up in the nest, with the sea carrying the ship far over to the side and swinging it back again in a crazy circle. He clung to the side and strove to keep from becoming sick. Yet an incident occurred which banished the idea of self entirely from his mind.

He had been up almost an hour when, looking below, he saw the outline of another figure come out of the wheelhouse and join the second. At first he heard nothing, though he caught the fling of an arm now and then; but after a while the wind whipped by the tag end of phrases evidently thrown out in anger.

For a bit he hung over the side of the nest, trying to catch these phrases, disregarding his watch ahead. But that was too meager of results, and he turned about impatiently, stamping his feet and staring into the night which seemed to fall in blacker folds about him. Then he did a most unseamanlike thing; seizing the nest's edge, he thrust one foot over the side and began descending.

Some battering wave threw the boat farther over, a gust of wind carried up a passionate shout from the bridge, and a curse went flinging by. Bender flattened himself against the mast, gripping hard. The next moment his foot met the shrouds and he caught hold of the wire stays and went swiftly down, touching the bulwarks for an instant before jumping to the deck. A series of short, lithe strides carried him across to the

ladder and he quickly ran up this. Going to starboard, past the darkened portholes of the galley, he caught at the hand rail of the ladder leading to the captain's deck, and flung himself higher within a moment's time. He was breathing laboriously as he crouched in the dark, his short and solid body inclined forward to catch the words that sounded so faintly above him. They rose and fell, swelling in anger and dying away in half veiled threats, with the rising gale snuffing them out at will; they were not yet distinct enough to be understood.

A fiery, impatient oath escaped Bender. He straightened and observed the narrow ladder standing in front. The ship plunged and the wind ripped across the deck; he caught the report of the slatting canvas tacked around the bridge stanchions above. Creeping forward he stretched out on the ladder and pushed himself along and upward.

Should anyone have business on the bridge he would most surely be caught. From outside, at least, this was the only way to gain the deck. By this time he was lying out at full length, his head on a level with the bridge planking. Only for a moment did he give a thought to his awkward position before intrenching himself by grasping hold of a stanchion. Sooner or later the arguing men would come to starboard on their everlasting march back and forth.

They came with the roll of the ship and their feet went clumping by in heavy, protesting steps, passing within a few scant inches of the prone Bender. Yet it was so dark that he caught only a momentary blur of heavy figures before the gloom swooped down again. He heard them bring up along the starboard railing.

"Not . . . . on my ship . . . . jail first!"

He caught the words now; the answering shout was distinct enough.

"Be careful. You're not so strange on board . . . . be captain but . . . . but . . . . do as we say . . . . be trouble!"

Bender waited for the outburst from the skipper, but when the latter answered it was with a bitter and aggrieved shout.

". . . .dirty curs . . . . won't play square. I made an agreement . . . . want you to stay by it . . . .lose my certificate if . . . . get caught with this on board." Then the shout rose. "If I'm to be master, I'm to be master. Won't have any back talk from you or any of . . . . crew. Obey my orders or I'll log you for mutinying!"

"Easy. You're in a bad way to be logging anything. Look fine, won't it? Ship with bum papers . . . . master of a rum ship!"

". . . . doublecrossing me?"

"No, no, no! Talk sense. Get off your high horse. Run the ship where it's supposed to be run, and don't get stiff-backed. You're not on . . . . regular voyage. Different . . . . sailors have a word to say . . . . too."

"Run according to orders . . . . yes. Crew free and equal . . . . no! Not if I have to run this boat on the rocks. Won't have it!"

"How about your certificate?"

"Never mind it. I'll have your hide stretched in the sun, if I go!"

". . . . always another way . . . ."

"Threatening me? By God, Mr. Lowry, be careful or I'll break your neck! Not brought up to take anything from my officers! Won't start now!"

Bender heard the voice of the second mate fall to a lower, more conciliatory note. And again the talk rose and fell, with the angry words spluttering and exploding above the storm. They were well in the teeth of the gale and the *Welsh Castle* plunged, twisted and bucked, decks buried, for the most part, under sheets of flinging water. And in the midst of all this turmoil the two officers fought their own quarrel stubbornly.

". . . .don't like those men you got. Not seamen . . . ."

"Best I could do . . . . good enough . . . ."

"Damned impertinence . . . . talk to me in front of seamen like that . . . ."

"Aw . . . . . I'm sick of hearing that . . . .treat me careful, and I'll do well by you . . . . otherwise you're liable to get in trouble. Need you to run the ship . . . . but one word of mine to the crew . . . .you hear?"

The bell clanged out in front of the wheel house. The instant after Bender heard a quick give and take of blows, followed by an explosion of oaths. The men came swaying toward the ladder and fell against the handrail nearby. One had the other bent over, and shortly he twisted him around and flung him at the ladder's opening.

"Get off my bridge!"

Bender half raised himself and slid down the steps, but he was too late to avoid the second mate who came clawing after. They collided, the impact sending them to the deck. A kind of primitive protection drew the second mate together, and the next instant he was pounding Bender viciously with his fists. The red-headed one warded the wild blows from his face and sought to grasp the other's neck. This unsuccessful, he drew back, tore free and got to his feet. In the process the mate's hand grasped a button of Bender's oilskins, and it parted company with the rest of the fabric. A moment after they collided again and a roll of the boat sent them against the side of the cabin.

It was a short and silent fight, each man grimly trying to gain some effective hold on the other. A blow rocked Bender's head. With a great effort he drew the mate's body away from the cabin and, with a raised knee, thrust him back again, jamming the knee into the man's stomach. The latter slid away limply, and Bender wasted no time in turning and going back along the alley to the port ladder which he descended in two jumps. Another flight carried him to the well deck, where he poised and waited for the swirling waters to go rushing out. A dash brought him to the rigging and he regained the crow's nest to lean against the edge of the barrel and struggle for breath.

It had been a hard pull and he was sorely pounded by the mate's rawboned fist. He felt a welt rising below one eye. Doubtless they would locate him in the morning by that welt. He cursed softly. Things on this ship were very much of a puzzle. Plainly the second officer and the captain were involved in some kind of vendetta which extended even as far as the crew. No self-respecting captain would tolerate the kind of language coming from Lowry; yet the skipper had mixed his anger with protest and even with remonstrance. A strange thing for the commander of a boat to do!

Of course, this was a rum ship, sailing with double papers and no certain destination. That made discipline and ranking different. Yet, with all that, the other of old, traditional seamanship hung to the captain's speech, while the second officer suggested strongly the rebellious, undisciplined landsman clothed with a bit of brief authority.

A shout floated up to Bender; looking over the side of the nest he saw the vague form of the new watch standing on the ladder just below. The red-headed one climbed out and went down. They edged past each other with a brief word, Bender letting himself into the shrouds carefully and continuing to descend. Again he made the swift dash across to the main deck. Going through the port alleyway he let himself down into the aft well and brought up at the entrance to the quarters. He got through the door and closed it quickly behind him to block the whipping spray that slid over. For a moment he stood blinded by the light of the place and

half dazed by the unaccustomed noise going on within. As his eyes cleared he made out a queer, topsy-turvy scene.

The swaying lamp that rotated wildly in the gimbels threw its guttering rays from one corner to another of the quarters, now lighting up a dishevelled bunk, now revealing the hard-set and unfriendly faces of the half dozen men scattered about. The rough pine frames of the tiers of bunks filled the small place, save for a spot perhaps twenty feet square in the center. Here a table was bolted to the floor, and around it were four benches. At present a poker game was in session and the shifting light of the lamp alternately hid and disclosed the countenances of the men playing. Back in the shadows a fifth man was rolled in blankets, smoking and watching the table. And across from him, Bender saw, Waycross reclined, also smoking and watching the table. At the head of the bed frames swung the bird cage.

Bender took it all in within the space of a moment. At his entrance all eyes were turned to him, and he felt that he had never before been the focus of so much silent hostility as here. Nothing was said; it was in the manner they paused from their game and turned in their places to watch him as he closed the door; it was in the manner they took their pipes away from lips that began to close tightly and distrustfully down; it was in the way they silently resumed their game.

The red-headed one walked around the table to his bunk and sat on its edge to remove his boots.

"Queen full," announced a player; he was ugly, lantern-jawed and freckle-faced, while a great scar ran its livid course from a pock-marked temple diagonally across the left cheek to the jaw. It gave a sinister cast to the man's countenance and made it appear askew.

"Take 'er away, Jud," replied another, throwing his cards to the center of the table. Jud raked in the chips.

"Sure I'll take it," he growled. Reaching into his hip pocket he drew out a whisky flask and uncorked it. "Here's to a quick and fat trip!" he cried and tilted his head back. Someone kicked his boot, beneath the table, and caused him to choke. He hurled the flask away and rolled around on the bench, coughing and sputtering, half strangled for air.

"Who did that?"

Bender, turned from them to remove his wet clothing, heard a murmur. Jud answered it recklessly. "Oh, what's the difference. They'll know soon enough. I guess I c'n handle them, anyhow."

They went on with their playing, now and then to break into exclamations of discontent or glee. Bender got into dry clothing and sat on the edge of his bunk, smoking. Occasionally he glanced up and caught the eye of Waycross who was leaning partly out of his bed. But it was only a fleeting glance; for, across the space, the other man rolled in blankets watched them closely.

The ship rolled over; the crowding water piled into the well deck and the roar of its spilling, battering force echoed faintly in the fo'c'sle. Jud, the ugly one, made a quick stab for his pile of chips which tottered toward the edge of the table.

"By Godfrey, I don't like this!" he cried. "I told Lowry I didn't want to go out in a storm. He spills his usual line about gettin' away in a hurry, and about who's runnin' the boat, anyhow." The fellow's face grew angrier. "Next time I'll not be so easy. I'll tell *him* who's runnin' the boat. I'll tip him a few words about that hard-nosed skipper, too. Had just about my bellyful of his ways."

"Jud Callahan, shut up!" called out the man in the bunk.

"Ah!" growled Jud; but he went on grumbling in a lower tone, staring morosely at the cards he shuffled. His temper seemed to labor and increase under

the restraint imposed by the other men; they, in turn, became more silent, eyeing their shipmate carefully.

The bird cage at the head of Waycross' bunk swung with the ship, bumping the bulkhead at every roll. The pigeon, in the effort to keep its balance, flapped its wings and the result of their hitting on the wire wall of the cage produced a strange, half startling sound. Time and again Callahan turned and stared at the bird, to resume his playing with a low mumbling of oaths. Frequently Bender rose and tried to readjust the cage, stringing the cord from different beams of the fo'c'sle. But no matter how he fixed the thing, it swung regardless, and the pigeon kept flapping its wings.

It was, finally, more than Callahan could stand. Bender had just finished one of his many attempts to ease the cage, and had relit his pipe. At the table a sizeable pot had been taken from the ugly sailor, and he cursed his luck with more than the usual amount of violence, flinging the cards away. Hardly had he done so when the pigeon flapped its wings and cooed in a liquid, mournful way. Callahan swung about.

"Say," he called to Bender and breathing hard, "that thing's got to go out. It gets on my nerves. 'Tain't healthy to have it in the fo'c's'le."

The game stopped and all eyes turned to the new men. Bender smiled agreeably. "Where'll we put it?"

"Don't care where you put it, but it can't stay here!"

Bender's mouth closed down on the pipe, but still he retained part of his smile. "This bird's a warm animal. Got to have heat or it'll freeze to death."

"Say, young fellow, I ain't used to bein' argued with in this place," broke in Callahan. He edged forward in his chair. "I say that bird goes out, now."

The bullying tone acted as an immediate irritant to Bender. His jaws came together. "Ease off there, man, and talk civil. I'm asking you where I'd put it!"

"An' I say I don't care where you put it! Throw it overboard—that's the best place to put it. But it's got to go out!" shouted Callahan.

Bender put out his pipe and laid it on the bunk. "I'm damned if it does," was his succinct answer.

Of a sudden the atmosphere seemed to be charged with an electric current. The roar of the storm outside boxed in and compressed a small cell of intense and expectant silence. Callahan was sliding forward, now on his feet. Bender rose to meet him, shoulders squared. His eyes took on a dancing, fitful light and he was almost smiling. Waycross whispered a few low words that only Bender heard: "Don't, you fool, don't. Keep your temper down!" But Bender flung his head back, unheedful.

"If you want the bird, come after him," was his challenge to Callahan. A moment later both his fists struck the solid, rugged man who plunged forward.

They were not pigmies, either of them. Perhaps Bender was the smaller of the two, but a single glance at his chest told of a springy, tireless body, and one saw, in those cheerful, combative eyes, the heart of a born fighter. He ducked a bear-like hug of Callahan's and came up behind the man. "Here, here," he called. "You're a poor slob of a man to be usin' his fists."

Callahan turned and rushed again. A blow rocked the Irishman's head, his guard dropped, and they were whirling, around and around, in the small place, bringing up against the bunk frames and smashing into the bulkhead. The table went over with a crash and the benches were inextricably mingled with the charging feet. Callahan thrust one foot through the back of one and made of it a bit of wreckage. The rest of the crew crawled into their bunks, out of the way and watched in silence. Waycross was holding tight to the frame

of his bed and staring at the couple as if his very life were involved. Once his lips moved, and at a time when Bender slipped, his own body drew up into a tight bundle, as if to spring out in rescue.

Bender struggled to get free from the solid hug of his opponent, but only succeeded in being drawn tighter about the waist. Callahan was using the old, old squeeze on the red-headed one and bit by bit the latter was forced backwards toward the floor. The effort brought the livid scar out on Callahan's face; his lips turned back, and between rage and effort his whole countenance was distorted and swollen.

The next thing the intent spectators saw was a sudden transformation. Bender's right foot shot out, and at the same moment both forearms were pressed against the left side of Callahan's neck. He went off balance, twisted as he fell, and shortly Bender was on top.

They had fallen with a terrific crash; Callahan went limp, while Bender drew back and got nimbly to his feet.

"Come on," he panted. "Get up, you imitation man, and fight. I'm going to knock the heart out of you!"

Callahan drew up, his face twisted in pain, and held to the side of a bunk for support.

"Get up your fists!" cried the red-headed one. "I'm going to batter you into a different frame o' mind about that bird. Put up your hands!" And he rushed once more.

He pounded the larger man at will. The other, bumping against the bulkhead, rallied, and fended off the destructive fists for a bit. Bender lowered his head and came on; Callahan was twisted and shot across the small open space. Again Bender rushed. The watchers saw him draw up on his toes for an instant in front of the tottering man, saw both fists shoot swiftly out—then Callahan sagged to the floor. The fight was over.

Bender drew a forearm across his face to check the blood coming from his nose. "There'll be more talk, maybe, about that bird?" he queried.

There was no talk. The faces he met were hard and the eyes unsmiling and hostile, but no one offered comment. The red-headed one grinned faintly. "We'll get along nicely, I'm thinking. The bird's a warm blooded creature, and I'm awfullly fond of it."

Callahan rolled over and very slowly managed himself to a sitting position. "Hey you!" he called out. Blood was trickling down from the corners of his mouth and from his nose, yet even in all this vivid color the livid welt still stood out in sharp contrast, drawing all the man's features into a vengeful, hate-ridden knot.

"Hey yourself," answered Bender, turning to his bunk.

"I'm warning you now," continued Callahan. "I'll get you, don't you forget that. This ain't the last of it." His voice filled with pain and rage. "Oh, no! You're bucking more'n you c'n handle. S'help me God I'll put my mark on you!"

"When you get patched up come around again," returned Bender. "We'll have a real fight then, you freight train!" He dropped into bed.

But the threat left the atmosphere of the fo'c'sle strangely sinister. Perhaps it was because of the deliberate and cold manner of the men as they turned in their bunks; perhaps it was because of the fitful way the light flickered as it thrust its shadows here and there; perhaps the sullen boom of the storm sounded more ominous.

Bender dropped off to sleep, but Waycross kept on smoking, his watchful eyes roaming from spot to spot. The fire went out of the heater, and a chill settled over the quarters. The light suddenly guttered, struggled, and was extinguished, leaving the intermittent glow of Waycross' pipe the only bit of warmth

in the shadows. He felt the lawless impulses of the men of the fo'c'sle closing about him.

CHAPTER III.

THE BLOOD TRAIL.

The morning broke with the *Welsh Castle* driving through gray seas. The edge of the storm had worn off, it seemed, and it no longer rained; but a cold, raw wind whistled across the starboard bow, bringing with it long stringers of water that spilled into the well deck and churned around and around, battering the bulwarks, before pouring out again. Low scudding clouds went racing past, detaching themselves from a dark mass in front of the ship and joining a darker mass behind it. It was the dismal beginning of a dreary and restless day, marked for evil deeds by the sullen and defiant words of the watches as they filed into the mess room at the head of the upper deck.

Waycross came in with his watch and fell to eating without delay. Callahan, face marked by the previous night's battle, settled into the bench, directly across from him. The black gang—the half dozen of them off shift—crowded in likewise, their faces smudged with coal grime and dried sweat. They wolfed down the food in silence, anxious to get to their bunks in the forward fo'c'sle. Callahan reared up as one of them came beside him and jogged his arm in getting to a seat.

"Take a look where you go," growled Jud.

The stoker reached for the mush. "Shut up, or I'll lam you over the head with the sugar bowl," he returned briefly. "Pass th' cream. You birds wallowin' in yer bunks and restin' while we fought th' damned steam gauge all night. Boilers on this hooker leakin' like sieves. Steam floatin' about below enough to choke a man. If th' chief doesn't get a new ship next trip, I leave. Got better use for my life. This thing'll blow up some day."

"Aye, didn't I say we ought to ha' stayed in port during the blow?" returned Jud, with increasing heat. "Didn't I say to Lowry, 'There ain't no hurry, and I vote we wait until we can see——' "

"Stow that!"

Callahan turned to catch the warning circle of the bos'n's arm toward Waycross. He shrugged his heavy shoulders. "Oh, well, you know what I mean. And what did he say? Gave us the high and mighty airs, and said we'd go if he said so."

"You talk too much, Jud," argued the bos'n, uneasily.

"Well, ain't it so—ain't it so?" returned Callahan, half rising in his seat. "What're we gettin'? Not near what we ought to. We got some rights and what'll happen if we're caught? All hung on the same boom. No sirree, if we takes the dangers we ought to share the gravy, and by dad, I'm sayin' right here that we're a bunch of mutts not to get more for ourselves!"

By now the dozen odd men at the table were looking between Jud, the bos'n and Waycross. The latter continued his meal, apparently serene and oblivious to what was taking place about him. But if his countenance appeared unconcerned, his brain and his ears were not. He sought in every word and gesture some clue to the rising tide of mutiny that seemed to sweep the whole crew on. Here was Jud Callahan, apparently nothing but an able seaman, talking with the bos'n on terms of equality; speaking of the officers as if they were partners instead of men on a higher social scale. And the bos'n took it all in with a troubled face, while the rest of the crew glowered over their plates.

"Got to take orders from some one," said the bos'n, not at all positive in his manner.

"Ah, who says we do?" fired back

Callahan. "Leastwise not from that dodo-faced captain we got. He's stepped on my pet corns just about enough. And who made Lowry and Olsen mates on this boat—who did it?"

Waycross finished his meal in a leisurely manner by wiping his mouth with the back of a coat sleeve. The bos'n seemed to be waiting for him. "You there," he called to Waycross, "go below, will you, and take a look at the lashings on the winches."

"All right." The latter got free of the bench and sauntered out, buttoning his oilskins.

He started forward, but on looking over his shoulder saw Bender come up the ladder from the aft well, so turning, went down to meet him. They came together near a small jog in the alleyway; Waycross drew Bender into it, thus screening them both.

"Bos'n and Callahan chewing the rag in the mess room," said Waycross. "More mutiny in the air. Sent me out so's they could argue it out. Something's going to smash. When'll we do the trick?"

"Not time yet, I don't think," returned Bender. "Never saw such a mad house. Can't dope it all out."

"Heard 'em talking of the chief. Who's he?"

"O'Flynn, in Seattle. He's the headpiece. They never seen him, though. Closest they get is Lowry."

"Callahan crabs him."

"Callahan's a fo'c'sle bully and a sea lawyer. Give me another day or so and I'll beat him into different manners."

"No—no! Lay low and don't attract so much attention! You'll have our throats slit." Waycross grew angry. "For heaven's sake, man, don't be a fool. We can't walk off the boat, you know."

Bender chuckled and nursed a fist. "No, but we can walk onto another. How many on this boat?"

"Well, six in the crew, not counting us; about a dozen in the black gang forward; a couple of oilers; carpenter, bos'n, wireless man, Chinee cook, mess boy, first and second engineers, captain and mates. About thirty-four or five, all told."

"What's wrong with the skipper?"

"Haven't figured it, yet."

"Last night," said Bender quickly, "I had a listen-in and heard him and Lowry quarreling. Lowry ran into me, but hasn't located me, so far."

"Man! Will you never keep low? Get on and have your breakfast. If you hear anything try to meet me behind the wheelhouse, aft."

"All right."

They parted; Waycross kept on down the alleyway, descending to the after well, while Bender walked into the mess hall. It seemed to be his fate on this ship to interrupt arguments, for as he entered a flood of hot and angry words came to a full pause, and a dozen hostile eyes turned swiftly to him. The bos'n was leaning against the bulkhead as if at bay, the stokers were all looking in a hungry fashion at Callahan, and that ugly gentleman was leaning far over the table, his face contorted with unlovely feeling. He turned to view Bender as the latter shoved himself into a seat at the table.

"Hey there, doctor," shouted the red-headed man through the galley door, "bring in some hot grub."

"All li."

With an exaggerated show of indifference Callahan turned from the newcomer and raised his coffee cup. "Never you mind," he added significantly, to the bos'n. "Never you mind, Holt, we'll find out to-night!"

The long, indecisive face of the bos'n twisted about this phrase and held it for a moment. "That's enough till then," he said finally, and a sort of authority seemed to fall over him. "Get outside now. There's work to do."

The crowd got up from the table and filed out. Bender, looking up, caught the malevolent gaze of Callahan. The red-headed one beamed. "Well, old merry sunshine, what's matter, this fine morning? By the way, there's a bump on the side of your face that I didn't see last night. Fighting again? Naughty! naughty!"

Callahan paused and teetered on his feet, as if desiring to spring on the irritating Irishman. The bos'n prodded him in the back. "Go on—go on," he ordered, and Callahan went out, swearing under his breath.

The bos'n rested in his tracks, looking soberly at Bender. There was something melancholy and discouraged in the man's eyes and his head drooped a little as he looked down at the red-headed man. The latter swallowed a gulp of coffee and returned the scrutiny.

"Well?"

"Young man, I wish you'd not make so much trouble with that tongue of yours," was the surprising answer, delivered in a plaintive and dispirited voice. "It's a mighty hard job to keep things goin'."

"Say, dad," urged Bender, "if I was in your shoes I'd hang a belayin' pin over that Irish yokel's neck."

"You want to be careful he don't do you up," returned the bos'n with a sudden access of energy. "You're playing with gingery men. Be careful." He stared about him and his voice sank to almost a whisper. "You better keep yourself pretty low and silent. Mind now, I'm warning you! Things ain't so easy on this ship!"

Bender's face drew into one of its momentary unsmiling masks, and his eyes became clouded and frosty. "Where do I get off at?"

