

PS
3511
R7757
1912

The
Strange Adventures
of
Captain Runnelstoke



Alfred James Fritchey



Class PS3511

Book R74S7

Copyright N^o 1912

COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT





THE STRANGE ADVENTURES
OF CAPTAIN RUNNELSTOKE



The Strange Adventures
of Captain Runnelstoke

BY

ALFRED JAMES FRITCHEY

II

NEW YORK
THE COSMOPOLITAN PRESS

1912

PS 3511
.R77 S7
1912

Copyright, 1912, by
ALFRED JAMES FRITCHEY

#1.00
© CL.A312080

When I see how poets wrangle
O'er the Muse they almost strangle,
I have laughed until my sides
Ached, at such poetic hides.
There's one way to woo the Muse,
Let her come to whom she choose,
Where she will and when she will,
Then you'll write, and not until.



CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. THE ORIGIN OF TITLES, OR THE ETHICS OF COXCOMBRY,	9
II. THE MEASURE OF ELITENESS, BEING SOME JAUNTINGS AMONG THE AMBER- GRIS-EATERS,	23
III. THE SEAT OF AUTHORITY, OR BUTTER- FLIES WILL FLY AND FISHES WILL SWIM,	38
IV. THE ISLE OF DINOSAURS, OR THE ANTI- QUITY OF COWRY,	51



The Strange Adventures of Captain Runnelstoke

CHAPTER I

THE ORIGIN OF TITLES OR THE ETHICS OF COXCMBRY

Now of Runnelstoke I sing,
Runnelstoke, the wayfaring,
Runnelstoke, the wily one,
Who the wondrous deeds hath done.

In the very year before
Freedom swept Havana's shore,
Weigh'd with rum, a thousand tuus,
For the Gold Coast thirsty ones,
Sailed a ship by Morro Castle,—
Cuba then to Spain was vassal,—
As the flying fishes scatter,
As the sun, a golden platter,
Twinkled on the Cuban blue,
With a Solie wink or two.
Runnelstoke is on the bridge,

Now the lights a-studded gleam
 On the far reeeding shore,
 Like the harbour of a dream.
 Maybe, too, some witching eyes,
 Latent with Castilian fire,
 Waken palm-girt memories,
 That would dare to home aspire
 In the heart of Runnelstoke,
 That no sailor's oath could choke.

Seven bells,—and in the sea
 Of Sargasso now are we;
 Seaweed here, seaweed there,
 Seaweed floating everywhere;
 Miles of it and piles of it,
 In luxuriance indeed,
 And wherever flits the eye,
 Back it lights on more seaweed.

Some there are, can still be found,
 Who of this same sea avow
 Ships go sailing round and round,
 With a figurehead a-prow:
 Happiness that form, I'm told,
 And her cargo's lined with gold;
 Tho' her sailing long hath gone,
 And her spars are split and bent,
 Yet she sails forever on,
 And arrives—from where she went.
 Fair winds and the schooner bore

Off the coast of Afric's shore,
When a mighty storm appears,
And a whirlwind adds its fears,
Like the Indian Sea's monsoon
Came a-wooing here in June.
Rolling, monster surges cast
Whitened spray o'er deck and mast,
Over jib-boom spar and o'er
Hatch and poop with mighty roar ;
Cinnamon was all the sky,

And the hurricane's wild mood
Rode on billows mountain high,
And was speeding now too nigh

For the schooner to elude.
(Funnel-shaped, 'twill be allowed,
Is the regulation cloud.)

Runnelstoke was pacing after,
When he heard loud shrieks of laughter
Coming from the cargo's cover
And his ire bubbled over,
For he deemed that mirth had come
Somehow from his casks of rum.
So, with rage beyond control,
Down the ladder quick he stole :
Maudlin, I am 'shamed to say

Was the crew, and worse than swine
Acted noble intellects

That have oft been called divine.
Runnelstoke, in dire distress

At his sober loneliness,
Took a spike and beat tattoo
On the skulls of one or two;
But no beating can restore
Brains where drink hath been before;
So with benedictions he,
Of a large variety,
Dowered them for parting strain
As he sought the deck again.

Then the storm in fury broke
Over crewless Runnelstoke,
With a curious twisting turn,
Splitting ship from bow to stern;
Went, and in its foamy train
Left the sun that shone again.
And on Runnelstoke alone
Of that cutthroat crew it shone;
All the rest to maudlin graves
Sank beneath the thirsty waves.
And that very rum that gave
 Death to some—how Fate will joke!—
Destined now was it to save
 From a like fate Runnelstoke.
For the day the storm arose,
 (Very hour mem'ry fails)
Runnelstoke hid on his coat
 Hammer and a pack of nails,
With intent to secretly
Build a strong box none might see.

So, recurring this to him,
On a plank he strove to swim
Where the casks their noses poke,
And soon there was Runnelstoke.
Nailing planking on the rum,
Quite a raft he built therefrom.
Then on one of them he spies
X of an enormous size,
Which his mem'ry tells doth hide
Biscuits that he placed inside.
So a hole in each he cut,
Which with corks of wood he shut;
No fine dainty ever shared
Sweetness with those biscuits snared,
As from sponge in liquor sank
His delirious palate drank.

Thus he lived until October,
Alternately drunk and sober;
This is (tho' somewhat late season)
Not beyond the bar of Reason.
For whoever scans Religion,
Will have seen how few things are
Like a humming-bird bred pigeon,
Just beyond our Reason's bar.

On the fourteenth, loomed the strand
Of a palm-fringed tropic land,
Opportunely high and dry,
Where the huge flamingos fly,

Him a tidal wave now stranded;
 Rum and biscuits with him landed.
 Runnelstoke, with pleasure great,
 Saw he was the guest of Fate;
 For on trees with fruit that teemed,
 Mangoes and bananas gleamed;
 Cocoanuts, with playful whim,
 Dropped a nut or two on him;
 And on shore, full frolicksome,
 Crabs and turtles gamboled sweet:
 And our hero lay a-dreaming
 Of the meal he soon would eat.

But to get that one desire
 Runnelstoke must have a fire;
 Not a quenchless flame like reigns
 In the lovelorn hearts of swains,
 But a flame to stomachs soothing
 That can make a dinner toothsome.
 Casually he looked around
 To explore what might be found,
 And upon a pile of rocks
 He discovered mica-blocks.
 On the thin-split mica, he
 Scooped a jelly-fish entire,
 And that magnifying-glass
 Gave him soon a roaring fire.
 Then a meal he roast and basted
 As Lucullus never tasted.
 Then within a friendly cave

Which a fire-brand explores,
On a pile of leaves he gave
Praise to Morpheus in snores.
Wakened was he by a chorus,—
Overhead the buzzing sounded.—
And he deemed (as soil is porous)
’Twas an apiary grounded.
And his tongue with longing wavered
For his biscuits honey flavored.
So for honey and to see them
Carefully he dug a pass;
And for fear that he might free them,
He inserted mica glass.

It was day, and all the workers
Forth had gone, for none were seen,
And the drones, who are the shirkers,
Staid attendance on their Queen.
Beautiful and iridescent
She, and foppishly arrayed
Were the drones who bowed obeisance
To the majesty she played.
Then it flashed upon our hero
Why in idleness they ease,
For the drones, whose toil is zero,
Are the nobles of the bees,
And the titles they endure
Are as follows, I am sure:
Holder of the Golden Anklets;
Looper of the Diaphanous Bodice;

Fixer of the Royal Garter;
Duster of the Queenly Feet;
Wiper of the Princely Mouth;
Trainer of the Inimitable Coiffure;
Designer