The bos'n's voice dropped again to its weary, discouraged tone. "Sing low and you'll be all right. Maybe they shouldn't ha' signed you on."

"You must think I'm a ninny. Everybody's splitting the profits on this ship. Am I to be the fall guy and work for a straight salary? Share and share alike, I say."

The bos'n was greatly agitated; his thin mouth flew open and his eyes popped wide. "Hush up, man!" he cried. "You want to get your throat split open?" He drew a shaky hand across his forehead. "I've seen that, too. I give ye my last warning: Sing low around here. You don't know what you're into."

Bender emitted a short laugh. "All right, dad. But listen, I've got a couple of good eyes."

The bos'n waved a dismissing hand and went out the doorway, leaving Bender at his coffee. A queer character, this bos'n Holt, thought the red-headed man. Somewhere he must have got his cables afoul the gang and been drawn more or less unwillingly in tow of their half piratical business. His shambling gait and his apathetic, lacklustre air certainly did not stamp him as one of the bold spirits of the crew. He was in a class apart from the second mate and Callahan. He seemed to have more in common with the captain and first officer. The latter Bender had seen only once and he had got the fleeting impression of a burly and taciturn chap who eternally debated with himself while pacing the bridge. Strange characters aboard this boat!

The red-headed one finished eating and rose to light his pipe. The boom of the charging rollers hitting the blunt bow came up to him, and as he stepped out of the doorway he also caught the low moan of the wind as it flung through the rigging. When he had gone into breakfast, a short time before, he had seen the faint smudge of land still looming up astern. But now the last of it had dropped away, and only a lowering black sky closed over the far edge of water. The air took on a heavier cast as the fog began to creep in.

He walked down the alleyway and descended to the after well where the bos'n superintended a group of men working on the hatch coamings.

"Work for you to do," said the latter. "Come along."

Bender followed him to the short alleyway that split the after housing in twain. On the port side was the fo'c'sle, with its door opening into the passage. On the starboard side was a similar compartment, but, in the absence of a larger crew, this had been converted into a storeoom. The bos'n opened the door leading into it and entered. A dark and cluttered place it was, and all that Bender might see was a series of piles, indiscriminately heaped up. Here rested a huge coil of new manila rope; farther on was a pile of blocks and tackle; while back against the bulkhead rows of canned goods disappeared into the gloom.

The red-headed man leaned on the door sill while the bos'n fished about within. Finally he came out again, carrying a brush and a fresh can of red paint.

"Here," he said, giving these to Bender. "Want to keep the bulkheads along here from rusting." And he led the way still farther back down the alleyway, reaching at last the very end. The iron walls of the ship enclosed all three sides. "Ain't been painted here fer a long while and the rust is eatin' in. Run the brush over the whole works, up as far as the fo'c's'le door. Take your time—there's lots of it."

He turned to go; a fresh thought, however, turned him about and lifted his doleful face to the red-headed one who was now opening the can of paint.

" 'Member what I told you," he reiterated. "The fellow that keeps his ideas under the hatches is the one that gets through this trip the best."

Bender swashed his brush through the red pigment. "Hell, man, but you're a mournful cuss!"

"Ay, so would you be, if you'd seen what I have." And with this parting shot Bent walked hurriedly away.

Bender watched him until the lank and stooped form ducked out of the alleyway's entrance, stood silhouetted for an instant in the gray light of the day, and disappeared. But very little illumination came down the passage and Bender could hardly see the bulkheads around him. He found a corner of the iron partition and began slapping on the paint.

He covered one wall and worked back down to begin on the other, now scraping off the scaling rust with the end of his brush, now pausing from work to stamp his feet in an effort to keep the blood flowing. The boat flung its stern out of the water. Bender heard the throb and race of the propeller shaft below him and caught, directly behind the end bulkhead, the metallic clink of metal on metal. It sounded like the dropping of iron pawls into a huge ratchet. The thing stirred Bender's inflammable curiosity; he set the paint can down and felt around, in the semi-darkness, for some sort of door in the iron wall.

His hand struck hold of a grip and latch. He pressed on it and shoved forward; the door moved perceptibly to the pressure, and returned his weight. "Well, well," said he, "open up, you critter," and he flung the whole of his body against it. The door yideled a groaning and screeching of hinges. "Need oil there," he observed, pausing on the threshold to get oriented in the dark.

A mass of gearing grew out of the gloom. A great iron shaft rod thrust itself down through the decking above, was inextricably caught to great cogs which stretched out on the floor in semicircles, and plunged out of sight again, through to regions below. The clank of the iron pawls, again drew his attention, and he saw that the great teeth of the largest metal semicircle bit through

the shaft rod which turned slowly, stopped, and turned again.

That much settled. Here was a continuation of the steering gear from the wheelhouse on the deck above. He moved about and caught his foot on some sort of coping. Reaching down he found a circular trap door. Again the Irishman's curiosity came to the fore and he tugged at the hand grip. The cover lifted off, Bender laid it aside, and found himself gazing down a manhole, at the bottom of which a dim electric light revealed a twisting, glistening segment of the propeller shaft. A ladder covered the distance of about twenty-five feet from the top to the bottom of the manhole.

"Holy mud!" exclaimed Bender. "There sure are lot's of funny things on this hooker."

Abruptly he straightened and whirled about. Down the alleyway sounded sharp, swift footfalls. He lunged toward the door, intending to draw it shut, but his hand reached out and touched the breast of Waycross, who peered through.

"Who's that?" queried the latter, sharply, shading his eyes.

"You gave me one helluva scare," returned Bender, simply.

"Oh, you, eh? Thought I saw you and the bos'n come in here a while back." Irritation jumped into his voice and he spoke half angrily. "Now what devilment has your prying hands got into? My God, I wonder we haven't been killed a dozen times over! Will you never use caution? Suppose I'd been the bos'n or one of the crew?"

"Thought you were, bedad!" answered Bender, chuckling softly.

"Oh, well—listen! Something else rotten on this boat. Somebody else got their fingers in the pie!"

"Now who?" asked Bender, growing serious.

"O'Rourke."

"The devil!"

"Yes! Posing as a wireless operator. Was going along the captain's deck when he popped out of the wireless house and gave me the once over. He's never seen me before, though. You know, I've always made it a policy to keep out of his sight; so he didn't know me. But you should have seen the look he handed me. Took me in from head to foot. I kept going. When I was ten feet or so past he sang out: 'You one of the new men?' I said, 'yes,' and turned about. He thought of that for a minute, still boring into me with his eyes. 'Strange boat for you to be on, isn't it?' he asks again. I stalled a bit. 'Oh, I don't know. Haven't found anything so very bad to complain of so far. Chow's good and the mates aren't bad.' That seemed to satisfy him. 'Well I just wondered,' he said. 'Things seem mighty queer on board sometimes.' And he turned back into his house and slammed the door."

Bender leaned against the bulkhead and stared at the machinery. "Jerusalem!" he whispered. "Jerusalem! The worst man in all the world to see me here."

"He's seen you before, too. He'd know you at the first glance."

Bender's accompanying laugh was mirthless. "Last time we met it was in a blind passage in a Portland Chinee joint. If I hadn't been lucky I'd never got out alive. Oh, he knows me, all right. And he's layin' for me, too. Jerusalem!"

Waycross swore softly. "Again, again, again! Bender, I think I'm done with you after this trip. I'm done, you hear? No sense of discretion, no caution, nothing but your damned temper and curiosity!"

"Ah," growled Bender—and Waycross drew up with a startling suddenness—"quit it! Somebody has to take the risks, and I'm the guy that's been doing most of the taking. You can't get along without scratching blood now and then. I haven't ever yelped about it. Shut up and think of something we can

do—that's your long suit. God knows if O'Rourke sees me the game's all off, and my life ain't worth a penny."

The stern soared up and the screw thundered and raced. The pawls clicked, were silent, and clicked again. The two men stared at the machinery.

"What's his game, you suppose?" queried Bender, half plaintively. "What's he doing here?"

"Don't you see? He's wireless man. What could be simpler."

"We're stuck then!"

"Not yet," answered Waycross, grimly. "Not yet. But we can't be standing here. Stay out of sight as best you can. We'll have to trust to luck, and hope for the breaks. And something will break shortly, I figure. Now I'm going back. Meet you here at eight to-night."

"Hold on, want to show you something." Bender pulled him over to the manhole. "See it."

Waycross stared down at the whirling shaft. "Life escape, I guess. Runs to the shaft alley and that goes all the way to the engine room. In case the engine room is flooded they get into the shaft alley, close a trap door behind them and come up here. Sort of water tight compartment."

At that moment a light wavered across the farther corner of the compartment they were in. Turning they saw it stream from a small hole in the iron wall. Bender jumped over and peered through it. Shortly he came back and whispered into Waycross' ear: "The thing opens into the fo'c's'le. Chap came in for some tobacco, I guess, and lit the lamp."

They drew back and waited, watching through the door. Shortly the ray of light went out and they saw the man come from the fo'c'sle and disappear out of the alleyway's mouth. Both men stepped outside and closed the door. "Mind now," admonished Waycross, "Keep out of sight as well as you can. If you let your curiosity get the best of you, God knows what will happen." And he went down the passageway.

Bender took up his can of paint and resumed work.

The day passed slowly, with the *Welsh Castle* bucking the persistent, raw head winds, which sang in a dreary, monotonous fashion through the rigging and whipped a thick, heavy fog over the crests of the great seas trooping by. The booms creaked under the roll of the ship and more than one of the crew going across the decks looked aloft with an anxious eye. At midday the first mate appeared on the forward break of the captain's deck and ordered preventer stays on the lifeboats and an extra fold of tarpaulin on the hatches. "Aye, aye, sir," shouted Bent. "And I'm thinkin' we'll tighten down still more," he murmured, "before the night's over. Craigie, Dodson, Merritt, go aft and get spare 'paulins for the foredeck hatches."

At five in the evening the *Welsh Castle* began sounding the whistle through the dense fog. Now the wind had risen to a shrill wail as it hurtled across the boat, bringing with it the spray snatched from the crested rollers. The smash of the attacking waters again and again seemed to resound throughout the frame of the battling craft, while the throb of the engines took on a deeper, more laboring note. Bender, skipping across the forward well, felt the bottom of things drop beneath him and heard a great thundering of waters behind. He flung himself at the ladder and gained the upper deck one step before a seething, tremendous sea. He ran swiftly down the port passageway, but even before he had reached its end, the *Welsh Castle* heeled far over, throwing him against the life rail. He looked out into the dense fog and saw nothing; a tongue of water swung itself aboard the deck, wet his feet, edged farther back, and slipped off again. The boat recovered with a spring, sending Bender to the cabin walls.

He struggled on, and at the aft break

of the deck ran into the second mate who gripped the hand guards of the ladder and looked down at men working swiftly on a hatch. He effectually blocked Bender's progress.

"Excuse me, sir, but I'd like to go down there."

The second swung around. "Eh?"

"I'd like to go down there!" repeated Bender, raising his voice.

The mate nodded and held his position, eyeing the red-headed one. Of a sudden his hand shot out and gripped the latter's oilskin, along the row of buttons. He pulled the flap back and saw, halfway down, that the middle button was gone. A grunt of satisfaction came out of him, and he let his hand fall away.

"I thought so!" he shouted, eyes filling with gusty anger. "Left your watch and came sneaking up to the bridge! Spying, eh? I thought that was your breed. You're not on this boat for any good, I know that; and you've heard too much for your own safety. Hear me?" The mate's face turned crimson and vengeful, and his bulking chin protruded even more. "Get below, you eavesdropper, and if I ever catch you on the captain's deck again, spying, I'll kill you!"

Bender swayed on his heels, looked at the men below, looked at the mate, and turned quietly to the ladder. "That's one time," he muttered to himself, descending, "that I took it from him. Just one time."

Night sifted in with the fog and shut all but a great roaring sound away from the *Welsh Castle*. Within the fo'c's'le the lamp swung in crazier circles than ever and no one played cards on the table. In their bunks, each man smoked his pipe and looked out upon the small open area. Watching them all, Waycross intercepted sharp, meaningful glances that they frequently cast to each other. He felt an intent and restless quality in their gestures, as if they expected some uncommon, exciting, half-feared event to take place. He rolled over and looked at his watch. Now seven-fifty and time to go outside and wait for Bender.

He slid out of the blankets and drew on the oilskins. Callahan watched him sharply; Waycross, conscious of this scrutiny, made his progress toward the door as casual as the pitching ship would permit. Once outside, however, he ran back along the alleyway to the very end and waited. It was perfectly dark.

Eight o'clock came, marked by the opening of the fo'c's'le door and the exit of the new watch. Callahan stood in the light, buttoning up the slicker, his red face distorted to a still uglier and more debased appearance by the sou'wester jammed down over his ears. Waycross caught a hearty curse flung out by him; the door shut with a slam and the face was blotted out. Waycross settled back to wait.

It seemed that a half hour went by; still no Bender. He stamped his feet to keep the blood circulating and walked as far as he dared down the alleyway. The relief had long since gone inside. He waited perhaps fifteen minutes more, then, propelled by a fear that had no substantial basis he could understand, went swiftly out to the well.

Going up the port ladder he made his way down the passage and brought up at the fore break. No one along that route. Turning, he walked to starboard and crawled back that side. The fear mounted, gave an added keenness to his eyes, and an extra power to his ears; time and again he paused, thinking he heard strange noises mingling with the storm, to go on after a bit, his mind racing with activity. That passage way explored; still no trace of his partner. Now he felt his way up the port ladder—the only way up from aft—to the captain's deck.

He paused here, not certain of his way, and with no idea at all of his next step. He was seeking Bender in a hit

or miss fashion; perhaps that hot headed and curious man was now poking his nose into forbidden places again. Waycross swore at the thought, quietly and intensely. The outline of a lifeboat appeared and he guided himself along its side until he reached the iron arm of a davit. He put out his hand to take hold of it; in so doing he leaned forward. His right foot slid away, and he fell to the deck.

The fall didn't hurt him much; but the surprise of losing his balance caught him up. He drew his hand across the deck, and felt the contact of a fluid that was decidedly not sea water. It was more solid, stickier and unpleasant to touch. He drew the hand to his nose; the smell was disagreeable and not familiar. He got to his knees and with a free hand reached into a pocket for his waterproof matchbox. Now, hovering under the protection of the lifeboat, he attempted a match, and failed. The second effort was more successful, but the flame was only of an instant's duration. He tried a third match, placed the hand near it, and struck a blaze with his thumb nail.

By the single revealing flash he saw this his hand was red with blood!

He dropped the match and got to his feet at a single spring. Fear caught hold of him for a bit and it took several moments of struggle to collect his faculties again. The full, chilling force of an evil premonition was now swaying Waycross and he could not argue it off. He must, however, trace this smear of blood. Obviously such a stream couldn't trickle far. He had slipped on it. There was nothing on this side of the lifeboat; therefor, there might be something on the other. He did not attempt to define that "something" in his mind, as yet. Circling the davit he went around.

The advance of his tentative steps met the solid planking of the deck. Perhaps the blood was only a solitary puddle from some injured deck hand. Perhaps—his body stiffened and he found that his fists were tightly clenched. His movement was awkward, imperceptible; sweat broke out on his forehead. Then his foot struck the soft, half resistant bulk of a human body!

He brought up with a jerk. "Hell!" he cried, carrying the foot back in a panic. Havoc wrecked the orderly processes of reasoning, and he stood, partly stooped over and motionless, the wind beating against him, while conquering his tottering self-command. With some semblance of it restored he reached down and inserted a hand within the shirt of the man; the skin was still warm, but he felt no heart beat. No life left. He withdrew the hand and reached for the waterproof matchbox again; once more his attempts were fruitless. He tried the old tactics, placing the last match in the close proximity of the dead man's head, and striking it with his thumb nail.

The flame spurted and flickered wildly in the wind, keeping its queer, jagged shape for the briefest of moments. Yet in that instant Waycross saw the upturned countenance of Bender, discolored by blood, a long, misshapen track across the head where some blunt instrument had crushed in the skull. The redheaded's face in death held one of his infrequent unsmiling expression, and the eyes were frosty and gray.

CHAPTER IV.

THE RISING TIDE OF MUTINY.

After the flame had flickered out Waycross remained in the same attitude for perhaps three minutes, his mind whirling between the two or three possible instruments involved in his partner's death. All fear was now gone; the brief bit of light had confirmed and dispelled it; a slow, passionate anger, such as only the silent and grim-featured Waycross was capable of, rose in a slow, irresistible tide. Something caught in his throat. 'The cursed dogs!" he said, and got to

his feet. With the increasing anger arrived a cold, hard cast of mind. Whatever his former position had been, he was now by far the most dangerous man aboard. He turned about and gripped the davit, and half jumped from the unexpected diversion in front of him.

It was an explosive series of clattering, harsh, droning sounds; they broke through the noise of the storm with a peculiarly metallic effect, drawn-out, short-stopped, varying and pausing, now rising, now falling. Waycross was puzzled for a moment. The clamor stopped as suddenly as it had begun; it commenced again, continued its racket for an indefinite period, and quit for a second time. Waycross listened for its repetition; but apparently it had done for the occasion.

"Ah!" he cried, gripping the davit, "now I see. The wireless, of course."

Hardly had he got the words out of his mouth when he was instinctively ducking. The wireless house door opened, directly in front of him, and not over fifteen feet away. In the high blaze of light streaming out the operator stood revealed while buttoning up his oilskins; it was O'Rourke, whom Waycross had seen in the afternoon. The former paused on the threshold of his house, peered along the deck aft, and closed the door behind him. Waycross ducked still lower behind the boat. His eyes were dazzled by the sudden exposure to light, so he could see nothing. But he heard O'Rourke's heavy, rapid steps go pounding along on the other side of the lifeboat and die out.

"You devil!" swore Waycross. "I'll bet your finger's in this!"

He slipped around the davit and got aft, finding again the ladder to the deck below. But he did not go immediately down, rather hanging to the iron tubing and waiting. Out here the wind was more penetrating and whipped and beat him from both sides. He simply hunched his head lower between the shoulders; his hands were numb, but no matter, Waycross was stalking big game in the interests of his partner.

Below he saw the door to the fo'c's'le open and a man slip in; and from the bulky silhouette, Waycross recognized again the form of O'Rourke. His patience had been rewarded. The wireless man was going aft to the fo'c's'le, leaving his set unattended. Not a usual thing for a wireless man to do. Waycross descended and paused at the bottom of the ladder to get his bearings. Above all things he was grateful for this dark night; he had work to do.

Over his head he heard the scraping of feet followed by a long sustained cough; with one jump he had got away from the ladder's path and was flattened against the housing. The body came down the ladder and was likewise swallowed up in the dark.

"Hell's bells!" whispered Waycross; and he went forward to the break of the deck, but away from the ladder. He wished to be out of the way of any other straying member of the crew.

Again the fo'c's'le door opened and a man went through. This time Waycross thought it was the first officer, though he was not positive.

"Better I wait here a while," he murmured. "Something's up."

And something was up, for within the next five minutes the fo'c's'le door opened a half dozen times to admit others of the crew, while he heard swift, cautious feet go past him toward the ladder. He saw the second mate go in, pausing at the door with something that resembled reluctance. He saw the ugly face of Callahan work into a grin as he faced the momentary light; Callahan was deserting his post. And finally Waycross made out some of the black gang. After that the door was no longer opened.

"General meeting, I guess. And they're about full up now."

He sought the ladder and went down,

crossed the well in a half dozen swift strides, and paused before the fo'c'sle door. He was doomed to disappointment here; for only a confused babble and mingling of noises rose above the sounds of the stormy night; besides, this was a particularly dangerous place to be in. Should a late member of the crew come by, or should any of those within desire to come out, he would inevitably be discovered eavesdropping.

"Ah, sure! Why didn't I think of it before?"

He slid on down the impenetrably black alleyway and got to the bulkhead door. A strenuous pull brought it sufficiently open for him to crawl through. It slammed shut, leaving him standing confused among the steering gear. The decking shoved up on his feet, the pounding machinery beneath roared and was shut off completely; the pawls leaped into clattering life and clanked rapidly. The deck fell away with a dizzy drop and the rumble of the screw awoke again. The pawls intermittently clicked.

The first visible thing to Waycross was the thin ray of light shooting diagonally across the compartment. He picked his way very carefully toward it and was rewarded by finding himself in a position, on looking through the hole, to see the entire assembly in the fo'c's'le.

Callahan, he found, had the center of the floor. About him were grouped the various members of the crew, sitting on the edges of the bunks, squatting on the floor, leaning against the bulkheads. The ugly agitator was pointing his finger toward the second officer, and the latter, seated on one of the benches, looked defiantly back. Beyond him, in the shadows, Waycross saw the uncertain, lacklustre face of the bos'n, now twisted into lugubrious, painful lines. In contrast to his expression was that of the stokers who followed each gesture and word of Callahan with avidity.

"You know we ain't gettin' our share," he was shouting at Lowry. "Not half. We're th' boys that do th' dirty work. We sweat and we slave an' we take all the chances while that bloated buzzard in Seattle gets all th' money. It ain't fair. An' here you go spoutin' about mutiny and playin' square and finishin' th' trip. What th' hell's the use —what's there in it f'r us? Nothin', and I'm sayin' once more, we're a bunch of ninnies if we don't get ours!"

"Aye, that's right," came a voice from the stokers; it trembled, and was filled with husky cupidity. "That's the gospel truth. We're not done right by."

Lowry swung an angry hand out. "You dirty hyenas!" he cried. "Double crossing a man like this! The chief's always given you a fair break. Kept a lot of you out of the pen, too, if you want to be reminded of little details. Not a one of you got a bit of kick coming. Not a bit!" He swung back on Callahan. "As for you—you're nothing but a dirty wharf rat looking for trouble. I been watching you, Callahan. You're the cause for all these men spoiling. I saw you go stale last trip, and if I hadn't walloped the meanness out of your ugly frame you'd spoiled that trip." The mate's face grew menacing. "You want me to do it again?" he shouted.

Callahan's scar stood out against a sudden pallor. "You—don't—dare touch me!" he cried. "I'll have the law against you! A seaman's got rights."

Lowry's answer was sardonic and grim. "You're a measly kind of bird to be talking about rights. I'll right you!" He got up and kicked the bench back from the table. "I've got a notion to end this right here, Callahan." He advanced; Callahan fell back against a stoker.

"Leave him be, Lowry—leave him be!" cried several voices. "He's talkin' for the rest of us!" added still another stoker.

Lowry brought up; his face took on the cast of many different feelings, and

it was a study to watch him suppress a boiling, domineering wrath and call out an entreating expression, which patently was hard for him to maintain.

"Why boys," he said, "what ails you, anyway? You're doing better than you ever could 'a done on your own."

"Stuff!" growled some one from the crowd.

Lowry clenched his fist to maintain composure. The strain was severely telling on him. "What more do you want?" he asked with a half despairing way. "What do you want?"

This was Callahan's golden opportunity. Here was Lowry, the chief authority on the boat, knuckling under. Once more he took the floor. "This is what we want!" he said, triumphantly looking at the men about him. "We want the whole works! It's been long enough the other way 'round. We ain't the tools no longer. We'll not meet the tugs that come out from Seattle, or from Portland. We'll just steer off our course, keep a goin' and fix it up to land the liquor ourselves and get the whole money ourselves. Everybody share and share alike!"

After this momentous declaration there was a long silence in which each man, save Lowry, perhaps, looked self-conscious and a bit guilty. But the die was cast; they had issued their ultimatum, and with the increasing pregnancy of the pause the faces of the lawless crew settled down to masks of defiant and hard determination.

"That's so," breathed a voice; and a general stir moved about the fo'c'sle.

"My God!" said Lowry, his voice breaking. "You're proposing open mutiny!"

"Aye, aye," agreed Callahan, his animal-like courage now pitched at a maximum by the success of his declaration. He felt the crew behind him, no doubts of the feasibility of disposing of the liquor cargo independently had yet entered his mind, and he was flushed by his personal triumph over the mate. He detested the mate; his red, gray-green eyes plainly displayed that.

"We say that the chief's got enough plunder off'n us," remarked another of the crew. " 'Tain't exactly mutiny. This boat was never run on a strict, ship-shape plan. We 'lected Rawling first officer so's we wouldn't be tramped on too much. We 'lected Holt bos'n f'r the same reason. You bein' the chief's mouthpiece we couldn't 'lect you, nor the skipper who we got to keep to steer the ship straight. But that don't give no one license to run over us. This ain't a strict sea goin' voyage. It's different. Bein' sort of outside the law, anyway, we can do jest as we please. And I guess we 'bout decided it was time to feather our own pockets. Some day we'd get run down by a revenue cutter. Best get ours now. The chief'll never miss it. You'll get your share; mebbe we'll give you the boat after the trip's over, and you c'n start a graft of your own. 'Tain't a bad idea, all around."

During this soothing, conciliatory speech Lowry had composed his features, Waycross saw, as best he could. The eyes of the rest of the crew were focused sharply upon him, and the mate must have known that the least sign of dissent on his part would have immediately placed his life in jeopardy. The affair had become a grim and desperate one indeed; no matter what the conciliatory voice had said, this was mutiny on the high seas and punishable as such under Canadian laws. They could not back out now, and they could not suffer one man to hang up their plans. Lowry flung a hand to the ceiling.

"All right," said he, in a weary, resigned voice. "The chief'll be gunning for me for the rest of my life, but if you boys will do it, I guess I can't stand in the way."

The tension relaxed. In the far corner Waycross noted the face of the wireless operator break into a sudden, mali-

cious smile and sweep a look about the fo'c's'le. No one noted him, it seemed, and he grew sober again and self-occupied. Waycross experienced an involuntary constriction of muscles each time he looked at the man.

"Well," said Callahan, his blustering air resumed, "that's done. You understand us know, Lowry. Guess you c'n be second mate, still, but what we say you do." Then he turned on the wireless operator. "An' as for you, whenever they ring in and ask you where we are, don't you say a word. An' don't you be sendin' them any messages either."

"Aye," replied sparks. "Not a word."

Another of the crew sat bolt upright. "Who was you talkin' to last night?" he demanded.

Again a full wave of suspicion swept over the crew and they transferred their attention to the big man by the door.

"Just tuning up my set, so's to talk to Seattle, in case we did," replied the other in an easy manner. "Don't look at me so hostilely, boys, I'm not slipping you any lemons. You're a ticklish bunch of gents. What ails you?"

"Better not slip us anything," whispered a voice.

"Never mind," ordered Callahan, "whether we're ticklish or not. You just lay off usin' the set until we say so. Nobody knows what you're sayin'. So don't you say anything."

"What about the skipper," was the general question. "An' what about those two other fellows—Bender and Waycross?"

At the mention of these three men Callahan's face turned frightfully ugly. "Damn that skipper!" he half shouted. "An' damn those cocky boys. I'm f'r puttin' them both in th' chain locker for'd an' keepin' them there until we get loose. That captain has stepped on my toes enough. He's hard nosed, an' he thinks he's on a square rigger. He can't tell me anything!"

"We can't do anything without the skipper, remember," said Lowry, coolly. "Nobody knows enough navigation to run this boat. We've got to have him. And he won't consent to what you boys have been saying. He's an old-fashioned skipper."

"We'll show him some new fashions, then," returned Callahan sourly.

"And here's something else," continued Lowry. "The chief engineer is also like the captain. They go together, and we've got to have the chief, too. Now what're you going to do? If you try to push things too far they'd just as soon run the boat on the rocks. Got to go easy with them."

There was a general silence, broken by the reckless Callahan. "Ah, we c'n get along without them. Lowry, you c'n persuade him to be reasonable, or else we'll——"

The threat was left unfinished, but it was perfectly obvious what Callahan meant. "If worst comes to worst, we c'n navigate the tub as far as 'Frisco. Won't need to go any farther."

Lowry again broke in. "You're an ignorant fool, Callahan," said he curtly. "Leave it to you and you'll make a mess of things. Now if you boys must go on with this, let's do this: Lay low until morning. The storm's too fresh for us to be upsetting things at night. When dawn comes we'll rush the captain's deck and get him, also the first engineer. Somehow we'll manage to make them do their work."

A general note of approval ran through the crowd. Callahan, with a mutter of discontent, looked about him.

"Shut up!" ordered Lowry, again confident of his power in the fo'c'sle. "You've got no brains to use, so let some one that has plan this thing out. All right, then, boys; at dawn we'll go out and get them. Now get back on watch, Callahan."

"What about Bender and Waycross?"

Callahan's hands closed spasmodi-

cally; the mate looked reflectively at the lamp; in the shadows the wireless man shifted back and forth and Waycross saw a grim cloud pass over his face. "Get 'em and lock ' em up," said O'Rourke unexpectedly. "They're dangerous. They're not sailors—and they've got their eyes and ears open for us. Get them!"

A growl of assent ran over the fo'c'sle again. Waycross grew tense.

"That's right," said the mate. "Where are they now?"

"Out spyin', I 'spose, damn 'em!"

"Let's go out and find them!"

"Hold," said Lowry. "Do it this way: One man cover each ladder and passageway. Then we're bound to pick them up. I'll go forward and look about."

"No! You stay here!" The whole crew seemed to leap into life. Lowry's face darkened and he caught one fist in the other.

"You're a sweet lot of cutthroats! My God, what a crowd! All right. We'll all stay here, but the watch and the men to guard the ladders. Hurry up; Sawtelle, Williamson, Fallon, Dunton—you take the first watch; be relieved in an hour if you don't pick them up before. Now go on. They may be up to some sort of deviltry. Go on."

Waycross drew back as the fo'c's'le broke out into a general discussion. The meeting was over, and the mutinous men settled back to wait the night through. Those on watch crawled into their oilskins and went out. Waycross took another look and saw Lowry seated on the bench, head bowed between his hands. The wireless operator had sunk to a more comfortable seat on the floor. No man seemed in the mood for sleep; even if any desired it, they would not have been able to get to their bunks.

Waycross had heard enough. For the second time he withdrew his gaze from the peep hole. Quite clearly he had the facts of this strange cruise now—if he had not understood them before. Here was a boat under Canadian registry, with a full cargo of whisky, bound for the clear stretch of water just off the entrance to the Strait of Juan de Fuca. At that point they were evidently to be met by tugs of the smuggling ring and relieved of their cargo. The tugs, quite naturally, could slip into Seattle, Tacoma, Everett, Bellingham, and the other coast towns, with ease and dispose of the whisky. Or, the ring might have storehouses on the south shore of the strait. It was a wild country in spots and yet not far removed from the big towns. A shallow inlet would permit a tug to enter, a frame shanty would hold the whisky, and a fast automobile would take it away when needed.

"Now," he whispered, "how do I get out of here?"

And that was the pressing question. He might, of course, successfully leave the compartment and go down the alleyway again. But beyond lay danger, for the ladders were all guarded by now, and men would surely be roaming along the decks seeking him—seeking his partner. A grim bit of humor flashed across the man's mind as he thought of them seeking Bender. They would find him if they looked diligently enough and for their pains they would have the task of sewing him up in a bit of canvas and tossing him over the rail. Some one man in that bedlam beyond the bulkhead, thought Waycross, knew where Bender was; some one knew he lay stark and lifeless to windward of the after starboard lifeboat. Who was it?

He stood, irresolute, in the center of the dark cell, thinking his way out of the present difficulty. His reasoning was confused for the moment by another great gust of anger; he'd get the murderer of Bender if it took the rest of his life!

"Now how do I get out of here?"

They were attacking at dawn. Dawn

was seven hours off. Before then he must get to the captain and warn him, make him defend his position; elsewise Waycross had a scant purchase on life. Surely in this ship there must be a half dozen loyal men; that was plenty for a defense of the wheelhouse. They could hold the rest of the ship at bay, control the steering and destiny of the boat.

In turning about Waycross' foot struck the metal coping of the manhole to the life escape. In a flash he saw his way out. "Sure! Why didn't I think of it before?"

He reached down and fumbled for the hand grip, got it, and wrenched the cover away. The roar of the machinery flung itself out of the hole; at the bottom the swirling, twisting screw shaft glistened under the solitary electric light. Waycross paused only long enough to take another last look into the fo'c's'le. The assembly had thinned out a bit more; evidently Lowry was posting more guards. Waycross could see him faintly through the haze of tobacco smoke.

"Look long, you cutthroats," murmured Waycross, "here's a man that's going to put a crimp in your plans."

He lowered himself into the hole and contracted his shoulders to squeeze past the opening. Getting his feet solidly on the ladder, he paused to drag the manhole cover back across the opening. This was a strenuous bit of labor taking nearly five minutes; getting it done he continued his way down and dropped nimbly to the floor of the shaft alley.

It was not high enough to permit his standing erect, but even so it was a cavernous looking thing. Aft, it was swallowed up in gloom from which emanated the din of battering water and threshing screw. Forward it stretched away under the periodical glow of incandescent lamps until it reached a small opening that Waycross could just make out. Beneath his feet a boxed runway covered the screw shaft, indented at short intervals by bearing cases and oil spouts.

He took all this in by a few swift glances, then started forward. Once in his haste a flange of the shaft casing caught him up and he fell sprawling. He got to his feet with a grimace and continued his way. The door grew larger and shortly he stood near it, looking into the engine room. At first all he saw was the rapid rising and falling of the crossheads on the pistons that drove the shaft round and round; approaching the opening he got a larger view and saw a vast series of cocks and dials; a grated walk ran around the engines, mounted, circled again, and continued to mount, high overhead. In the far corner he saw an overalled figure oiling a pump. Off to the right another figure stood at the throttle and when the after end of the boat came soaring upward he threw the long rod over, held it, while a vast clanging and roar filled the great space, and drew it toward him again as the stern once more took water.

Waycross dodged out of the alley's mouth and followed the staging around. Neither of the men had seen him come out, and it was not until he had reached the first series of stairs that the one at the throttle ventured to shoot a brief glance of surprise toward him. Waycross waved a hand and kept going. As he turned to the second landing he caught a view of the boiler room through the engine passageway and saw a bare shouldered man heave a slice bar into a flaming furnace. He ran on.

Another flight and another circular, grated track. Below him the crossheads rose and fell; the oiler shrunk to dwarfish proportions; Waycross came to a door. Again he paused. He was not certain where this would let him out, and he did not wish to let himself into dangerous quarters, nor did he want to come upon any of the seekers from the fo'c'sle.

"Can't do anything standing here. Let's go."

He shoved the door open against the wind, slipped out as rapidly as he could and let it slam behind him. Next, he jumped sidewise and stood poised; he had revealed himself for the brief moment that the door had been open.

Nothing happened. He crawled along and bumped into a bulkhead; this set him to following it and he turned a corner, to find himself full in the teeth of the storm. Now he guessed that he was on the starboard side of the captain's deck, and at this moment was feeling his path along the side of that officer's quarters. This cheered him immensely. He picked up speed and came in contact with the knob of a door. First engineer's cabin; the skipper's was directly ahead. He went on.

It happened without warning. One moment he had stretched out a hand to protect himself while advancing; the moment after he had caught the rough-skinned fist of some opposing man. Just one thought occurred to Waycross in the shock of that contact: "Here's one of them; I've got to do away with him or we're all lost!" With that he swept his arms wide open and drove forward, catching his enemy in a solid grip.

The wall of the cabin was hard by; he turned the man toward it and with a repetition of his old tactics drove him against the planking, exerting his full force. Next, he brought an elbow back and jammed the man's head viciously to the bulkhead. He heard the report of that, even above the wind. But the other was a tough, tenacious opponent. Waycross had lost his grip momentarily, and a straight, forearm jab took him across the windpipe, knocking his breath away. He clung on with one hand, weathering attack. Another and another short, rocking blow smashed against him, reaching his chest, his forehead, his cheeks, but he lowered his head and took them all.

Strength returning he made a final desperate effort, launching the point of his elbow and his forearm against the other's face. He did not dare to try a straight blow, for fear of crippling his hand. A punch of this sort, solidly landed, would do as much if not more damage. He parried an arm, by chance, and threw his whole weight into a return lunge. It must have been a telling attack, for his opponent dropped the struggle. Waycross wasted no time. He threw himself forward and again bore the other to the wall with tremendous force. Now he brought up his knee and plunged it into the man's stomach; the latter gave a cry and relaxed. Waycross caught him around the waist and supported him there, fearing to let go and possibly suffer from trickery. At the same time his strength was about expended; he could only hang to the other and labor for his breath.

The situation was abruptly ended. A door opened not five feet from him, and the captain stood revealed on the threshold, a pistol in his hand, staring out into the night. The two fighters were so close that the cabin light, emerging from the opening, fell faintly on them, enabling the officer to see the strange spectacle. Waycross saw his lips move, and he lugged his burden forward to catch the words.

"Let me inside, and I'll explain this!" shouted the latter.

The captain did not move, still holding the pistol in a menacing manner. From his appearance Waycross thought he must have been drinking, or lost his reason, so dreary and worn and bitter was the expression of that officer's face.

". . . ungodly noise?"

Waycross came on further. "It's all right!" he shouted. "There's mutiny on your ship and I'm warning you. Warning you! Let's go inside!"

He did not wait for the other's reply, but advanced, making the captain retreat before him. Thus they gained

the shelter of the stateroom. Waycross let his captive fall while he turned to close the door. When he again moved about he saw the captain collapse into a chair and bury his face in his arms on the small table that served as a writing desk. The pistol dropped to the floor.

CHAPTER V.

WHEN DAWN BREAKS.

"Hell's bells!" exclaimed Waycross, startled at the sight of this unexpected breakdown. "You're not crying?"

But the man was. Or, if it wasn't crying, it was some paroxysm of feeling that shook his whole body, twisted his face into weak lines of defeat, and rendered him a pitiable spectacle indeed as he raised his head and stared at Waycross. It looked as if he failed to comprehend the meaning of the intrusion. Some semblance of dignity and authority gathered in him, Waycross saw an attempt at speech; the first effort failed.

"Get out of my stateroom!" was at last managed.

Waycross regarded him calmly. "Buck up, sir; there's mutiny aboard this ship."

The word "mutiny" penetrated the captain's consciousness and straightened him up, and recalled his sense of authority as nothing else possibly could. Here was a direct challenge, an out and out defiance to the constituted authority of the sea.

"Mutiny?" he half shouted. "Who's talking about mutiny?"

"They've done talking," responded Waycross. "It's all decided. At dawn they intend to storm the bridge, take you and the chief engineer and hold you while they run off with the ship."

"How do you come to be here?" was the sharp question. "Very strange for one of the crew to break away like this!"

"Don't forget, sir, that I and my partner were hauled aboard this boat at the last minute. Don't belong to the regular crowd in the fo'c'sles."

The skipper looked at Waycross more closely. "Ah, that's right. That's right. Your name's Waycross, eh?"

"Yes sir."

Their attention was diverted to the man on the floor. He rolled over, sighed hugely, and struggled to a sitting position, glancing about him with a dazed appearance. Waycross quickly went over to him, and seizing both arms, got a double hammerlock. "Here's one of them. Get a bit of rope and we'll tie him down. Make's one less to bother us."

The captain rose and sought out a locker, finding therein a long coil of half-inch rope such as is used for sounding lines. He brought it over to Waycross and between the two of them the prisoner was effectually trussed, not without a stream of verbal abuse from him. The captain's mouth tightened down.

"Aye, curse if you want," said he. "I'll have you hamstrung before I'm through with you."

"What about yourself?" asked the other in a surly fashion. "You'll never command another ship."

"Better than knuckling under to a band of street sweepings and wharf rats." The captain looked about him. "I'm not wanting to have him lying about," he said to Waycross. "Pick him up and we'll lock him in that closet, there."

The closet was a wardrobe locker; they shoved the prisoner within and the captain locked the door. "That makes me feel much better," said he. "Now, Waycross, where's your partner. He with the others?"

"No, sir. He's dead—killed by some of the crew on deck not over three hours ago."

"Murder, too?"

"Aye, they're a rare bunch of birds.

Nothing's too desperate, and they're up to their necks now."

"And Lowry?"

"He's with them."

"Too bad." The captain's face underwent another change; now it was the hard and practical visage of a blue water master. "They've bitten off more than they can chew with me. At dawn, eh? At dawn I'll cook their little scheme." He walked over to the speaking tube. "Below!" he called. "MacPherson there? Let me talk to him." He turned on Waycross. "I'm having the chief engineer up here. Hello, Mac, come up here as soon as you can . . . .hey? Well, you'll have to trust the engines to someone else. I want you here, right away."

Waycross settled into a chair, and the captain turned again to him. "You don't look like a sailor," said he, bluntly. "I never thought ye were one when Lowry brought you in."

"I been to sea."

"So's a fish," answered the captain rather tartly. "But you're no sailor, any one can see that."

Waycross chose to remain incommunicative, which visibly upset the captain. "It may be you're a secret service man. God knows, a man can't be sure of any one nowadays. Ye'll be wanting to know, maybe, how I'm mixed in this crowd." He leaned forward, earnestly. "It's not of my choice—remember that. They're devilish clever, the high men in this liquor ring, and they found me out as a man that needed money badly. I had my own family troubles I'll not explain to you. They offered me a good berth on a good ship, under certain conditions. Needing the money I took this job—and I'll regret it to the last day o' my life." He brought up rather shortly. "That's that. A man can't always have things to his choosing. But I'll never permit mutiny—not if I have to hang."

They relapsed into silence, the captain sitting doggedly in his chair, a figure appearing beaten by the storms of a rough life's voyage, Waycross inscrutably watching him. Only one other remark did the captain make, and that was to justify his chief engineer.

"You'll find he's a loyal man—there's none better. We've had the same ship for ten years, and he wouldn't leave me, so he came on this—him jeopardizin' his license the same as I. A loyal man."

Still Waycross remained silent.

The door burst open, dragging the chief engineer within. He put his tall spare frame against the thing and got it closed with some difficulty.

"Losh," said he, turning to his superior. "It's a fairish wind to-night. Tell me what ye will and let me go back. Things are not as well as they might be, below."

"What's wrong?" inquired the captain.

MacPherson shrugged his lean shoulders. "Eh, what's not wrong with this boat? It's not fit for good men to sail in, such as you and I. The boilers be leaking, I'm afeard the shaft will break in a hundred pieces, and God knows what's taken the strength from the stokers. I've knocked sense into a lot o' men, but these be the worst."

"I'll tell you," broke in the captain. "It's mutiny!"

"Eh?" said the chief mildly. He had heard. This was his way of expressing astonishment.

"Mutiny—and you and I are picked to be trussed up and treated like a couple of Christmas fowls when daylight comes. Nice, isn't it?" The captain's eyes snapped in anger.

The chief turned to notice Waycross for the first time, apparently. His blue eyes passed over the sailor and fell away, to wander back to the captain.

"What's to be done?" he asked in a calm, matter-of-fact way. "Morn is no so very far off."

The call of self-defense brought the three of them together shortly and they

were outlining plans for defense. First of all they must have firearms. The captain got a pistol out of his desk drawer, rose and fished a high powered rifle from a cabinet, "that I sometimes use when we land on the Alaskan coast," he explained to Waycross. For his part MacPherson silently drew a small thirty-eight caliber automatic from his hip pocket and laid it on the table. Waycross seemed to draw a similar gun from some mysterious part of his body. "Ye seem to be unco gude with such weepons," observed the chief in shrewd observation. Waycross looked noncommittal. That made four guns, well enough for three men, but not a sufficient arsenal should they recruit their party to larger proportions.

"My second's below, and I think I know where he keeps a revolver," observed the chief; he rose and went through a door connecting with the other staterooms on the captain's deck. After a bit he came back carrying not only a revolver, but also a box of shells. "Lyin' right on his table," he chuckled, and his whole face was transformed by an inner excitement. Anticipation seemed to liven him up tremendously. So it was with the captain, Waycross observed; the former actually embarked on some ponderous joke, and the chief chuckled and repeated gayly, "aye, aye, aye, so it is." As for himself, Waycross grew tenser and quicker of movement as the time passed. He also became more reticent.

"Ye seem distressed," observed the chief to him. "Perhaps ye dinna care for fighting?"

"Now," interrupted the captain, "let's see who we can depend on."

They ran over the list of men aboard. All the black gang were with the mutineers, likewise the second engineer. "A stubborn lad, he," commented MacPherson. The first assistant was doubtful. The chief knew very little about him. "He's asleep now, and let's wait until later to find out. If he's no for us, we can better take care o' him."

The crew aft were all classed as mutinous. "But Holt would come over with a little persuading," noted Waycross. "He's not of their breed."

"The wireless operator—how about him?" queried the captain.

Waycross looked reflectively at the ceiling, before speaking. He seemed to be formulating a decision. "Not for us," he decided at last.

"Felton," said the chief, getting gayer all the time, "this is to be ver-r-ry interesting." The skipper nodded. "But," continued, MacPherson, "have we not the Chinee cook and the mess boy?"

The captain slapped the table. "That's so; I'd forgotten. There's four of us."

"'Tis enough; our first officer, of course, goes with them. Small loss."

"Now," broke in the captain a second time, "we'll not try to hold this place. We'll go above to the wheelhouse. It will be easy to defend. We'll command a view of the whole ship from there, without exposing oursèlves."

The decks could be watched without difficulty; the rub was to keep tab on the companionways within the boat's shell. Once on the upper deck the mutineers might dash for the protection of the galley or mess hall and storm the single passage leading up to the central corridor of the captain's deck. Here, still protected, they could attempt to force their way through the captain's stateroom and up the inside stairs from that room to the wheelhouse, covered by a trap door. Either the defenders must keep the upper decks clear or they must effectually barricade the passageways leading up from within.

"'Twill be hard to keep them from coming up the outside ladders," agreed MacPherson; "it's the inside we must think about."

"We'll lock all doors of the companionways, just before dawn," said the skipper. "Now, Waycross, you go down

and find the Chinee cook and the steward and bring them up here."

Waycross set out, through the inside door, walked along a short passage, descended an abrupt flight of stairs, opened a door, and found himself in the mess hall. The cook and the mess boy slept on opposite sides of the hall. Waycross rounded them both up; the boy, a small-statured lad of about fifteen went quietly; the Oriental did not fully awake until he crossed the threshold of Felton's stateroom. Then he was all respect and attention.

The captain explained the situation in a few brief, simple phrases and put the blunt question to them. "Which side will you have?"

The boy flared up with an unmistakable enthusiasm. "We'll fight 'em!"

"Sho," agreed the cook. "Bimeby lick hell all out uv 'em."

"Fine!" agreed the captain. "Now there's work to do."

The next hour was an arduous one; all four of them set to work packing provisions from the galley to the captain's stateroom. "Carry 'em up to the wheelhouse when we get ready," said Felton. They got enough to sustain them for several days before they stopped. By then it was two in the morning. "Now," directed Felton, "you go and see about your first assistant. Take along a gun."

A quarter hour elapsed before the chief returned, leading his subordinate. "He's no fond o' mutiny," was MacPherson's comment, tossing another revolver on the table.

The first assistant, whose name was Stevens, looked after the revolver in sullen acquiescence. He did not appear to be overly eager to help the small crowd. "Understand," said he addressing the captain, "I'm not fighting my friends, but I won't doublecross the chief, nor can I stomach mutiny. So you just count me as a spectator." And the man's not overly strong chin set into a stubborn line. "I'll promise you, on my word, not to lift a hand against you; only, don't ask me to fire against anybody."

"Fair enough," agreed Felton, albeit a bit sourly.

For the first time since Waycross had broken into the stateroom a bit of calm invaded the room. Now came the most tedious part of the whole eventful night—that of waiting. Felton and MacPherson toasted each other silently with a finger of Scotch and settled back to fitful periods of rest. Waycross was immobile in the remaining chair and only the difference of race prevented him from appearing as impassive as the cook who reclined on the floor, seemingly asleep. The mess boy's wide eyes roamed continually. Stevens settled in a corner and stared doggedly before him.

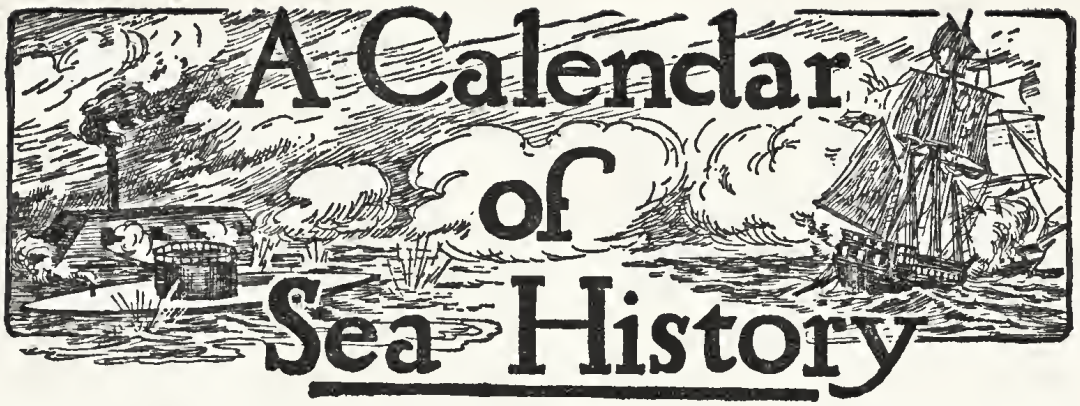
TO BE CONCLUDED.

LOSING THE VACUUM

SOME years ago, when the battleship *Rivadavia,* built for the Argentine government by the Fore River Shipbuilding Company, was about ready for the builders' trials, some of the engine-room instruments had not yet been installed. Among these was the vacuum gauge. The builders thereupon decided to use a U tube temporarily.

During the trials this tube was broken, and of course the mercury ran out and was lost in the bilge.

One of the yard force on his first trial trip, in describing this incident to some of his fellow workmen on his return, spoke of how the vacuum tube was broken and the "vacuum ran all over the engine room."



Past Perils, Battles, Achievements, and Romance of the Deep, presented in calendar form day by day

JULY

July 1, 1816.—The French ship *Medusa* strikes reef off Africa. One hundred and fifty embark on raft; only fifteen rescued two weeks later.

July 2, 1895.—Captain Joshua Slocum sails on his voyage alone around the world.

July 2, 1915.—The British submarine E-9 torpedoes the *Pommern* in the Baltic.

July 3, 1898.—The Spanish fleet comes out of Santiago harbor; American ships are waiting.

July 4, 1631.—New England's first ship launched.

July 4, 1840.—The *Britannia* sails. The founding of the Cunard line.

July 4. 1878.—The *Vega* sails from Nordenskiold, rounding the north of Europe and Asia.

July 4, 1898.—*La Bourgoyne* sinks off Nova Scotia with loss of five hundred and fifty.

July 4, 1918.—Ninety-five merchant vessels and seventeen warships launched in the United States.

July 5, 1801.—The birthday of David G. Farragut.

July 6, 1782.—*The Ranger,* of Salem, repels boarders at the mouth of the Potomac.

July 6, 1908.—Peary sails on the *Roosevelt;* he found the north pole before he returned.

July 6, 1919.—The U. S. transport *Great Northern* completes the fastest trip across the Atlantic, a little over twelve days.

July 7, 1798.—Congress authorizes naval warfare against France.

July 7, 1846.—Commodore Sloat raises the U. S. flag at Monterey.

July 8, 1497.—Vasco da Gama sails for India, spreading commerce to other oceans than the Atlantic.

July 8, 1778.—A French fleet of eighteen sail arrive off the Delaware to aid the American colonies.

July 9, 1916.—The merchant submarine *Deutschland* arrives at Baltimore.

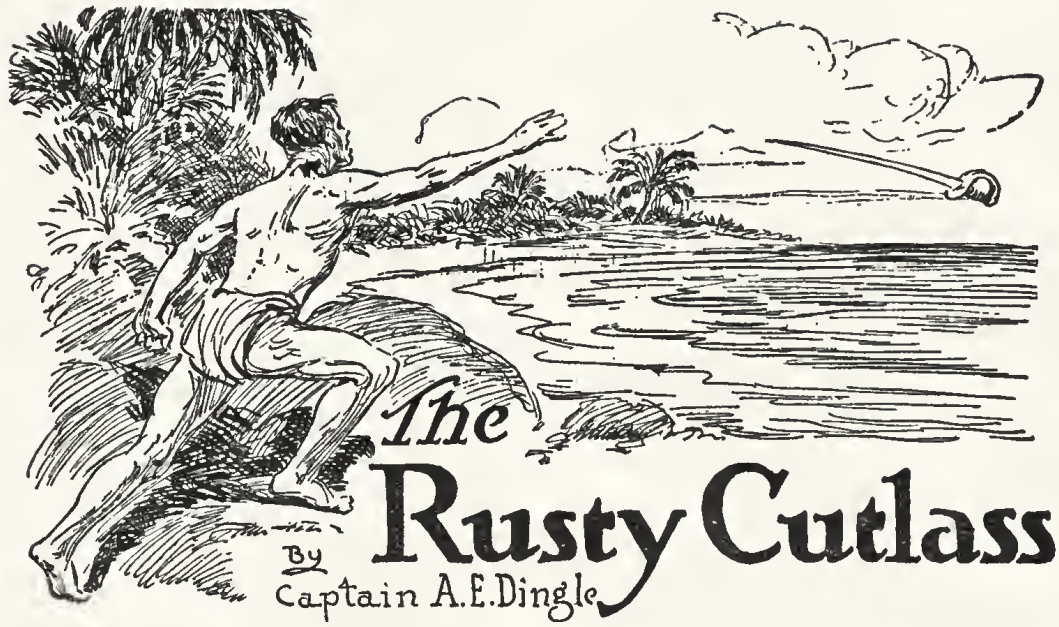
July 10, 1690.—The French defeat English and Dutch at Beachy Head.

July 10, 1792.—The *Commerce,* of Boston, is stranded on Arabian coast. Most of the crew die or are killed after long wandering.

July 10, 1812.—The *Fame,* Captain Webb, brings two British ships to Salem, the first prizes of the war.

July 10, 1840.—A British fleet blockades Chinese coast.

July 11, 1863.—Four blockade runners elude Union fleet and reach Wilmington, N. C.



The Rusty Cutlass

By Captain A.E.Dingle

After a sufficient period of service it gets in one's blood, and the instances are very rare where a man can escape the lure of navy life. Frequently, as in Gammon's case, a fancied or even real grievance will cause a seaman to rebel, but in the emergency they very seldom fail the flag of their country and the service which, deep down in their hearts, they have grown to love.

FROM behind a great chunk of convoluted coral rock, gray with age and splotched with crimson lichen, Tim Gammon peered with lessening anxiety at a smart navy cutter sweeping rhythmically across the glassy blue of the lagoon. The last trace of worriment vanished from his rugged face and made place for a self-satisfied grin as the boat sheered alongside the gunboat *Flamingo,* tossed oars, and was hooked on to the dangling tackles, while from the ship's forecastle head clattered the harsh protest of a taut chain cable around the windlass.

White foam spread across the blue under the gunboat's stern, her bows swung to seaward, and the blazing sunlight made jewels of her port glasses and polished brasswork, as she pointed her quarter fair at the beach; her flag made a stab of vivid color against the shimmering background of sea and sky, bringing an involuntary choke into Tim's throat which he smothered with a curse.

Half an hour more Tim lingered behind his boulder, until the *Flamingo* had dwindled to a fairylike toy of ivory and gold on the deep-breathing bosom of the Pacific; then he stood erect, peered sharply under his hand along the white, level beach at the solitary hut nestling in a group of palms on the southern bluff, and became feverishly busy.

His cap he had already lost. Now he tore off his uniform savagely, with a gritted oath for every button and fastening.

"Drill and polish and look smart!" he growled, and bundled his jumper around a slimed rock, dropping it into a cavity in the rock pile.

"Jump to a bos'n's pipe, and salute yer bloomin' orficers!" And leggins and boots and trousers followed the jumper.

"And 'ten days in the rattle,' says the snipe of a perishin' loot'nant, cos I leaves the boat for five minutes just to take a handk'chi'f full o' hard-tack to

the littte brown gal as had fed me with fruit for more'n a week! Navy! Jail! Me for the simple life now—that's the finish!"

The finish was Tim's cutlass and belt, which he picked up and poised preparatory to pitching it far out into deep water. Of all his equipment, he had kept only his neckerchief and sufficient material from his shirt to make a loin cloth, in which he now stood clothed. The rest he had parted with without a qualm, unless it was a slight regret that he could not keep the cloth for barter; knowing the danger of such scraps of navy goods becoming awkward clews to his whereabouts, he had cast aside regret and clothes at once. But his beloved old cutlass! It seemed to stick to his hand; the belt twisted about his arm as if imbued with life, making its dumb protest, and Tim's hand sank back to his side. He drew the spotless blade from the scabbard, and his eyes burned as he regarded it. Many pictures were evolved out of the mist that suddenly swam before his vision: homely as well as lurid pictures; pictures of savage, seething conflict and a dripping blade; pictures of loving care applied, with rotten stone and canvas, to the refurbishing and cleansing after the fighting was done.

A blinding flash was reflected from the steel, as it turned in the sun, and Tim came back to earth. He started in momentary fright at the thought of the far-carrying powers of such a flash: a heliograph was not a surer signal. Then the soft, rolling "Kr-r-r-r-r" of a parrakeet in the bush behind him reminded him that he had friends at hand —that parrakeet's cry came from a dusky maiden's throat—and he wrapped the belt around the cutlass with a vicious twist. With set lips, and without a second look, he hurled the weapon into the darkest patch of blue water in reach; and before the ripples from the splash lipped the rocky marge, his flashing white skin was hidden by the cool, breeze-stirred foliage.

The broad leaves had barely settled back into place after Tim's passage through them, when, far along the dazzling beach, a white-clad figure emerged from a lonely hut and started at a rapid walk toward the spot the seaman had just vacated. As he neared the rocks, the man paused, gazing hard after the receding ship, as if to gauge the possibility of recalling her. He shook his head hopelessly, and proceeded to the spot to which the flash of Tim's cutlass had attracted him.

This white man was good to look upon. Dressed comfortably and coolly in white drill, his figure revealed in its every movement the virility of clean manhood. His face glowed in the sunlight like the mask of a bronze god; eyes and chin and the line of the mouth all were as chapters in the story of a strong man in whom power was equally divided with human kindness.

Nickalls was nominally a trader, though none of the infrequent visitors to the little island of Ulua had ever succeeded in discovering how he made a living. Freight came to him, that was certain; but it was for the greater part provisions and clothing; and the quantity was surely no more than would suffice for his own needs. The trade to be picked up in exchange was little more than enough to pay for the imports.

Other traders had tried to get a footing on Ulua; they had usually found it convenient to leave after a brief stay. Yet few men could be found in the wide Pacific who would speak other than good of Nickalls, though in traders' circles he was damned goodhumoredly. To get rich quickly in the islands, a trader must as a rule judiciously mingle quite a good proportion of alcohol in with his other goods; and under the influence of Nickalls, Ulua was free from that doubtful blessing: the people, against the will of some of

the younger, were in consequence healthy, clean, and upstanding.

Even the missionaries, after some trifling demur, had long been content to leave the morals and uplift of Ulua in Nickalls' capable hands, without visible detriment to the well-being of the islanders. And the gunboat, whose duty it was to show the flag in those far-flung footholds of humanity, never passed within a day's sail of the trader's lonely hut without altering her course a trifle to pay him a visit.

Nickalls gave the rock pile a swift, comprehensive scrutiny, found nothing, and, with a harassed expression, swung about and plunged into the bush in the direction taken by the deserting seaman. His errand was as fruitless as had been his search of the rocks, and an hour later he was retracing his steps, with bowed head, along the hard strand toward his hut.

"I'll dig him out—they must give him up," he muttered fiercely, clenching his brown fists until the knuckles shone white. "Between runaway sailors and rascally gin peddlers lies disaster for any native community!"

He strode along in silence for some moments; then, striking fist on palm with almost savage fervor, he gritted:

"Why in thunder can't people leave me alone to work out my own redemption! Why can't I be permitted to preserve this tiny patch of the universe at least as clean and sweet as the Creator made it?"

During his stay on the island, Nickalls had, in the early days, often been inflicted with the presence of wastrel seamen from trading vessels, for Ulua was a tiny paradise, and its soft-voiced people were very primitive. At times he was forced to match his own physical prowess against that of the beach comber; sometimes a little straight-out argument would suffice; but in every case he had succeeded in ridding his brown people of the threatened danger to their peace. It was the same at first with the traders themselves. But one man, Punally, the Malay, who by devious methods had somehow obtained command of a Sydney schooner, still remained a thorn in his side; he was never sure that the *Kestrel,* Punally's vessel, was not dodging about somewhere near, watching for the departure of the gunboat to make one of his swift descents on the blind side of the island with his filthy, square-faced trade gin.

Luckily, it had never yet happened that the Malay swooped down at the precise time when a runaway sailor was loose on the island; but now, with a disgruntled navy man to put profane thoughts into the islanders' receptive minds, Nickalls was shrewd enough to foresee trouble unless he managed to unearth the sailor before the *Kestrel's* next appearance.

For the next few days the trader assiduously sought for the runaway. To all his inquiries, the natives replied with furtive, but negative, gestures. They knew nothing of any white sailor, they told him. But Molo, the brown-skinned Adonis, who looked after Nickalls' hut, knew better. He slept in the village with his people, and knew that, though the sailor kept aloof during the day, he always passed the night in the chief's hut.

Nickalls took the chief aside one morning, and charged him with harboring a deserter, a crime for which there must certainly come a penalty. The vehemence with which the charge was denied, and the shifty leer in the chief's eyes, brought a thought to Nickalls that made his kindly face darken with apprehension. He left the chief with a reiterated warning, and hurried to the crest of the bluff behind his hut. Here, on the highest spot on the island, he kept his private lookout station in a tall palm, fitted with a good naval telescope.

It was near noon, and the sun, al-

most at its zenith, blazed down upon a rippleless ocean that glowed like a blue-steel shield. There were signs of a coming breeze, but now sea and sky were motionless as the land. At the southern sea rim, vague to any but a seaman's trained vision, a silvery sliver of glancing light, poised upon the dazzling, metallic horizon, was plainly revealed by the long glass as a becalmed sailing vessel.

"If that's the *Kestrel,* I've got a fight on hand!" muttered Nickalls, climbing down and entering his hut. "If that fool sailor was just an island roustabout, I'd go after him and scare him off; but he's a navy man—a man who's perhaps fought under the old flag—and I can't let him——"

He broke off in his musing suddenly, and hailed Molo.

"Here, you Molo; you go one-time over by those rocks"—indicating the place where Tim Gammon had hidden —"and make good look-see. Search the rocks, dive if you have to, but try to find that white fellow's clothes. You bring me what you find. Then, to-morrow morning, before you come here, you find out where the white fellow goes in the daytime, and follow him."

"All can-do, Missey Nicklas," said Molo, and his white teeth showed in a wide grin. "S'pose I find um, I bring um along?"

"No. I'll get this one myself, Molo. Just find out where he lib, that's all."

The sun hung like a crimson ball, two diameters above the western horizon, when Molo returned from his search. But he brought results. Wrapped in a bundle of tapa cloth, he carried every item of Tim Gammon's equipment, except the hat and one boot. From a longer parcel he unwrapped the short service cutlass, the parting with which had caused Tim his one qualm. Every article oozed moisture. About the bundles hung the tang of ocean, the reek of weed-slimed rock; a tiny barnacle had already attached itself to the cutlass hilt, and a frantic little crab dropped from the unrolled jumper and scuttled from the doorway toward the whispering sea.

Nickalls handled the cutlass with something approaching reverence. When Tim flung it into the sea, the blade had jarred loose from the scabbard, and the salt water had entered, and rust was already forming on the steel. On the point of ordering Molo to clean it, Nickalls refrained, and bade the native carry out the other part of his instructions. He stood the cutlass in a corner; he would scour it himself.

With the sunset, the breeze struck down; and with the rising of a full moon the sea shimmered as it leaped, spattered with a thousand gleaming foam crests, to fling its frolicking wavelets in musical thunder on the glistening beach. Nickalls left the cutlass for another time, and betook himself again to his lookout palm. The moon flung the light of an arc lamp athwart the windward ocean, rendering that section of tumbling waters as clear as day; and, after a short delay for focusing, the glass picked out a black shape, touched with silver, that flashed and became obscured again and again. A vessel swinging along to the spanking breeze it was, stealing a radiance from the moonlight as she rolled.

Nickalls was not surprised to learn from Molo in the morning that the *Kestrel* had anchored in a small harbor on the leeward side of the island. The item of news, not altogether unexpected, but feared, that worried him was that the Malay had brought with him a strong crew of white men, in place of his usual complement of Kanakas. It told him in unmistakable terms that Punally was determined to add Ulua to his list of trading ports; and what that meant to the population Nickalls well knew, from the *Kestrel's*

unsavory reputation the wide seas over.

But Molo had found the lair of the runaway, and all other matters were swept from the trader's mind by the information that Tim Gammon was ensconced in a snug retreat in the least likely place he would be looked for: within a hundred fathoms of the hut, in a dry, well-hidden cave, under the rear of the bluff. There he was being supplied with food by the laughing brown maiden for whom he had deserted his ship. Molo added that the chief intended to make use of his guest as a sort of moral support when Punally came to open trade. Some of the young bloods of the village had set the yeast of mischief to working, and the elders were half persuaded already that a trial of the Malay's square-face might prove a welcome change from the humdrum respectability of Nickalls' kindly sway.

The trader went alone to the cave. It was empty. Coming to a swift decision, Nickalls strode across the island, a bracing morning walk over a sparsely timbered, hogback hill, the northern spur of which terminated in a precipitous cliff. In it a deep cleft formed a snug, deep-water harbor for any craft less than a hundred tons' burden. And from the vantage point of the crest the trader verified his fears. The white skin of the runaway gleamed pink in the sun, showing already the first effects of a tropical scorching which must have convinced him of the manifold advantages of clothing. Standing on the ledge of rock at the cliff base, Tim Gammon was deep in conversation with the Malay skipper of the *Kestrel*, swinging to her anchor in the glassy pool, and near by a square wooden case, with a board ripped off the lid, revealed the familiar square bottles of the villainous gin of trade.

Frizzy, black heads bobbed into sight above a clump of buginvillæas, and Nickalls realized the magnitude of his task. Ulua was one of a thousand tiny islets that came under a sort of general beneficent protectorate of the powers. No great nation had thought it worth while to formally hoist the flag and annex the island; all seemed to rest content to play policeman for morality's sake. Hitherto, since he had taken up his abode there, Nickalls had experienced little difficulty in reconciling the islanders to the absence of the average trader's temptations. They looked upon him as a being apart, but one who seemed always able to cure any little ills which might visit them. His small medicine chest was kept replenished for just that purpose, and, in consequence, the island was free from coral sores and most of the other petty ailments that accompany primitive island life. The daily fishing, too, had been rendered doubtly productive, and just half as laborious, since Nickalls had applied good, hard-headed northern methods to it.

Most traders making a call had seen the quiet, unobtrusive good that was being done, and gracefully left the self-appointed guardian angel to his peaceful labors. But Punally was of a different breed: he coveted the little island of Ulua; its possibilities of trade were good, and its young men were stalwart and strong. Nickalls knew now that, with the aid of this runaway sailor, who had got close to the chief's heart by taking up his abode with him, instead of holding aloof, as Nickalls himself had done, Punally was likely to insert the thin edge of a wedge that would split into splinters the peaceful contentment of his little flock.

He saw two brown islanders steal from the bush to the sailor's side, and, at a gesture, take up the case between them and bear it off toward the village. The Malay remained a while longer in earnest talk with Tim, and Nickalls took another snap decision. He hurried

across the ridge, and, plunging into the pathless undergrowth, got ahead of the two natives and reached the village first.

Here he found the chief looking much like a small boy caught filching apples. The young men standing about were obviously on thorns of expectancy, and tried hard to show the trader an insolent face. He coolly ignored them, going straight into a quiet, earnest remonstrance with the chief, who wriggled in discomfort between deep-rooted respect for the white man to whom his people owed so much, and a sneaking, mouth-watering itch to taste just once the dissipations hinted at so alluringly by his new friend Tim.

The chief was wavering when the two natives arrived with their burden, and his eyes snapped at sight of the bottled balloon juice. His mouth opened and stayed open, his eyes rounded out like the night orbs of an ancient owl, at Nickalls' next move. The trader stepped up to the bearer of Punally's gift.

"Pick that up again, boys, and carry it down to my hut," he said firmly. The men stared at him in amazement, and from him to the chief. From the young bloods standing by rose a sullen muttering.

"Pick it up. Up with it. That stuff kills brown men. Come!"

The natives stood as if stupefied. The chief grinned sheepishly; he could not avoid hearing the low growling of his young men, but neither could he avoid the cold eyes of the trader. He hesitated to either back up the order or to forbid his men to obey.

Nickalls solved the problem in characteristic fashion. Thrusting aside the bearers with gentle force, he stooped, swung the case to his own broad shoulders, and marched off to his hut, deaf to the howl of rage that now went up unrestrained.

Arriving at his small home, Nickalls dumped the case of square-face into the storeroom, and smoked a pipe the while he pondered upon the situation. He knew he would speedily receive a visit, either from the chief and his men, or the Malay, or possibly Tim. The last possibility he hoped would eventuate, for he wanted to talk navy to the delinquent seaman before it was too late.

One thing was very certain: if it came to actual encounter with the *Kestrel's* people, Nickalls would be overmatched. In keeping with his general mode of living, serene and tending toward good works, he possessed no weapon of any kind. He had seen the more-than-ample boat equipment of the *Kestrel,* and knew from long experience that an island schooner with a crew of twelve men and boats for fifty almost invariably counted a well-supplied arms chest among her other equipment.

He looked up at the slender pole erected before the hut, which he had rigged as a signal mast for communicating with passing craft that did not stop, but which were ever willing to exchange a friendly greeting with a lonely white man. His one resource was obvious, and he passed into the hut and opened his camphorwood chest. When he came out, he bore a rolled-up flag which he handled lovingly as he bent it on to the halyards and left it, still bundled up, hanging clear of the ground.

Molo had disappeared upon some business of his own, and was still absent. He had, therefore, not seen Nickalls deposit the case of gin in the storeroom. Yet when, an hour later, he turned up in company with Tim Gammon, who wore an aggressive air and little else, he evinced signs of incipient imbecility indisputably due to alcoholic indulgence. The Kanaka slunk around the hut, ashamed to meet the trader; but Tim was there with a purpose, and stated it belligerently.

"See here, mister, you swiped some goods o' mine. I want 'em," announced

the sailor, planting himself squarely before Nickalls, and staring into his face with fiery eyes.

"Swiped is hardly the word, Gammon," responded the trader gently. "Recovered, is better. I'm glad you've come to your senses."

The sailor started at hearing his name spoken. Some of the bold aggressiveness faded from his face as he stammered:

"Who told you my name's Gammon, mister? And wot d'you mean by comin' to my senses, eh? I come arter that square-face."

Nickalls forced the sailor to lower his gaze by the cool persistence of his own, and replied in a tone which Tim had more than once heard from the quarter-deck:

"All the square-face that comes into Ulua goes out with the tide, as long as I remain here, Gammon. But come inside. I've got other things of yours inside, which told me your name, and which you'll be glad to have again. You're a white man, Tim; you'll never make a good nigger; you brown too suddenly," he added, with a smile at the sailor's scorched cuticle. Tim was painfully aware of the coloring process he was undergoing.

Entering the cool, dim hut, Nickalls called loudly for Molo. The Kanaka did not respond, and the trader said quietly:

"You see the first effects of square-face, Tim. Molo has lived with me in absolute contentment for three years, and for the first time he's ashamed to come before me. I saw he was half stupefied, so I suppose I failed to get all your stock."

"You got all mine, all right, mister. Before I tasted it, too. Besides, it wasn't all mine; I was to divvy up with the chief. Your boy got his from one o' the *Kestrel's* boats, and you can't stop the rest getting theirs in the same way. But what have you got o' mine?"

"This—you may as well put it on," returned Nickalls, taking down a sea-stained seaman's uniform from a peg. "I can find a man's job for you here."

"Not by a dam' sight!" swore Tim, furious at sight of the hated uniform he had discarded. "I dunno how you got it, but you can burn it or bury it as soon as you like. I served ten years in that convict's rig, and I ain't keen on wearing it again. I'd a sight ruther go to jail outright."

Tim stalked outside, forgetting his original errand in the wave of resentment that surged over him. Nickalls followed him, and went to the foot of the flagstaff. The trader dropped the subject of the uniform for the moment, but while bending over the rolled-up flag on the halyards, he asked:

"After ten years' service in an honorable profession, aren't you acting a bit childish in throwing off a decent uniform and enlisting on the side of a traveling rotgut peddler, who would poison half the people of an island like this to carry the other half away into slavery?"

"Honorable profession! Decent uniform! Say, mister, you ain't never had to run yer legs off at the orders of a cub loot'nant as was swingin' on a gate arter you'd learnt a ship frum knightheads to taffrail. You ain't never been clapped in the rattle arter standin' a double wheel in a sneezer, cos you forgot to say 'sir' to the pink-faced swab as asked yer why you wusn't on watch. Honorable profession—hell!"

Nickalls smiled softly at the sailor's heat. He leisurely cast off the turns of the flag halyards from the cleat, and remarked:

"I used to think something like that, Gammon, and with, perhaps, more reason than you have. I, too, have served under the old flag. I behaved like a raw youth when I thought promotion went by favor, and that I was disciminated against. And yet I had only been rated

lieutenant two years when I got so disgusted as to let myself go. I didn't do just what you have done; it was booze with me; and before I could chuck off my duds and get out, I was fired out.

"But I know now that I was a fool, and I'm paying for my folly." Nickalls straightened up and slowly commenced to hoist the flag, the sailor's eyes following the bundle up to the truck in vague wonder. "I have kept this little island sweet and wholesome as part of the price, Tim; and the only man who refuses to leave me alone with my task is the Malay who gave you that square-face. I'm alone, and have never found it necessary to keep an arsenal at hand; but now that the *Kestrel* has turned up again, manned with unwholesome-looking whites, it looks like trouble, and I'm up against it. I've got to make a grand-stand play, and"—the speaker paused for an instant, twitched the lower part of the halyards, breaking out the big flag at the masthead—"I think you're too good a man to refuse to chip in. The island is annexed.

"Tim Gammon, I call on you to support that flag!"

The sailor flushed hotly from forehead to feet, shifting uneasily and casting shamefaced glances aloft, where the folds of the old flag blazed against the azure of the zenith. Nickalls paid no further attention to him, but fetched out from the hut Tim's uniform and the rusty cutlass, laying them down on the sand. Then, procuring a stout cane from the veranda, he turned inland, remarking as he started:

"I happen to know the *Kestrel's* game, Tim. He's a blackbirder of the worst sort; and if he can manage to fill the chief and the older men with his villainous liquor, he'll have the young men aboard his ship and bound for Queensland before sunup to-morrow. I'm going over to try to stop him, and when you're dressed, you can come down to the little harbor."

The trader strode away, and, turning before the hut was quite out of sight, laughed confidently to himself at the little picture on the beach. At the foot of the flagstaff stood Tim. In one hand he trailed a bundle of sea-stained clothes; in the other, his brawny right fist, he gripped his beloved old cutlass, and his bronzed face was a-work with battling emotions as he switched his gaze from weapon to flag, and back again. Then he dropped the point of his cutlass to the ground, and leaned upon the hilt, the while he stared hard and long out upon the heaving breast of the sea.

"I'll count on Tim," smiled Nickalls, and strode with lighter step toward the village.

The trader's task with the chief was rendered easier than he had expected. Since taking away the case of gin, no more had yet been received, and he had only expectancy to combat. He was helped still more by the discovery of Molo, whom he forthwith proceeded to treat to a sound thrashing with his cane. Poor Molo did not need the castigation. As he was hauled to his feet, dragged into the light of day before all the old men of the village, the powerful and unaccustomed liquor he had absorbed got in its deadly work, and he presented a doleful object lesson to his fellows that added great weight to the trader's words.

Nickalls speedily discovered the method to be used by Punally. The boat that was to bring supplies to the chief for the evening's debauch of the elders was to carry aboard the *Kestrel* all the young men, who were now looking forward eagerly to a night of unrestrained license and feasting at the white men's expense.

With the example of Molo to back him up, Nickalls used all his persuasive eloquence with the old men; he soon convinced them of the peril hanging

over their peaceful island. Most of them had heard of other islands being ravished of their young men by slavers operating under the name of labor recruiters. All of them had seen the blessings and advantages that had come to them during Nickalls' residence on Ulua.

"Tim he say all right—velly fine ship. Why he say so? Why he stopalong us, s'pose ship he no good, eh? Where Tim go now, eh?" The expression of doubt came from a wavering relative of the chief, who wanted to stay at home, certainly, but still hankered after the white man's gloom dispeller. Nickalls briefly indicated the groaning Molo, doubled up in the throes of a rebellious stomach unused to trade gin, and replied:

"Tim belong war canoe my country. He stopalong you to catch this captain who wants to carry your young men away. Bimeby Tim come down by schooner, then you see."

The chief at last returned to his old allegiance, promising to support Nickalls if matters turned out as he said, and Tim showed himself arrayed against the schooner's people. With that promise the trader went down to the head of the little harbor, and paced openly up and down the tiny beach, swinging his cane and calling unconcerned greetings to the many young men who lurked among the trees waiting for the boat to come ashore. It was the young men whom he half feared. If Tim failed him, after all, he knew his efforts to prevent these young savages from throwing themselves into bondage would be futile.

The afternoon was far gone when a boat put off from the *Kestrel* and pulled ashore. She was manned by four husky white sailors, and in the stern sheets another big white sat beside Punally, the Malay. Nickalls sent an anxious glance along the ridge, where he expected Tim to appear, and, seeing no sign of him, turned to meet the boat. The Malay wasted no words, but hailed the trader in sharp terms, capable of no misunderstanding.

"Better get back home, Nickalls," he shouted. "I warn you to keep your hands off my business!"

"Stay right where you are, Punally," retorted the trader. "You land no square-face here, nor will you take one man away. Keep off; you're trespassing."

A roar of grim merriment peeled from the boat, which dashed in to the beach. Nickalls looked again for Tim; the ridge was still bare. On the bluff, a hundred yards to his left, three tall cocos nodded above the thick bush, and there was a faint, though visible, movement going on at the foot of the palms. But Tim was not expected in that direction; it was probably more of the young men, bent on seeing everything that happened.

The boat's keel grated on the sand, and her crew sprang into the water to run her up. Nickalls advanced imperturbably and laid his hand upon her stem.

"No farther!" he warned, thrusting back the boat a foot. "I advise you to get out. This island has been annexed to——"

A howl of rage burst from the white man beside Punally, and he stood up with outstretched hand, pointing up at the three cocos. The trader looked, and his whole being surged with relief.

From one of the palms, flung out to the warm breeze, fluttered the flag; and from the bush around him Nickalls caught the deep-breathed "Oh's" and "Ah's" of the hidden natives, as a stalwart seaman in sea-stained uniform, lacking one boot and a hat, came leaping like a goat down the side of the bluff, headed for the boat.

A snarl of rage broke from the Malay, and he plunged from the boat, whipped out a murderous creese, and

darted upon Nickalls. The trader, unarmed save for his stout cane, sprang back to harder ground, and received the onslaught with a muttered hope that Tim would not break his neck coming down.

A sailor in the boat snatched up a rifle and started to the Malay's assistance, but did no more than start. A sharp coral rock whizzed past Nickalls, took the sailor between the eyes, and dropped him, rifle and all, over the side of the boat. Reassured thus of his safety by his own natives, the trader faced his attacker.

A fine swordsman in his service days, Nickalls still found himself hard pressed to ward off that licking creese with his cane. With thudding feet, the two men circled each other, the trader using all his skill to turn Punally's blade without losing his own weapon. He saw an opening, and darted in swiftly, giving the point of his cane rapier fashion. A sneering grin wreathed the Malay's swart face as he caught the stick in his free hand, wrenched the trader nearer, and whirled aloft his wave-bladed weapon for a lethal stroke.

"Get out o' that!" roared Tim Gammon, covering the last ten feet of distance with a jump, and hurling Nickalls headlong out of the way.

"Now, yuh black-faced slaver!" he shouted, brandishing his old cutlass, streaked with rust. "Watch yer left ear!"

Tim's sworsmanship was weird and effective. His heavy blade rose and fell with a strength and swiftness that gave the Malay little time to attack; a shade of fear came into the lowering, savage eyes as the creese slithered again and again against Tim's sturdy guard.

The *Kestrel's* men drew nearer, growling deep in their throats, seeking to render aid to their chief. Their advance brought a shower of clipping, bruising rocks that seemed to fly without human agency, from so many directions did they come. Nickalls had picked himself up from the sand, where Tim's timely charge had hurled him, and called to the chief and his men to appear. He wished at all costs to avoid further conflict, if without it he could make Punally realize that it was to his advantage to pull out.

The chief responded, and advanced from the bush, followed by his more substantial men, now wholly won round to Nickalls' side. But they came too late to save Punally. A shout of triumph burst from Tim's leathern lungs as steel clashed upon steel with an ominous ring.

A flickering flash passed through the air between the combatants, and the howl of mortal terror the Malay gave tongue to froze all hands to a standstill. A lightning glance showed Nickalls that the Malay was disarmed, and he shouted to Tim to hold his hand. With the stroke that had hurled the creese from Punally's tiring hand the seaman stepped back; he had no murderous intent toward a defenseless adversary; but the end was out of his hands entirely.

The creeze whizzed straight into the air, turned as it started to fall, and, as the Malay cringed back with upstretched arm, the wicked blade plunged to the hilt in the hollow between throat and breast, ending the blackbirder's career right there.

In the evening, when the *Kestrel* had towed out in silence, taking her fallen skipper with her to give him sea burial, Nickalls and Tim Gammon sat outside the trader's hut, smoking a soothing pipe and watching Molo break bottles and pour a libation of trade gin to the land crabs on the beach.

Tim was gloomy, in spite of Nickalls' efforts to enliven his spirits. He was a deserter, from whichever angle he regarded the matter, and that was the burden of his complaint.

"I'll get clapped into the rattle as

soon as I get aboard, Mister Nickalls," he grumbled, "and when they get me home, they'll shove me in jail properly. I'd ruther stop here with you."

"But, man, dear, after this affair, when I tell your skipper about it next time he calls, you'll be right in line for promotion. You can't make me believe you've got no love for the old service! That stunt you pulled off of hoisting the flag where it could be seen from the *Kestrel* perhaps saved a dozen lives. Only for that the whole boat crew would have piled in, and never mind a few rocks. It was the old flag that made 'em half-hearted about backing up their skipper.

"You're navy from the boots up, Tim; and you could have warrant rank in no time. You'll go back aboard the *Flamingo* next time she puts in here, and I promise you I have enough pull with the skipper to smooth over your little fault in running away. Besides, Tim, I owe you something for chipping in this afternoon, and I hate to think of you as a beach comber. You're too good a man to go to the dogs. What's the answer?"

Tim puffed furiously at his pipe, and rested his eyes in a long look seaward. His dreams of an island kingdom were shattered; but another vision had taken form—that of advancement in the service—the service he really loved, in spite of its fancied ill treatment of him.

"All right, sir," he replied quietly, rising from the sand. "I'll get a bit o' canvas; this sand's fine to polish the old cutlass with."

ANOTHER VESSEL MISSING

FROM the Pacific coast comes news of another ship which has been added to the long list of ships which have put to sea and never been heard of again.

The ship in question is the four-masted barkentine *Alta*. This ship had been in the lumber trade between San Pedro and Bellingham, Washington. The last seen of the *Alta,* was when she cleared from San Pedro for Bellingham with a cargo of lumber. From that day she has not been seen or reported by any ship. Added to the mystery is the fact that during the time that the *Alta* has been missing the prevailing weather has been ideal, for a craft of her type. The winds have been fair and there have been no calms. Vessels which left San Pedro at about the same time that the *Alta* did, have made the run in fifteen days.

DOG HOLDS UP LINER

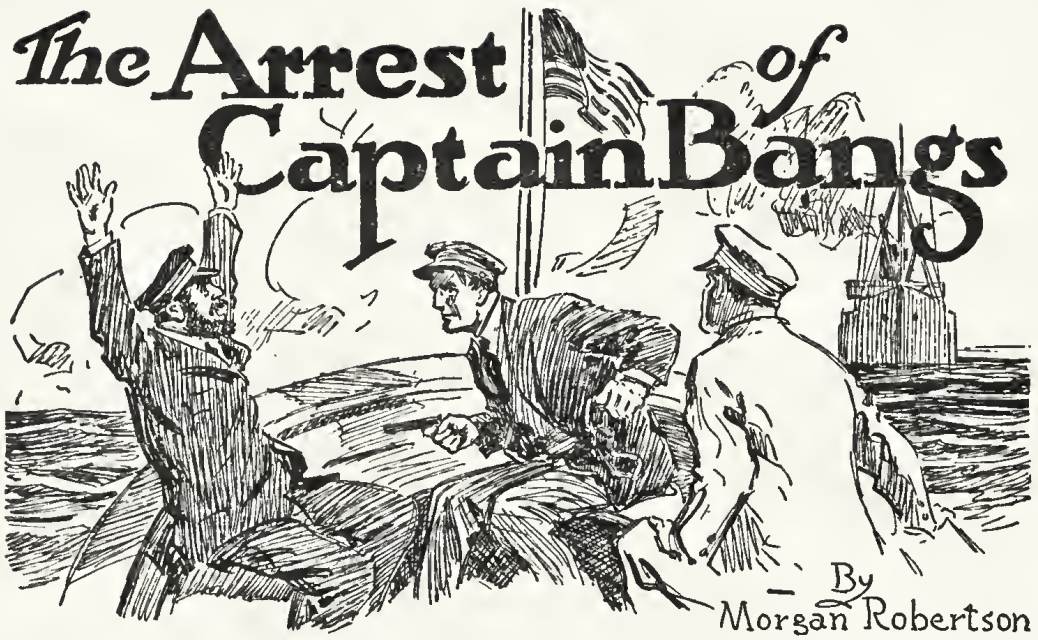
AN amusing incident recently happened which is illustrative of the intelligence of some dogs.

On a recent trip of one of the Bermuda liners, a passenger who had previously made a booking for this voyage, found that he could not arrive at the pier at eleven a. m., the time the vessel was to sail.

Doubting the efficacy of sending a messenger he sent his pet dog. When the dog arrived at the pier he hunted up the baggage master who had presented him to the owner some three years ago.

When the longshoremen began to take in the gangplank at eleven a. m., the dog started barking, and the baggage master, realizing that the animal would not be there if its owner was not expected, held up the ship for fifteen minutes. Meanwhile the dog's master arrived and so made the trip which he would otherwise have missed.

The Arrest of Captain Bangs



By Morgan Robertson

It is rare that a captain's actions on shipboard brings him in contact with the shore police. Detective Fitzgerald had never been to sea and didn't want to go, but, as the sergeant reminded him, "our wants are not considered in the cold, hard world." Since Captain Bangs was "wanted" by the police, it was up to Fitzgerald to become a seaman and get his man. Here's how he did it.

DETECTIVE FITZGERALD, of the Central Office, in San Francisco, wandered into the station house at ten in the morning in the tranquillity of mind coming off duty well performed—his man was landed, and in a cell—and was greeted by a vociferous call from the desk.

"What?" he demanded, when he faced the sergeant.

"Inspector Smith wants you. Get in there quick, and don't be chesty; for I'm thinking he'll take it out o' you."

Fitzgerald entered the office of the inspector, who glared at him over a polished desk loaded with documents.

"Fitzgerald," he asked sternly, "ever been to sea?"

"No, and don't want to be," answered Fitzgerald.

"Our wants are not considered in this cold, hard world. Can you box the compass?"

"I cannot."

"Know whether to go to windward or to leeward o' the mate when you go aft to the wheel?"

"No. What are you giving me?"

"Know which side the main topsail halyards leads down?"

"Don't know anything about it, inspector. Are you stringing me?"

"Not a bit. You acknowledge, Fitzgerald, that you don't know a blame thing about ships and seamanship?"

"I acknowledge. I never saw the sea except when I came over with the old folks when I was a kid."

"You'll do. For I wouldn't send a man on this job who had been hammered and bullied and starved, as I have been, until he forgot that he was human. I've been to sea, Fitzgerald, in my young days, and the effects are still with me. I wouldn't go myself on this job, for I couldn't make good. D'you see? Irishman—like you—that I am, I had my manhood thumped out o' me by bucko mates and skippers, and even now I would be oppressed and stultified by

the sight and the sound and the contact with 'em. See, Fitzgerald? But you're young, and you're fresh, and you're Irish, and you're lacking in the sailor's respect for law that hangs him while it gives the skipper a gold chronometer —all for the same job. But, I've a case here that promises a reversal, and I'm interested. I want you to get Captain Bangs."

"Where is he, and what's he done?"

"Murdered one of his crew, if you want the legal explanation of my interest. Nearly murdered me, if you want the human explanation. He towed an ordinary seaman over the stern, just outside the three-mile limit, and when they pulled the seaman in he was daffy, and died in the hospital ashore here. The offense was committed on the high seas, but as the man died ashore, it came under the jurisdiction of the local authorities, and he was indicted by the grand jury, but had already sailed. He can't be extradited, because, though a Yankee skipper, he's in command of a Blue Noser, a Nova Scotia ship, and, again, though he cleared for Yokohama and a market, we don't know that he'll fetch. See?"

"You've got to catch him in some American port, or some colonial port, in the Philippines, Guam, or Alaska. Go down to the comptroller's office with this order and draw five hundred. Cable for more when you need it. Take your badge and your gun, and get that scoundrel. He knows he's wanted, and may dodge American soil for years, or until he thinks it's blown over, for he's controlling owner in the ship. But you get him. Take steamer passage for Yokohama, and ship with him, and when he touches an American port, or comes under the American flag, put the darbies on him, and bring him back. Go along with you, Fitzgerald."

"You mean I'm to become a sailor to get this man?"

"I do, and when you're a sailor you'll have the necessary grouch. On with you, Fitzgerald, and learn fortitude, temperance, vegetarianism, and submission of the spirit. Ship 'fore the mast in a Blue Noser, commanded by a Yankee skipper and doubt the existence of a God. Then think it out and revise yourself. Get out o' this, and don't let me see you until you have Captain Jim Bangs, the worst bucko out o' Boston, who skinned me alive with a deck scraper when I was 'fore the mast with him in the old *Singapore*, twenty years ago. D'you hear me?"

The last words were roared at Fitzgerald, and he decamped. He had enough of human sympathy to be impressed by the inspector's description of Bangs, and on reading the data in the district attorney's office he was further impressed. Bangs, no doubt, deserved the gallows.

He learned further details at the Maritime Exchange, and with five hundred dollars in his pocket, the warrant of arrest, his badge, his pistol, and his Irish manhood to fortify him, Fitzgerald took steamer passage to Yokohama.

Arriving there, he reported his errand to the American consul, found small comfort, and loafed along the Bund, awaiting the arrival of Bangs, in the Nova Scotia ship *Waldemere*, and gleaning such gossip and tutelage as he could from the sailors he met.

He soon learned that to ship as a sailor he must look like one, and, to this end, provided himself with a cheap, ready-made suit, a sailor's canvas bag, and an outfit of sea clothing—oilskins, rubber boots, flannel shirts, etc. Further, that he needed "discharges," and these he bought of a broken-down old wreck, who had spent a lifetime in procuring them; but he gave back all but a few selected ones of a late date, which gave him the name of John Larsen, Able Seaman.

Fitzgerald was a well-formed, athletic, and well-favored young fellow of

thirty, keen of observation and judgment, quick of speech and action, and well equipped to master in a short time enough of a seaman's work to escape all but severe criticism. Yet, within one hour of his going aboard the *Waldemere,* two weeks later, as an A. B., he was thumped into unconsciousness by an irate first mate for the simple fault of coiling a rope down back-handed. He came to in the scuppers, but deferred rising until he had studied the problem.

Bangs, a mild-mannered gentleman of middle age, who grievously complained that half of his ingrate crew had deserted, had shipped Fitzgerald in the British consul's office on his discharges and representations, and had later repleted his crew with a dozen drugged men, who even now, while Fitzgerald was regaining his faculties, were unconscious in their bunks.

Fitzgerald had his badge, and his gun, and the warrant hung to a belt within his shirt, but it was no part of his plan to show them at present. The big, bluff-bowed, round-sterned Nova Scotiaman had only called at Yokohama for provisions and men, and was bound, in the same ballast, for Shanghai. This was not a colonial port, but there were steamers under the American flag running there from San Francisco, and an American consul, in whose office he hoped to catch Captain Bangs. So, he rose up, asked a shipmate about the coiling of ropes, and was instructed and laughed at; but he held his peace.

There were about twenty men in that crew, of various nationalities, and some unable to speak English, but the poorest of the lot was a better sailor than Fitzgerald, even though, in strength and intelligence, he topped them all. His discharges had fooled the skipper, but there was no passing of the test in the forecastle. He was derided, ridiculed for his ignorance, and even pushed—a little too heavily—out of the way by a Swede.

Fitzgerald, realizing that his bodily comfort was at stake, and his mission in no danger from conflict with the men, thrashed the Swede, quickly and skillfully, without in any way interfering with the work going on. He thrashed —in the next watch below—one other critic, and proved to the understanding of all, that, though a poor sailor, he was yet able, of good courage and intelligence, and worth developing.

So the better element of the crew took to him, made him their friend, and tutored him—which tutelage saved him much friction with the afterguard. There were but three of these to deal with—for the two boatswains and carpenter were practically of the crew—the first mate that had floored him, who was a big-shouldered Scotchman, a second mate under him, but equally big-shouldered, abusive, and truculent, and Captain Bangs, the mild-mannered, middle-aged Captain Bangs, who had bewailed his troubles into his ear at the consul's office, but who had remained out of sight since then, until, with topgallant sails coming in on the third morning out, he appeared on deck, no longer mild and gentlemanly, but purple-faced, drunk, and temporarily deranged. He pounced upon the man at the wheel, who was Fitzgerald.

"How're you headin' there, hey?" he demanded. "How you headin'?"

"Southwest by west, sir," answered Fitzgerald respectfully, and accurately, for boxing the compass had been his first lesson after rope coiling.

"You lie," yelled the skipper. "You're a point off your course."

True enough at the moment. The ship was swinging before a rising sea and gale, and the best steering could be no more than a balance between the yaws. She swung back, and a point the other way; but by this time the skipper had taken his eyes off the compass.

"I'm doing my best, sir," answered Fitzgerald mildly.

"Your best!" shrieked the madman—mad from drink, and the evil forces within him. "Your best won't do for my worst." He launched out his fist and struck Fitzgerald in the face.

Things went red before the eyes of Fitzgerald. The binnacle, the cro'jack, the two lines of rail leading forward, the house, masts, and deck fittings in sight, and the quivering form of the skipper—all took on the same crimson hue, and for a moment Fitzgerald went mad. He dropped the spokes, sent forth his fist, with the weight of his body behind, and caught the skipper on the chin.

Captain Bangs dropped like a log before the binnacle, and Fitzgerald, his environment taking on a more natural hue, seized the wheel, and ground it to port. But with all his strength, even though he hove the wheel hard over, he could not bring her back. She breached-to in the trough, and amid slatting of canvas, and the shouts of the mate and crew, she lay, soggy and helpless, with no steerage way, and green seas rolling over one rail and on over the other.

Then the slatting upper topsails on all three masts went to ribbons, the mizzen royal mast went over the side, and the fore topmast staysail sheet parted at the clew, leaving the sail to flap like a flag until it went to pieces.

The mate—who had the deck—braced the fore yards, set the jib, and the ship payed off; then, with steerage way, Fitzgerald brought her back to her course, and the observing mate squared the fore yards, and sent men aloft to clear away the broken gear and the fluttering shreds of the topsails. And, this going on, he wandered back to the wheel to inquire of the helmsman, and noted the prostrate form of the skipper, just regaining life. He lifted him to his feet.

Captain Bangs glared at Fitzgerald, while the mate glanced sternly from one face to the other.

"He hit me," stuttered Bangs wildly, as he felt of his sore chin. "He hit me Put him in irons. Get your irons, Mr. Bruce, and send another man to the wheel.

"Did you hit the captain?" asked the big mate, looking sternly into the tense face of Fitzgerald.

"I did. I forgave you for the first offense, because I was green. But when he hit me, I struck back—that's all."

Mr. Bruce lifted his voice. "A man aft here to the wheel," he called, and one of the crew separated himself from the rest and came. And Mr. Bruce, going to his room, returned with a pair of wrist irons by the time the man appeared.

"Up with your hands and take these," he commanded.

Fitzgerald, shocked, enraged, and helpless against the situation—with his mission in mind, obeyed. He had lost his temper, and made a mistake—which was fatal in good detective work.

Captain Bangs looked on until Fitzgerald was ironed, then he said:

"Trice him up on the after house by the end of the cro'jack buntlines. Let him swing until he gets the conceit out of him."

And so, Fitzgerald, with his mission still in mind, suffered himself to be led to the top of the after house and triced up with his feet just touching the deck when the craft was on an even keel, and his body crashing against the port or starboard rigging as she rolled. He stood it stoically, hoping that it would soon end, but acquiring, as the inspector had predicted, a good, wholesome "grouch."

At the end of an hour he was muttering curses upon the head of Bangs. At the end of two, he was offering mental prayers for deliverance to the whisky-soaked autocrat, stumping around the poop deck; but Fitzgerald made no oral plea, and at the end of three hours, he was unconscious, and

his body plunged and whirled, from rigging to mast and rigging, giving no sign that he felt, or thought, or resented.

Then, inert as a dead man, he was taken down, and, still ironed, lowered to the lazarette, where he lay until his senses returned—in the middle of the night, with his shipmates' voices sounding in his ears above, as they further shortened sail, and the screaming wail of the typhoon singing through the gear like the winter song of the kitchen chimney in his boyhood home.

Few men that go to sea escape the experience that Fitzgerald was undergoing, but few that go to sea do so for other than a living, which living depends upon the good will of the skipper, and a "discharge" at the end of the voyage which will secure further employment.

Fitzgerald was not so bound. He was a sailor, temporarily, with other objects in life than further employment, and all the bitterness of which his soul was capable arose in rebellion against his treatment. A few hours of fuming brought the reaction of tranquillity and deep-seated purpose—purpose in no way connected with the Golden Rule, but strongly involved in the old biblical doctrine of an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. Captain Bangs had hanged him by the wrists. Captain Bangs should hang by the neck. So decreed Fitzgerald, manacled, sore in every joint, and drenched with the wet, cold drift from the open hatch above. At breakfast time he was fed—with hard-tack and water—and he ate as would a famished wild beast in captivity.

It was the steward who fed him. and when the steward came again at dinner time, with more bread and water, Fitzgerald, sufficiently composed to be civil, asked him for liniment, witch-hazel, croton oil with water—anything from the medicine chest that would assuage the aches and pains in his shoulders coming from his tricing up.

The steward demurred. He dared not ask the captain, but would speak to the first mate, and if authority was granted, he would bring the remedies.

Fitzgerald, in his early life, had been a trained nurse in a criminal hospital, and he knew what he wanted; but he was somewhat surprised when, ten minutes after the steward had gone, the first mate dropped down the hatch and said:

"What d'ye want? Relief from the medicine chest?"

"Yes, sir," answered Fitzgerald sullenly. "Every bone in my body aches."

"All right. You shall have it; but don't make your request to the skipper. You did the blackguard up, and I wish that it was me—only, I couldn't afford it. See? I'm a mate, with a future."

"And I'm a sailor, with none."

"Right. Sing small for a few days, and I'll so represent things that he'll let you out; and, maybe, some day, when I see things clear, you'll have the satisfaction of seeing me do him up in better shape than you did. Meanwhile, say nothing. This is confidential, and I only talk this way because I see you're no ordinary man. He hit you at the wheel and you knocked him out. Never saw it done before by the man at the wheel."

He departed, and soon Fitzgerald received his remedies, which helped him to bodily comfort. But he was not released, and the mate visited him no more—not even through the long days and nights after the gale, while the ship made her offing, took on a pilot, anchored in the Woosung River, and filled up with a cargo of tea for Liverpool—a six weeks' count of time. And in this time his bread and water had reduced him to a dyspeptic wreck, which brought about a frame of mind conducive to amnesty when the captain, on the tow down the river, dropped into the lazarette, and offered him his liberty

and his chance to labor with the rest, on his avowal of penitence.

Fitzgerald was penitent—outwardly, and so avowed. He was released and put to work, so weak that he had trouble at times in keeping his legs; but it was noticeable that, while the second mate and the captain swore at him, maligned and ridiculed him, the big-shouldered first mate was kind to him. Once, when Fitzgerald had the wheel, he volunteered this much in the way of explanation:

"He didn't dare," he said, "to send you to jail in Shanghai, because he hit you at the wheel—dead against the law."

So, in the sweet and balmy breezes of the Pacific, Fitzgerald recovered his strength and his nerves; and whatever of resentment he had felt toward the big first mate melted away in the atmosphere of his sympathy and fellow feeling. The mate disliked the skipper, and so did he—much more.

But nothing material happened in the long passage around the Horn and up the two Atlantics to Liverpool. Fitzgerald developed into a first-class sailor, his natural intelligence aiding him in mastering seamanly problems that with the ordinary beginner requires years of service; and on the run up the Western Ocean, he had occasion to display skill of another kind.

His unofficial friend, the mate, broke his arm in a bad scramble with a green sea that swept the ship in the Bay of Biscay, and Fitzgerald was the man who set the broken bones, bound them tight in splints and plaster bands, and so prescribed and directed, that the mate lost but a few days from duty.

The still drunk and truculent skipper observed, passed a number of irrelevant and blasphemous remarks, and kicked Fitzgerald out of the mate's room when the job was done. All of which found mental note in the brains of Mr. Bruce and Fitzgerald.

At Liverpool the crew was "worked out"—that is, put to such hard, distasteful, and impossible tasks that the men shouldered their dunnage and jumped to the dock, leaving all the pay due them, rather than submit.

But one man did not go—Fitzgerald, the man who wanted Captain Bangs. He scraped hard paint from the topgallant crosstrees in zero weather; he scoured the copper at the water line on a stage so low that his feet were immersed. He scrubbed paint work with sand and canvas, when the sand froze to the canvas, and his knuckles bled from the friction, and he swabbed decks among stevedores that continually soiled them.

But he did not desert. He held on, and soon the skipper and the two mates gave it up, the first mate probably from sympathy; for his word went far, both with his inferior and his superior, and in a few days Fitzgerald, his purpose still unrevealed, was let alone, or given light tasks in the forecastle. And he was the only man left.

A new cargo came aboard—salt, machinery, bridge material, and farm implements for Montevideo—and when this was stowed, there came a new crew—a number of Liverpool Irishmen and outlawed Italians, Dutchmen, and "Sou'wegians," that promised trouble for the aftergaurd.

But the afterguard met the difficulty with almost success. Man after man was knocked down, and sometimes knocked out, and the crew finally adopted a working hypothesis, which, while it involved no surrender of their viewpoint, yet left them intact from physical tutelage or correction. Each side was ready for murder, and each side forebore to act.

And so installed, the ship crept down the Atlantic, drifted through the doldrums, and reached the southeast trades, with no one, forward or aft, out of commission, and Fitzgerald, the man with a mission, now the leading spirit in the

forecastle, and befriended by the mighty first mate.

Then there came the climax. The second mate knocked down an Irishman, who retaliated with a belaying pin, and, the fracas arousing the watch, other belaying pins were brought into use, while the skipper and two mates used their revolvers.

Fortunately for Fitzgerald, he was at the wheel, and immune from criticism. But his immunity did not extend beyond corporal punishment; in fact, he was the hardest worked man on board for a time, bandaging wounds, probing for bullets, and setting broken bones.

And among his patients was Captain Bangs, suffering from concussion of the brain, and wavering between life and death, while the ship sailed into the harbor of Montevideo.

Fitzgerald brought the skipper around in a manner that won praise from the surgeon who came aboard to repair damages, and in a few days Captain Bangs was able to go on shore and transact business—which business embraced the jailing of several members of his crew, and the stopping of liberty and money for the rest; for a fixed, hand-written clause in the articles that all had signed contained the proviso: "No money or liberty in foreign ports except at master's option."

This debarred Fitzgerald from leaving the ship—a grievous disappointment, for he had hoped to catch the skipper in the British consul's office, which at this port was also the American consul's office, and arrest him upon American soil. And his disappointment was not lessened by the angry attitude of the mate, who, when the skipper was ashore, berated him for a fool.

"For the dog might have died, and I'd got command if you hadn't been so almighty handy as a doctor," he said.

To which Fitzgerald could put in no defense except the logic of the Golden Rule, unknown to Mr. Bruce.

The ship sailed, with a cargo of hides, a new balance of crew, a rejuvenated skipper, and a sullen first mate, and sneaked and beat her way around Cape Horn without trouble of note.

But up in the roaring forties, when the wet, the cold, and the loss of sleep told heavily on the temper of all hands, and the whole crew on the fore yard wrestled for an hour in getting in the foresail, Captain Bangs and Mr. Bruce indulged in an argument as to which clew—the lee or the weather—should first be raised in the difficult operation of furling this sail.

In this argument Captain Bangs struck Mr. Bruce in the face, and Mr. Bruce in return planted his fist against the ribs of Captain Bangs with such force as not only to knock him down the poop steps headlong to the main deck, but to fracture a couple of ribs, the broken end of one puncturing his lungs. Captain Bangs, whining like a whipped child, was carried below.

Mr. Bruce, with thoughts of the penitentiary dominating his mind, assumed full command, and Fitzgerald, the embryo surgeon—skilled beyond his normal powers by the exigencies of the situation—was deputed to nurse the invalid.

Mr. Bruce, glaring hatefully into the face of Fitzgerald, so decreed.

"Give this dog his chance," he said; "but if he wants to die, let him die. I'll stand my share and take my medicine."

Fitzgerald, with little sympathy for the mate, and dominated solely by his own hatred and his mission, nursed the stricken skipper, while the ship, under the navigation of the mate, charged up the West Coast toward Callao, where she was bound.

Fitzgerald could do little, but that little he did. He drew the fractured bone away from the punctured lungs by pressure, massage, and the grip and pull of plaster bandages; and, little by little,

Captain Bangs regained health and activity. Then Fitzgerald resumed his work as a sailor, and bore the usual abuse of the skipper and the second mate, and even the first, who now held a secret grudge.

It worked out simply—very simply. Fitzgerald, as the ship sailed into Callao Harbor, was guilty of passing to windward of the disgruntled Mr. Bruce, and was promptly collared. Then, pressed against the rail by the officer, he listened to this:

"You dog, why didn't you let him die? Now, I've got to face court proceedings."

"Let up," choked Fitzgerald. "Let up, or I'll do you. D'you hear?"

Mr. Bruce heard, but did not respond. He still choked Fitzgerald, and Fitzgerald used his strength. He shook off the officer, struck him in the face, and, in the ensuing conflict, Fitzgerald kneeled on the chest of his superior and hammered his face into a pulp before he was interrupted.

The interruption came from Captain Bangs, who, armed with a belaying pin, soon reduced Fitzgerald to a condition more helpless and harmless than that of Mr. Bruce. Whatever Captain Bangs may have felt toward Mr. Bruce, this was a case of a sailor assaulting an officer, and he acted according to the ethics of seafaring.

Fitzgerald, under the captain's pistol, stood quiet while Mr. Bruce, his face puffed and disfigured, with all the base and conflicting emotions of jealousy and hatred showing through the contusions, put the irons on him and led him to the lazarette. Once more was Fitzgerald confined, and in disgrace.

There he remained while the ship sought her anchorage, and her crew furled the canvas. Then Fitzgerald was brought up. He looked around the harbor. A few ships of various nationalities were there, with American schooners in the coasting trade, a few tramps, and one man-of-war, a ram-bowed white cruiser showing the Stars and Stripes at the flagstaff on the stern. A small steam launch was creeping up to the *Waldemere's* gangway, and Captain Bangs was speaking to the young officer in the stern sheets.

"I've a man here," he said, "that I want sent to jail, for assault upon my first officer. The whole thing is down in my official log. Will you take us ashore?"

"I can only take you aboard my ship," answered the ensign. "Bring your man down the gangway."

So, Fitzgerald, in irons, and enlivened by the vicious looks of the first mate, went down the steps, followed by Captain Bangs. He was placed in the stern sheets, next to the young officer in charge, and abreast of Captain Bangs. Above them all, on the flagstaff of the launch, floated the Stars and Stripes; and Fitzgerald, bruised and subdued, suddenly came to life. He worked his manacled hands around his waist, felt his badge, his money roll, and his gun; then said to Captain Bangs:

"Why not take these irons off, captain? I'm here, and can't get away."

"Sure," said the confident skipper. "you're under the American flag, and liable to the jurisdiction of America. Off with the darbies, of course. You'll get three months in jail at least."

And he kindly and considerately unlocked the irons on Fitzgerald's wrists.

Then, before the captain knew what was happening, Fitzgerald jerked the irons away from him, twisted his pistol out from beneath his shirt, leveled it in the face of Captain Bangs, and said sternly: "You're my prisoner. Up with your hands, or I'll shoot you dead."

Captain Bangs promptly raised his hands, while the ensign in charge of the launch demanded:

"What does this mean?"

"It means, sir," said Fitzgerald, "that I, a detective of the San Francisco police, have arrested Captain Bangs for the murder of Hans Hansen, one of his crew on the voyage from Hongkong to San Francisco. He could not be extradited, but I've got him. This boat is under the American flag, and, under the law, is American soil. Keep your hands up, Bangs, while I put the darbies on you."

The amazed Captain Bangs made no resistance. In a flash Fitzgerald had snapped the irons on his wrists; then, deftly abstracting the key from his pocket, he said to the ensign:

"We will argue matters on board your ship, sir," he said. "I am a policeman, who shipped with this man to get him. *I have got him.* Any question of my amenability to punishment can be offset by my position as a policeman. Go ahead with your launch, sir, and we'll interview your superiors."

The ensign smilingly bowed his head, and while Bangs expostulated, the launch crept up to the gangway of the cruiser. Fitzgerald and his protesting prisoner went up the ladder, where a stern-faced commander received them. To him Fitzgerald showed his shield, explained his mission, and read the warrant of his arrest. The commander listened quietly.

"You have got Captain Jimmy Bangs," he said, "on a charge of murder. Well, God bless you! I've heard of him for years. Become the guest of this ship and the government, sir. We sail for San Francisco in the morning, and you can take your man home under the flag."

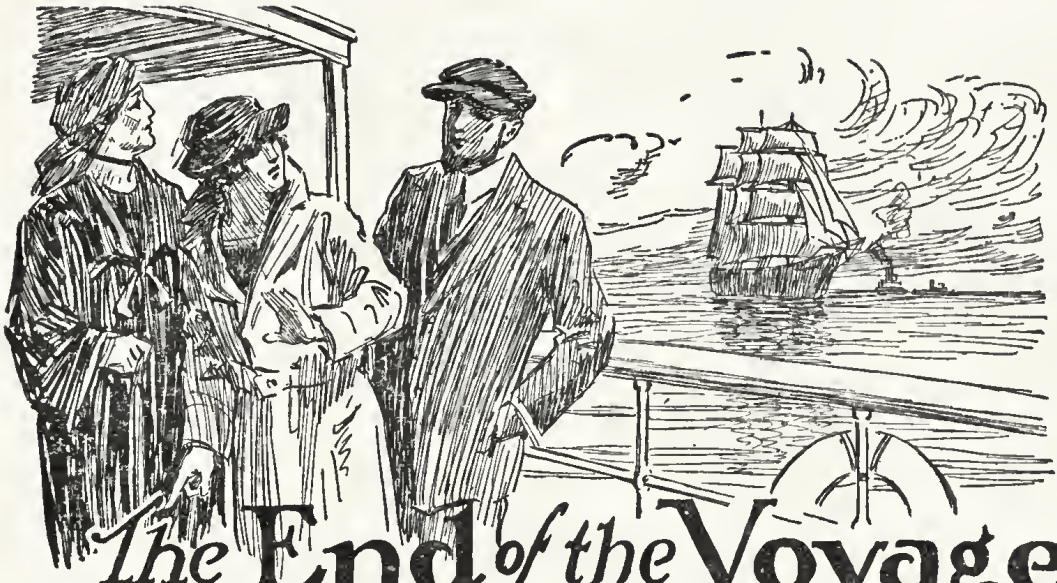
Fitzgerald delivered his prisoner in San Francisco, and had only this to mar his sense of triumph. It was Inspector Smith's sarcastic remark: "You had him foul on several occasions. Why didn't you slay him as the Almighty directed? Now the scoundrel will only hang! I'm disappointed in you, Fitzgerald."

But a month later, when Fitzgerald was rated inspector, he hardly believed Smith.

AN INCIDENT OF THE NAPOLEONIC WARS

AMONG the troubles which harassed American shipping during the wars of Napoleon were the troubles with French and British privateers. In all fairness it must be acknowledged that the former were the worst offenders. While Commodore Nelson was in command of the Mediterranean station an incident occurred which may be of some interest to students of American maritime affairs.

The American consul at Gibraltar wrote to Nelson asking him to furnish adequate protection for twelve merchant ships of the United States, which were then at anchor in the harbor of Malaga. These ships were afraid to sail because of French letters of marque which were lying in wait for them at the entrance to the harbor. Nelson immediately complied with the consul's request sending a frigate under orders to convoy the American ships to the Barbary coast, and out through the Straits of Gibraltar if necessary. At the same time he wrote a letter to the American consul, saying: "I am sure of fulfilling the wishes of my sovereign, and, I hope, of strengthening the harmony which at present so happily subsists between the two nations."



The End of the Voyage

By Juliet G. Sager

It is a common belief that there is no romance to be found on the North Atlantic passenger runs. In consequence of this idea we do not often have the opportunity to offer our readers a story of the transatlantic passage. This short story, however, shows that romance is very often found where we least expect it, and that because we live in the twentieth century is no reason why we should believe it dead.

A HEARTLIKE throbbing that deepened and steadied, a shiver that settled into regular vibrations like the play of muscles in a swimmer's body, and the great ocean liner waked into life. Bells clanged, chains rattled, a hundred new sounds and movements mingled, and a strip of sparkling water appeared between the deck and the pier, widening inexorably. A second's hush fell on the crowds that banked the pier and on the rows along the railing of the decks—the involuntary tribute of man, the land animal, to the mystery and majesty of the sea, into whose silences these few were venturing. Then the gay clamor of farewells and jests and final messages rose again, with a fluttering of handkerchiefs and a waving of hats.

The elder of two women standing on an upper deck, somewhat apart from the others, pressed timorously against her companion's arm.

"Oh, Enid!" she murmured. "I feel exactly as if we were letting go of all we'd ever known, and dropping off the edge of the world!"

The other woman, gripping the rail with rather shabbily gloved hands, bit her lips in vain. The thing she was trying to repress was too strong for her.

"We shouldn't have come, mother! I'm sorry we came!" The words sprang out.

"Enid!"

"I've been crazy, I think! Why, I don't know him. He's a stranger—a total stranger! And I'm on my way to——"

The older woman shot her a glance of dismay and bewilderment. "Channing Morse a stranger? You grew up together!"

"I haven't seen him for eleven years. He was a boy then. Now he's a man—a man I may not even recognize when we meet!"

"But you've been corresponding off and on all the while."

"What are letters? Mother, till this

minute he has never seemed real to me. I was tired of teaching school and living in a small town. I wanted to travel, to see the places he wrote about. I didn't think about him or what it—it meant. But now all at once I do, and I——"

"Hush, Enid! Folks will notice. There's a man staring at me now."

This time the daughter compelled her lips to obedience, and stood gazing silently out across the waters, though she saw nothing of the magnificent harbor sights. The strengthening breeze loosened curly tendrils of her hair and whipped them girlishly about her face, but there was no youth in her expression; and slim and graceful as her figure was, she had a quaint primness of bearing like that of the old-fashioned woman of forty.

"Good-looking woman," a passer-by observed casually. But the man with him shook his head.

"Looks starved—as if she hadn't got what she needed from life—fun, maybe, or friends or frivolous clothes!"

"Cold, mother?"

Mrs. Norton nodded, blue-nosed, for the breeze had grown into a steady wind, chill and salt as the miles of water it had crossed.

"Poor mother! And you're tired, too. We'll go down to our stateroom and you shall have a cup of tea."

"Oh, that would be nice!" But as they turned, Mrs. Norton gave a gasp of alarm. "That man—he's been watching us, and now I do believe he's going to speak!"

And certainly he was coming toward them, a tall, well-set-up individual, with a much-tanned face, a foreign-looking little beard, and an air of always having his own way.

"How do you do?" he said, smiling. There was a queer, only half-repressed elation in his voice, and he was actually holding out his hand!

They were the hand and voice of a gentleman. Aside from his impulsiveness, there seemed nothing really incriminating about him—unless it was that un-American beard. But Enid stiffened into her sternest schoolroom manner.

"You are making a mistake."

"What!" he exclaimed; and behind his eyeglasses his eyes began to dance. "You don't mean——"

"Come, mother dear."

"One moment!" he persisted. "I assure you the mistake isn't being made by me. If——"

Ignoring him, she stalked past, her head high and her cheeks pink. He made a quick movement to follow, but "What a very stupid, annoying person!" came back to him with stinging distinctness, and halted him very effectually.

"Though perhaps he really did think he knew us," she admitted later, in the safety of their stateroom. It was improper, disgraceful—but after the shock had come a furtive sense of exhilaration.

But her mother's shy, country-bred soul was quaking. "Such a thing never happened to me before in all my life!" she kept mourning.

"Nor to me, mother."

"And he seemed like a gentleman, too! He was real nice looking, wasn't he?"

"Perhaps he didn't mean to be rude. You know we've always heard that people speak without introductions on shipboard."

"Enid! Rush right up and try to shake hands, as he did?"

"N-no. Perhaps not. But if he thought he knew us——" Enid's lips would persist in curling up at the corners. "Or wanted to so badly——" some new-born imp in her was whispering.

"Well, I wish Channing had been there. That's what I wish!" Mrs. Norton said significantly. "I rather guess that—— What's the matter, dear?"

"I thought I heard the stewardess." Enid closed the door she had sprung up to open, and seized zealously on their suit case. "We'd better begin to settle, hadn't we? You tell me where you want your things, and——"

Her energy was commendable, if sudden, and she talked cheerfully and constantly. But it struck her mother that she looked pale.

"Don't fuss so. You're tired, dear," she said once; and again, uneasily: "You didn't mean what you said up on the deck, did you, Enid? About being sorry we'd come?"

Enid winced. "I don't know, mother. Truly I don't. For a minute I wanted to jump overboard, but——"

"Of course. Of course." Astonishingly her mother beamed. "All girls feel like that. I remember the day before I——"

"Oh, let's not talk about it!" Enid interrupted hastily. "We can't turn back now, anyway. And when we get to Liverpool—— But we won't look ahead. We'll just enjoy this trip, eh, dear? Think! It's the Atlantic Ocean rocking us so carefully, and we're on our way to Europe—you and I! What we've always dreamed of! And here comes your tea."

At dinner time, Mrs. Norton was in her berth, not exactly sick, but dizzy and disinclined to move.

"Have something to eat down here, Enid," she urged. "You can't go alone into that big dining-room—or whatever they call it."

"Oh, yes, I can!" Enid laughed, all the more valiant on the surface because underneath she was a-shiver with bashfulness.

"But that awful man—what if you meet him?"

"I can take care of myself, as I fancy I've taught him!"

And though her knees felt rather weak under her, she sallied forth in her prim little dress and her primmest schoolmistress manner.

An hour later, she came back, outwardly the same, and yet with a look about her that made her mother open her drowsy eyes.

"Enid, you haven't been out in that wind again?"

"No, dear," she answered—quite truthfully, for it was only the wind of romance and adventure that had blown across her, stirring the stiff, tight little leaves of her nature.

"The dinner? Oh, very nice, indeed!" Dutifully she described it from soup to coffee, and the crowd of diners of every sort, and all her small experiences. Then, at the very last, as if she had just remembered: "And what do you think, mother? That gentleman who spoke to us this afternoon sits at our table. He apologized over and over. It was all a mistake."

"Enid Norton! You didn't let him talk to you?" Her mother lifted her head in horror.

"Everybody talks to everybody else. It was perfectly proper!" Enid laughed and pushed her gently back on the pillow. "Lie down, dear, before your head begins to ache. Truly he was very courteous and sorry he had worried us. He asked me particularly to explain to you."

"Well, of course, if it was a mistake——" Mrs. Norton sank back again, mollified. "But a girl in your position has got to be so careful!"

No answer to that. She closed her eyes, opened them aagin. "I know now whom he makes me think of! That architect who built the new courthouse!"

"Oh, Mr. Ward is much better looking. Though he does remind me of somebody, too." Enid's voice sounded as if she might be smiling to herself, and she added irrelevantly: "That is his name—Ward. He's an American, but his business keeps him abroad most of the time."

There was more she might have told —the quick pleasure in his eyes when she appeared, the all-but-caressing note in his voice when he spoke to her, the delicately reassuring way in which he had set her at ease with her surroundings. But they were intangible things—perhaps imaginary!—and, put into words, would sound all wrong. So she sat and smiled over them in the half darkness, and presently her mother went soundly asleep.

Only nine o'clock of her first evening on the ocean, and a full moon, at that! Flesh and blood, still under thirty, could not go sedately to bed! Wrapping herself in her heavy cape, she slipped out, up onto the deck, and into her chair, luckily placed in a quiet, rather shadowy spot.

Somewhere an orchestra was playing, people sauntered past laughing and chatting, and before her—just as she had always pictured it—hung a great, golden moon at the end of its own silver path. Best of all, America and the drab, plodding past were safely sunk below the horizon, and Europe, and the uncertain future would not rise above it for six blessed days! Everything, herself included, seemed a little unreal, and she was content, blissfully, irresponsibly content, that it should be so.

Ward's coming troubled her at first, though clearly he had not come on her account. Twice he strolled by, eyes straight ahead, looking big and formidable in his heavy ulster; and, shrinking shyly back into the shadow, she was grateful that he had not seen her. But the third time he paused, tossed his cigar over the rail, and dropped lazily into the chair next to hers. She sat as still as a mouse, wondering what she ought to do. Speak? Or slip quietly away?

"Miss Norton?" He was looking at her now. "Are we neighbors on deck, too? What luck!"

"A beautiful night, isn't it?" she murmured inanely.

"It's perfect—now." There was teasing laughter in his voice, which was intimate to the point of affection.

She flushed painfully—as she was to flush often at remarks of his. "It's cold, though. I—I was just going in," she faltered.

"The moment I come? I'll think you're running away from me!"

Again her self-distrustful dread of saying or doing the wrong thing put her at a disadvantage. She hesitated, feeling wretchedly awkward and unsophisticated—and was lost.

"How did you find your mother feeling after dinner?" he asked. And when she had told him: "You're a good sailor yourself, I hope?"

"I don't know yet," she had to admit, and then to explain that this was her first voyage; which opened up a serviceable topic that led to another that led to still another, till she was enmeshed beyond her power of extricating herself.

Perhaps she did not try very hard. Certainly she did not try long. It was years since she had sat watching a summer moon with a man so obviously bent on detaining and interesting her, and never with such a man—so traveled, so worldly-wise, and yet so tactfully oblivious of her limitations that he seemed to lift her above them. The wine of it went to her head gradually. She lost her shyness and found her tongue, and a gay, frivolous tongue it proved, wagging easily, too.

"I talked to him as if I had known him all my life! I *felt* as if I had!" she reflected afterward, amazed.

"To-morrow we'll go over the boat on a sight-seeing tour, eh? Directly after breakfast?" he said, when she could be persuaded to stay on deck no longer; and if she did not consent, neither did she refuse outright.

Sleep came to her late that night. The throbbing of the engines, the sound of the waves, the queer, salty smells, the sense of great energies working on

sleeplessly through the silence and dark —these things, so hackneyed to the callous globe-trotter, were all new and wonderful to her. Her brain was teeming; the events of the day made themselves into endless moving pictures against her closed eyelids. Yet, illogically enough, it was Ward she thought about most, and with the keenest interest and anticipation.

"Does he really like me as much as he seems to?" she wondered, a smile that had no business there curving her lips. "But he takes too much for granted. I shall *not* go sight-seeing with him to-morrow. At least, not directly after breakfast."

But she did. After luncheon, too, and again in the evening under a moon whose magic path seemed broader and brighter than ever. She had two good excuses: First, that she was lonely, for her mother still refused to leave her berth; and second, that there was no way short of rudeness by which to avoid him. Wherever she was, there was he, with no apparent object in life but to provide her with conforts and entertainment. Moreover, he had amended his manners, and though sometimes his voice turned too caressing or his eyes took on the look that startled her, as a rule he was discretion itself.

The next day was like unto that, and the next and the next. They walked together, they ate together, they sat side by side in their deck chairs, talking or reading. To Enid, tasting a man's devotion for the first time, they were wonder days. She moved in a sort of golden dream, and though she had her disturbed moments, when she wondered how much it all meant, and how it would end, she would not allow herself to be wakened completely.

"How pink your cheeks are!" her mother observed once. "I declare, you look like a young girl again! What's come over you, Enid?"

"It's the air, I suppose. It's very bracing, they say," Enid answered demurely.

But Mrs. Norton had been a girl herself, and had not forgotten it. A vague misgiving seized upon her, connected rather definitely with the name "Ward" she had been hearing so frequently of late. Surely Enid could not be so foolish as to—— Even in her mind she did not finish the sentence, but the next day she lifted her protesting head from its pillows and dragged herself up on deck to make a few personal observations. Naturally there was not so much to see as usual—one cannot leave one's mother sitting alone among strangers—but she saw enough to make her very sober.

"Aren't you seeing a good deal of that Mr. Ward?" she hinted that night.

Enid was braiding her hair with great assiduity. "Well, his chair is next ours," she said, not looking around. "And he's very agreeable. You liked him, didn't you?"

"*I* did. But what about Channing? What would he think of your being such friends?"

Sheer pity for her mother's disappointment made Enid swallow the reply on the tip of her tongue.

"In less than thirty-six hours we'll be in Liverpool, Enid dear. You aren't forgetting that?"

"No," Enid said wearily. "No, mother, I'm not forgetting."

And if she had been, she made up for it before daylight, when sleep came at last. Thirty-six hours! How cruelly short the time seemed, computed so! And at the end of it—what? Alternately she was warm with trust and hope, and shivering with dread.

Mrs. Norton—careful mother!—rose for breakfast and heroically spent the entire day on deck. Ward adapted himself to the new triangular situation cheerfully, evincing not the slightest impatience, but Enid, loyal daughter though she was, fretted internally as she counted the precious hours slipping

away barrenly. But, providentially, with night came a chilly rain and symptoms of neuralgia the most resolute of chaperons could not withstand. Ward's eyes sent Enid a message as she escorted her mother below, and presently, in reply, she appeared again, alone.

"I—I forgot my rug," she explained, with a queer touch of her first shyness; but he only laughed and tucked her arm under his in the possessive way she half liked, half resented.

"Let's walk a bit."

So up and down they paced, the deserted deck wet and slippery under their feet, the mist driving into their faces. He was in high spirits, she nervously anxious to seem so, yet the talk did not run as easily as usual. But there was nothing significant in it—not a hint that the next day would see the end of their companionship. A humiliating sense of the futility of it gained momentarily on Enid.

"A flirtation—that's all it has been to him!" she thought, aflame with self-contempt. "What am I waiting for? He has nothing to say!"

But when she tried to say good night and leave him, his mood seemed to change.

"Oh, not yet! It's very early," he urged, and when she positively refused to keep on walking, drew her with gentle force to the rail. "I can't let you go yet. Don't you know that this is our last night?"

There was no sea, no sky—only a vague, heaving grayness beneath that ran away into a paler grayness beyond and above. There was a minute of silence between them as listless on the surface, but with much the same heavy surge underneath.

"And to-morrow, standing here, we shall see England!" He laughed under his breath, and suddenly his warm hand closed over hers, that was chilled and trembling "It's been a wonderful voyage, hasn't it?"

She nodded. Without looking up, she knew how his eyes were glowing down at her, and his big, protecting figure leaning over her.

"I shall never forget it," he went on, his voice a murmur close to her ear. "And yet—I shall be glad when it is ended. Can you guess why?"

"A hundred reasons, perhaps!" She spoke lightly, but instinctively braced herself.

"Only one—the girl I'm to marry. She will be in Liverpool to-morrow."

"Indeed! I congratulate you, I'm sure!" The words came with a cool, sweet composure that amazed Enid herself.

"Thank you. Thank you very much." He laughed again—mockingly, she fancied—and taking a card from his case, put it into her hand. "There is my London address."

"We're not going to London. In fact, we're going home by the next boat."

"Going home! But I understood you had come over for an indefinite stay!"

"That was the original plan. But before we were out of the harbor, I had changed my mind."

"Yet only this afternoon your mother was saying——" Clearly he was bewildered, and far more concerned than he had any business to be.

"I haven't talked it over with her yet. But it is settled—oh, decidedly!" In spite of herself, her voice had grown strained, but she forced herself to smile up at him. "Now I really must go down to her. Good night."

"Just a minute!" He would not let her pass. "Tell me why you have changed your mind. Has anything—er—happened?"

"What could? Oh, dear, no! It changed of itself, I suppose!" With a quick movement, she sliped by him and succeeded in making her escape.

"Enid, wait! Enid!" he exclaimed, but she scurried on, tossing him a gay, if rather shaky, laugh over her shoulder.

It seemed miles to her stateroom, miles she must walk calmly, if a remnant of self-respect were to be left her. But at last she was there, and, by Heaven's own mercy, her mother was asleep and did not waken. Ward's card was still in her hand, a crumpled wad. Without glancing at it, she tore it savagely into bits and flung it into a corner. Then, undressing somehow, she crept into the blessed haven of her berth.

Mrs. Norton was on deck bright and early the next morning, goating over the first sight of land, but the docks were within stone's throw before Enid found courage to join her. Nobody but herself could know how she dreaded the day, what terrified forbodings were in her mind.

But the first thing she saw was Ward standing in friendliest converse with her mother. He greeted her exactly as always, neither avoiding her nor seeking an opportunity to resume their talk of the night before. Apparently he considered it of no importance whatever.

The second shock was the failure of Channing Morse to appear. Though they waited—Ward waiting with them as a matter of course!—till the crowds had scattered and no possibility remained that they had missed each other, no Channing came.

"He's been delayed in some way. That's all," Ward reassured them cheerfully "He'll turn up soon. You'd better let me take you to a hotel where you can wait comfortably."

"I believe we had better. If you will be so kind," Mrs. Norton consented promptly and with surprising composure. As for Enid, she was ready to go anywhere, do anything, to postpone the meeting.

And so the preposterous thing came to pass that presently they were driving in a cab Ward had called to a hotel he had chosen, and then ascending solemnly in an English lift to the rooms he had secured for them, while below he stood smiling encouragement and consolation! *Ward!*

"Was ever anybody so kind? Oh, Enid, how lucky we knew a man like that!" Mrs. Norton said for the hundredth time.

"He's sorry for us, I suppose," Enid answered, with an irrepressible flash of bitterness. "Very likely we have kept him from some pleasant engagement, and he wishes we were at the bottom of the sea!"

She knew! But though the ache in her heart was a savage one, it was her mother and Channing she had to think about now. How, how was she ever to tell them?

She waited till their door was closed behind them, and then, in desperation, blurted it out:

"Mother, we must go home. I can't—I won't marry Channing!"

"Enid!"

"I know! I know it's treating him shamefully. And I know how hard it will be to go back—the gossip, the uncertainty of my getting another school so late in the summer, the straits we'll be in after spending so much money. I know all that, and I'm sorry—sorrier than I can tell you!—that you will have to bear it all with me. But, mother, I can't marry him—a stranger! However when I used to like him, I don't know him now. Between us, we've all three made a hideous mistake!"

Mrs. Norton argued a little and got out her handkerchief, but on the whole she took it very well.

"All right, all right. I shan't say another word," she sighed at last, and went, wiping her eyes, into the bedroom and shut the door.

Channing next! White and shaken, but still resolute, Enid sat down at the desk and wrote him a letter, gently phrased, but very final. And because she knew now what suffering was, she gave him what comfort there might be in an explanation: "I have learned what

love is, Channing; and the friendship, affection, all that I feel for you, cannot take its place in marriage."

Hours later or minutes—sometimes there is not much difference between them—there came a knock at the door, and Channing Morse's card was brought in. She gave the page her letter and sat down again, with her head in her hands. Another interval—another knock and another card, on which was written: "I must see you."

"Bring the gentleman up," she told the page, and waited lifelessly. "Come in."

The door opened, and a tall, clean-shaven man entered—a man whom she knew, and yet did not know at all.

"Enid! For goodness' sake, don't you know me yet? Have I sacrificed my nice, new beard all in vain?" he demanded, laughing, and strode toward her.

"Mr.—Ward?" she whispered, hands outstretched to hold him off.

"Oh, my dear! And I should have known you in Tibet!"

"You—you're not—not *Channing?*"

"Why didn't you look at the card I gave you last night? But you never would listen when I tried to explain, and even when I told you about the girl I was to meet—and marry——" His voice lost its laughing note, and somehow he got possession of her hands. "Listen, dear! I crossed simply to make the return trip with you. I meant it for a surprise. But when I found you didn't recognize me—— Well, I found out, too, that 'affection and friendship' would content me no more than they would you. So I determined to win you, not as the boy you used to like, but as the man I am. I wanted you to love me—*me!* And when your note came just now——"

"Oh!" She drew back her cheeks flaming. "You're very sure whom I meant! How do you know?"

"Ward told me!" Now he was laughing again. "He saw it in your eyes, just as—if you will kindly look at me—you will see it in mine!"

"I—I hate you!" she stormed—but circumstances spoiled the effect of it.

Considerably later, she remembered her mother. "Poor dear! Worrying all this time! We must go tell her, Channing."

"She's asleep and won't wake up for an hour. How do I know? Because she promised it this morning, when we were talking over old times," he said, with the utmost composure. "What? Oh, no, you don't! Come sit down and we'll argue it out!"

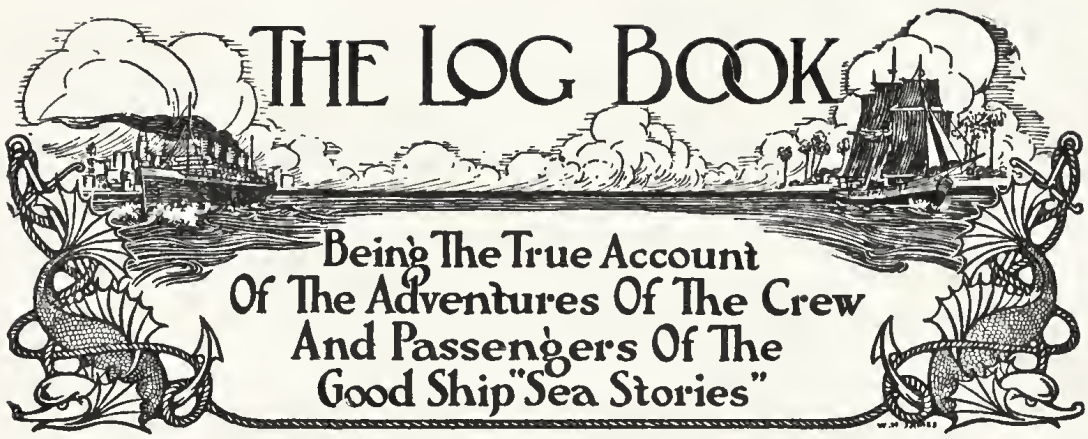
NEW COMMANDER OF SCHOOL SHIP *NEWPORT*

CAPTAIN FELIX REISENBERG, well known as the author of probably the best books on the duties and conduct of the personnel of the merchant marine of to-day, was recently appointed to command the New York State Nautical School Ship *Newport*. He succeeded Captain J. S. Bayliss who returned to the United States Coast Guard Service.

Captain Reisenberg formerly held this position for four years, and on the return of the *Newport* from the New York Navy Yard, where she was reconditioned, took up his old berth.

Residents of New York State between the ages of seventeen and twenty are eligible, and the examinations were held on May 20th. The object of the schoolship is to educate and train officers—both deck and engine room—to pass the Steamboat Inspection Service examinations for licenses of the various grades.

Further information is obtained from the Board of Governors, New York State Nautical School, 25 Broadway, New York City.



This department is designed as a meeting place for all farers on the sea of life who wish to hail one another in passing by, who desire information in connection with maritime matters, or who have had unusual salty adventures, and wish to tell about them. In other words, it is designed to be a sort of get-together club for Sea Stories' readers, and we feel that the correspondence which follows is full evidence of how interesting this department may be made to all readers of this magazine.

We extend to you a cordial invitation to use these columns either to ask or to give information, or to tell some anecdote which you feel would interest or amuse a few hundred thousand fellow creatures. After all, a good yarn usually has a pleasant little trick of brightening things up for most of us.

JUST why so many people say that all the romance has gone from the sea with the passing of the sailing ships is something that the Old Man cannot fathom. Whether it is because there is a lack of imagination or that a certain period of time must elapse to gloss over the hardships and perils to give the proper perspective he is not prepared to say.

Any one who has read Conrad's "Mirror of the Sea," that wonderfully descriptive word picture of the sea in all its moods, or, for that matter, all who have followed the sea, realize that it is never the same, always changing, and yet we have the same calms and storms that have prevailed since this old world began.

Again we have the same passions in men, the striving for supremacy in whatever field it may be, commerce or world dominion, and, given all the elements that go to make up the sea lore of the past, what if the tools used are different? It is only progress. As the first man traveled astride a log and paddled, then put two logs together, and later stuck up a mast and a square sail and ran before the wind and had to pole or paddle back, down through the ages and the development of the sailing ship to the state of perfection reached in our time, and then came steam to take their place, why should romance suddenly cease?

At one period of his career the Old Man was a naval architect and not only designed but actually built with his own hands several small yachts. And he feels, with every other lover of the water, the sense of a living soul that seems to exist in every vessel, some beautiful and others as cantankerous as an old hag. And yet the greatest fascination of all is the controlling and guiding of this insensate and yet living body and overcoming the wrath of the elements. Battle! Competition, the very soul of romance, and going on about us just as much to-day as at any time of the past, and will keep on long after we are all dead and buried. It all depends on how a man makes his first acquaintance. The old sea dogs that were brought up in sailing ships cannot love

their ships more than a large majority of the present-day personnel. Any one that thinks that the engineers don't grow to love their throbbing, pulsing machinery are very much mistaken. They may cuss and swear at it, but have them try some other field of endeavor and they become wholly miserable. Some of you doubters read "McAndrew's Hymn," by Kipling.

And the mammoth ocean liners of this day and generation. Don't you suppose they have their own little peculiarities, queer actions under certain conditions of wind and water? To some it may seem too mechanical, running as they do on almost railroad schedule, but don't overlook the fact that it is a man-made contrivance and while the form of power and labor has changed, it does not run by itself. Romance! It's all about us. Probably at some not-very-future date a new form of transportation will take the place of the present means, by airship, for instance, and undoubtedly when this occurs the writers of the period will lament the lack of romance and quote the times gone by.

Here's an example. What in times past differs so very much from the "Song of the Salmon Gang," taken from a clipping sent us from the west coast by our shipmate Louis Sheppard, of Seattle, Washington, with the following letter:

Having been a sailor, and being a rover by soul, I could not stay inland, so I slipped my cable and came to the coast again. I am now in Seattle working in a shipyard as a rigger.

There was an article running in one of the Seattle papers, the *Star*, called "The Price of Salmon." It tells of the hardships endured by the men who catch and can the salmon. While this is nothing new to me, having been there myself, to my sorrow, it would make interesting reading if you could get permission to publish it. I am sending a clipping of a piece of poetry in connection with this story.

You might tell Mr. Wetjen that I sailed on a full-rigged ship in my kid days, when I was eighteen years old, and she carried moonsails and studding sails on her topsail and topgallant yards. Her name was the *Bayard*, of Liverpool.

I wish to inquire for a Charlie Thompson, or Thomas. He and I were laid up in Turo Infirmary at New Orleans a year ago last Christmas. He wanted to follow the sea on sailing ships and I hope he got his wish. But I would not have wished him that twenty-five years ago at sea.

SONG OF THE SALMON GANG.

We're a frousy, lousy crew
As head wind ever blew,
  The scrapin's of five continents and more;
They have gathered us and shipped us,
And a dirty job they slipped us,
  A good two thousand miles from home ashore.

To Naknek, Kvichak, Ugashik,
To Togiak and Coofee Crick,
  To tundra flats and mud o' Bristol Bay,
To Kagione and Igigak,
Wood River, Snake, and Nushagak,
  Wind, 'skeeters, drizzle, slavin', rotten pay.

They have packed us fore and aft,
In this rollin', leaky craft,
  For fishin' like Ike Walton never knew.
For we're off to harvest salmon
For our masters, Man and Mammon,
  And we'll work from hell to breakfast till we're through.

Those of you who follow the Calendar of Sea History are a sharp-eyed lot. We get numerous queries regarding certain events mentioned therein. Occasionally you nail an error and we are glad to correct it. At other times some event is questioned and the Old Man is tickled pink when we find it is given correctly. This is one of the latter instances:

I have been reading for the past two months your magazine of excellent sea stories, et cetera, and I noted the inquiry of one of your readers for information concerning the "booby" bird. I thought perhaps you would like to know that a full description of this interesting, if stupid, bird is given in a book called "Denizens of the Deep," by Frank T. Bullen, F. R. G. S., author of "The Cruise of the *Cachalot*," et cetera. See page 386, where you will find the greater part of a chapter devoted to the description and habits of the bird in question. This book was published by Fleming H. Revell Co., New York and Chicago, copyrighted in 1904.

Now in your sea Calendar for February, 1923, I note two items as follows: February 9, 1799, U. S. *Constellation* defeated French *Insurgent* in West Indies, and on February 2, 1800, the same United States ship defeats French *Vengeance* in a bloody fight.

Personally I was never aware that the United States and France had ever been at war. I inquired about this from several people who ought to know and they gave me the invariable answer, "Never heard of it." As I think there will probably be some explanation regarding this matter and that you would like to give same to your readers, I mention same.

As I have a well-grounded aversion to "rushing into print," I simply sign my initials hereto. D. D. S.

In answer to the above two questions, the Calendar of Sea History is correct.

Briefly, the causes which brought about the trouble at that time were the Napoleonic wars. France at this period was engaged in a bitter struggle with England. These two countries were, at that time, the most powerful nations on earth.

As so frequently happens when two great powers are at war, many smaller and weaker nations suffered greatly. As this country was even then one of the largest sources of food supply to both of the warring nations, it suffered more than any of the others.

Our merchant ships were captured on the high seas by both the French and British cruisers, their cargoes confiscated, and where a British frigate made the capture the crews were "impressed." The French sometimes held the American crews as prisoners of war.

Added to this unbearable state of affairs was the political chaos into which this country was thrown at the time. Then, as now, there were two great political parties. These were called the Democrats and the Federalists. The Democrats were French sympathizers while the Federalists favored the British.

Needless to say, this country was in no condition to declare war on either of the powers, as we possessed no navy at the time. Pacifists and small-navy advocates take note.

But something had to be done. In March, 1794, Congress authorized the construction of six frigates. These were the *Constitution, President, United States, Chesapeake, Constellation,* and *Congress.* However, before the ships were finished three of them were sold and work on the rest was stopped. This was done as a result of the shameful Treaty with Algiers.

However, in 1797 the depredations of the French especially became intolerable, and public feeling became extremely warm. The French had the effrontery to send their privateers into American ports to refit for their raids on the shipping of the then-infant republic. Along about this time two French privateers were burned by a mob in Savannah. Work was again begun on the frigates and the first to be launched was the *United States.*

Not being satisfied with the three frigates, various towns and cities on the coast built several vessels by private subscription and presented them to the government.

Congress, at last roused to action by public feeling, issued orders to the commanders of the several ships of war to put to sea and capture all French cruisers which they fell in with. The result of these orders was that a state of war soon existed between the two countries, although neither the United States nor France ever made a formal declaration of war.

The first naval encounter of this "war" was the capture of the French privateer *Le Croyable* by the *Delaware,* commanded by Stephen Decatur. In connection with the *Constellation's* engagements, however, we must admit that they were not victories in both cases, as stated in the Calendar. The *Constellation* succeeded in capturing the *Insurgent,* but her affair with the *Vengeance* could hardly be called decisive.

This was a night battle. After a hot engagement, in which the *Constellation* was badly shot up, also losing her foremast, the ships drew apart in the darkness. In justice, however, it must be said that the *Vengeance* carried considerably heavier armament than did the *Constellation.*

The days of single topsails, large crews, varnished spars, and studding-sails have been gone for a long while now. And while there are still a few square-riggers left these are sometimes erroneously spoken of as "old square-riggers" or "old-timers." The present-day square-rigger is very different from the ones built and used sixty or seventy years ago.

Many of the characteristics of the modern ship are to be found in the following communication from Mr. H. T. Anderson, who was in a five-masted bark. Some of our readers are familiar with the difference between a sailing ship built in the last twenty-five years and those immediately following the clipper-ship period.

On the other hand, there are many who are not so well up on the changes which time has wrought in that grand old class of ships known as "windjammers," and it is for their edification that we are publishing this letter which treats of the conditions on the present-day ships. Lack of space prohibits our using all of it, but we are giving enough to hold the attention of those members of the ship's company whose taste runs along these lines.

In one of your issues last fall Mr. Wetjen says he has noticed several square-rigged vessel minus royals, with bare poles above the to'gallants. Two months ago I passed a full-rigged ship in the Gulf of Mexico. She was bound across, probably with a load of teakwood, as she came up from the south. She had no royals on her bare poles above the to'gallants, as the squally season was not quite over yet.

When the big square-riggers are bound across from east to west in the summer time, the majority carry the royal yards on deck, as the chances are they won't use them and so much top weight and hamper are out of the way.

The double to'gallants without royals were quite popular with the Germans before the war. It didn't look good, but it was better to handle.

The old square-riggers that people who have never been in, much less seeing one, are writing stories about, is a bit different from the modern ones. The latest one built that I know about is a five-masted bark, Danish named *Kobnhavn,* which came out two or three years ago. The only actual hand pulling done is the hoisting of the jibs and the royals. The rest is done by winches, the bracing up, too. But it is "beef" just the same, believe me, and not so many men, either, to supply that beef.

The average Norwegian square-rigger over two thousand register tons carries a crew of sixteen to eighteen before the mast; six to eight of them are A. B.'s and the rest ordinary seamen, young men, as they are called, and deck boys. One that I was in had a total crew of thirty-six when she was English and when she became Norgewian this was reduced to a total of twenty-three, and in her it certainly was "beef." She was of twenty-three-hundred register tons.

H. E. Anderson.

Norwegian Seaman's Mission, 111 Pioneer Street, Brooklyn, New York.

Mr. H. T. Weik, of 673 Third Avenue, New York City, who signs himself as a "Sea Story Fan," has sent in the following original verse which is such an accurate description of the sea and its lure that we think it well worth reproducing here.

THE LURE OF THE SEA.

The azure blue sky looks calmly down,
On the majestic sea the white caps crown.
There's a list on the lee of the good old ship,
As it lays its course on a gallant trip.
You feel the vibration of the engine turning,
As the propeller turns on with its mournful churning.

There are pitfalls of sin that lurk in its course,
Oft try to o'erwhelm us with ceaseless force.
Yet try as we might the sea casts a spell,
That no man can shake though he lived through hell.
This unseen force just goads us on,
To test its strength till our will is gone.

Yet sanity would perish if we lacked imagination,
To build happy worlds with eager anticipation.
For each and every mortal to a good God prays
To mold his life in happiness, where Paradise lays.

One of our old shipmates, who signs himself "An Old Shellback," comes aft with a yarn and a chantey that we think you will all be glad to see:

Having taken the SEA STORIES MAGAZINE from the very commencement of its voyage, I think I may claim to belong to the ship's company, and a good ship she is proving herself. I find myself spending many golden hours aboard of her. Also I find "some" good, genuine shipmates among her company. I'll qualify that "some;" they're all good shipmates, the only real difference is some have seen longer service than others and consequently their early years, like mine, were spent in sail, whether under the "Red Duster" or the Stars and Stripes makes no odds.

Personally I spent twenty-five years under the "Red Duster," four years as a 'prentice boy in the colliers out of Whitstable, Kent; eleven years to the south'ard, all grades, including command; ten years as a Channel and North Sea pilot. I left the sea in the latter part of 1909 through physical disability.

Needless to say, I commenced my sea career at a time when topsail schooners—fore-'n'-aft schooners in those days were hardly known on the British coasts—were in their heyday, and was perfectly familiar with the fruiters that sailed in the St. Michel's orange trade, the little schooners who, as the saying in those days was, "put their lee cathead under water when they left St. Michel's and let it come up once a day to say good morning to you."

The little channel ports of Brixham, Salcombe, and Topsham owned scores of them, craft that far more often than not made their passages from St. Michel's to the docks in London in five and six days. They were sailed by a class of men that were the equal of the Gloucesterman.

Captain Jones, of Newport News, mentions that he was on one voyage shipmates with stuns'ls, as an apprentice. I see he was thirty-six years at sea, therefore he's senior to me. Would like to mention that in March, 1890, I sailed from London on my first voyage to the south'ard as an A. B. in an old West Indiaman, a bark of six hundred tons register, named the *Sylph*, at that time forty-eight years old. She had the old-fashioned apple bows and quarter galleries and she carried a full suit of stuns'ls alow and aloft. Me being young and active, was captain of the top in the mate's watch. With them all set in the nor'east trades her best speed was seven knots. How's that for old times? She made one more voyage after I left her, so I think I may fairly say I saw the end of stuns'ls.

Now, as many of my shipmates desire to hear of some of the old chanteys and sea ditties, I've sounded to the bottom of my old sea chest and resurrected some of my old notebooks. Out of them have culled the inclosed, which, should you print them, I trust will give them a little pleasure.

With all best wishes for a long, successful voyage to the good ship SEA STORIES and her company, AN OLD SHELLBACK.

Lack of space prevents our giving all the chanteys and ditties in one issue, so here's one that's a corker, and we will give the balance in subsequent issues.

HOMEWARD BOUND.

Let go! and the white sails rustling fall,
The windlass clanks merrily, pawl by pawl,
Long echoing over the tall palm trees,
The anchor song floats in the morning breeze.
Ye ho! that wind will move her keel,
The waves are dancing round her bow;
Sweat high the sails! and give her a heel,
Her forefoot's talking Spanish now.

Cheerily! Cheerily! raise the dead
And the anchor up from its coral bed;
Cheerily! Cheerily! home, sweet home,
Till she chases a smother of sparkling foam.

Crack on! till the stormy cape is past,
And her bowsprit points to the north at last;
From stem to stern she's a smother of foam
As she reels through the Phantom Dutchman's home.
Ye ho! there the Southern Cross sinks fast,
The pole star over the cathead trails;
When its silvery points on the topsails cast
Old England's winds will be kissing her sails.

Cherrily! Cheerily! haul and hold,
Give her the canvas, fold on fold;
Cheerily! Cheerily! wake the dead
See how she buries her lee cathead.

Ho! a cast of the lead, for the mist lies strong,
And a "Watch there, watch," is the sounding song;
Down goes the lead in quest of the land,
Forty-five fathoms! white shells and sand.
Ye ho! and again she smothers her bow,
See, the land is there where the breakers comb;
The London girls have the towrope now,
Hand over hand they are hauling us home.

Cheerily! Cheerily! home at last,
No thought of the toil and the dangers past.
Cheerily! Cheerily! rant and roar,
Here's love to the girls, we're home once more.

THERE is an old seafaring yarn about a sailor who went aft to let go the flying jib halyards. When asked why he did this, he replied: "Different ships different places for the flying jib halyards." There is a certain class of sea lawyer, however, who cannot seem to appreciate this. All of you fellows have seen them, they will spend hours telling you how things were done on their last ship. But they cannot seem to realize that things are done differently on different ships. A great many of them have written to the Old Man criticizing certain things in some of our stories.

However, the Old Man would like to take this opportunity to say that any of the criticisms must be constructive, or he will come among you with a belaying pin in each fist. The above-mentioned class of people seem to think that because they have spent a dog watch at sea that they are at liberty to make all sorts of complaints about some of our yarns. They think that because they have spent a short time on a steamer, made one voyage on a tramp or deep-water ship, or a couple of voyages along the coast in a schooner that they are qualified authorities on things maritime.

The late discussion about tops'l schooners was a fine example of this. And you must realize that the good ship "Sea Stories" is a fiction magazine, and not a technical one. And the Old Man is not going to cut up a good yarn for the sake of a few slight misstatements, little things which only one out of a thousand people would notice.

A couple of months ago I bought a copy of SEA STORIES and I still "carry on." Log Book entries are my first reading, and it's funny what memories will make a man do, and how "reading names" fills one with writing impulses, my thoughts were stirred by your mention of that grand old packet the *Thermopylæ*.

In 1885, when I was a "brass bounder" on the so-called slipper ship *Soudan* lying in Port Pirrie, South Australia, I well remember the bark *Jane Porter*, as I sailed in her under Captain Jack, the *Brynhilda, Scotia,* and some of the *Stars* also.

At a later date I tramped the Wallaby. Some of the steamers in which I served at different times are the *Wilton, Highland Chief, Celtic, Optic, Trinidad, Latonia,* and others. Have taken in "between Brest and Elbe," and U. K. ports as well as Australia, Africa, India via Suez, South America, and West Indies, with dear old Bermuda on the side.

The biggest burden that I ever carried is the knowledge of the days which are no more, and, being unable to unload, because if I ever speak about those days and places I am classed with Ananias. Oh, the days when a Blue Anchor called at Port Pirrie, days when we took in the bazaar in Calcutta, days in Dunkirk!

Who remembers poor old Johnny Doyle, of Dennison Street, Liverpool, and other hard-up boarding houses? Do Lamport and Holt and other lines still use them? What a hard crew ran Brooklyn tramp steamers! Is shanghaiing still practiced in Portland and San Francisco? Those dear old chanteys you print and what nice words you have in some of them—how things change with time, eh?

Half a pound of flour three times a week. Oh, boys, didn't "dough boys" go good when we pulled them out of the "slumgullion" and put a little molasses on them. And the cockroaches and other bunkmates helped "Webster's Pronouncing Dictionary." Well, sir, I must take my trick at the wheel. So, so long.

HENRY ROBERTS.

123 Seager Street, Rochester, N. Y.

The above letter certainly recalls old times to the Old Man, all right. But some of the rest of you write in and

tell us about those days. How many of you have stopped at Johnny Doyle's, or Maggie May's? Let's have a regular dog-watch muster and tell us more about the ships *Port Jackson, Tamar, Kenilworth, British Isles, Oweenee, Monongahela, Ajax, Atlas, Astral, Crocodile,* and all of the fine old *Ben's, Fall's, and Shire's.* You'd be surprised at the number of letters which the Old Man gets from old "Sou' Spainers" who have "swallowed the anchor" and are living hundreds aye, and thousands of miles from salt water, and who would like to know just what has become of some of these fine old "windbags." And these fellows would be tickled to death to read some letters in the Log Book from a shipmate who has run across some of the old familiar ships. Because they haven't all gone yet, even though they may have fallen from their once proud station. Some, of course, are barges, others have been converted into auxiliaries. Among the latter, as the Old Man understands, is the *Oweenee,* and there's one fine ship that will never again cross three skysail yards.

And here's another old-timer, it does the Old Man's heart good to hear them. Frank Moncrieff writes an interesting letter and would like to hear from any of his shipmates on the *Glenburn.*

"More power to ye," as our friend Mr. Dooley would say. How my blood thrills when I read the old chanteys which you publish in the Log Book, for the call of the sea seems to creep into my blood after all the years since I bid it farewell away back in 1886, when I payed off in New York from the bark *Harvard.* We had made the passage from Calcutta in four months, and, by the way, I heard that she was lost last year.

I often wonder how many of my shipmates are alive to-day, and how many have gone to Davy Jones. The captain at that time was a down-east Yankee, small in stature, but big in every other way. A captain, pray, from New Hampshire.

If my memory serves me correctly I went from Penarth to Singapore and from there to Calcutta, in a Greenock ship that was called the *Glenburn;* there the Old Man made a beach comber of my pal, Tommy Riley, and myself. This was because we were too hard to control. It was a good thing for both of us that he was not a down-east skipper, or we would have been controlled all right. In those days there weren't many laws protecting American seamen, and I for one say God bless the unions that made it possible for laws to be made to guard and protect the welfare of American sailors.

I think that it is time to bring this palaver to an end, but before I close here's hoping that all of my shipmates of the *Glenburn* are living and doing well. That is the sincere hope of their old shipmate, the painter. I can still seem to hear their voices ringing out over the waters of far-off roadsteads and strange seas, making them ring to the tune of "Santy Anna," "Rio Grande," or "Blow, Boys, Blow." Hoping that you will find space in your Log Book for this poor offering, I remain, a lover of the sea,

BOB MONCRIEFF.

White Plains, N. Y.

Another error has been called to our attention, this is one anent the descriptive article in our January 5th issue. The title of the article was "Where Danger Lurks in the Seven Seas." In this article Cape Sable is spoken of as "the graveyard of the Atlantic." Mr. John Jenney, of Halifax, writes us a very interesting letter pointing out the mistake, and his letter also included a very interesting chart of all of the known wrecks on Sable Island.

In your January 5th issue of SEA STORIES I discovered a very serious error. I have been watching each issue to see if any one else would get wise, but apparently it has been overlooked. Now, being an old shellback, and therefore entitled to a growl, I want to call your attention to a statement made by the author of "Where Danger Lurks in the Seven Seas."

The statement is as follows: "The graveyard of the Atlantic is Cape Sable, lying at the southern extremity of Nova Scotia." Cape Sable is not what he has reference to, but rather Sable Island, which carries that dread name. The Nova Scotia coast is bad enough, but the "graveyard of the Atlantic" does not form any part of it, neither is it a part of or near the coast of the United States.

There is a Cape Sable, also a Cape Sable

Island, but neither have anything to do with the "graveyard of the Atlantic." Am inclosing herewith copy of a chart showing all the known wrecks up to 1900. Personally I am very much pleased with your magazine, and find some of the stories very interesting and, in some instances, fascinating. But all writers should be careful of their geography and also, unless sailors, of using nautical terms that they do not know the meaning of, because it destroys the yarn.

JOHN JENNEY.

Halifax, N. S.

Some of our tentative contributors have at different times made inquiry of us as to the proper manner in which to make up manuscript for the purpose of submitting same. One of these letters we publish below.

All manuscript should be typewritten with double spacing. All paragraph headings should be set in from the margin. Where the story is long enough to warrant the use of them chapters should be indicated. Each page should be numbered, and the number of words in the story should be written on the heading. Where a ship's name occurs in the manuscript, it should be written with capitals.

Being a constant reader of your interesting magazine, I am very much interested in the Log Book, and the discussions which are taken up in it.

The discussion which interests me most is that relating to tops'l schooners. In the April 5th number I noticc that a new discussion is being taken up. This being the comparison of the relative merits of the modern and the old-fashioned sailor. However, I am going to allow some one else to decide that.

I should like to make a try at submitting a few stories to use in your magazine. I have already written two interesting stories of the sea, also a manuscript entitled "The Sea;" the latter being nonfiction.

If you will let me know, either through the Log Book or through the mail, the conditions under which a manuscript must be submitted I shall be very thankful to you. Wishing you an endless voyage of success, I am, sincerely yours,

HOWARD SPINNEY.

Overbrook Station, Wellesly, Mass.

The Next Voyage

The good ship "Sea Stories" is now well under way, with a fair wind, and with the type of cargo which she carries for July 20th she will soon reach the port of success. The "piece de resistance" for this number is a novelette by Walter S. Story. This yarn ought to make some of our readers who are wireless operators sit up and take notice.

The two-part serial, the "Rum Runners," is concluded in this number. There is, however, a splendid assortment of short stories. These narratives take us to most of the waters of the world, for there are stories of the North Atlantic, Pacific, around the Horn in sail, down the coast in schooners, a story of the coast-guard service, and one about gun runners.

The crew list contains many names well known to "Sea Stories'" readers, there are such names as: J. T. Rowland, Captain Dingle, Park Abott, and several newcomers, whose work we are sure you will like. So don't miss this next voyage whatever you do, and be sure to have your news dealer reserve you a copy.

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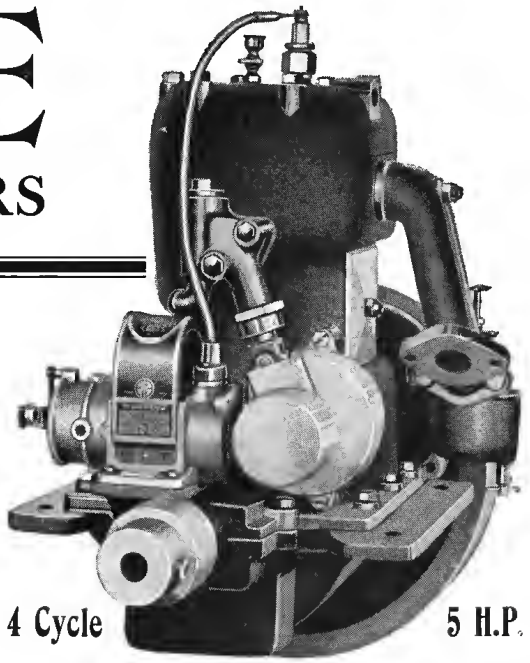

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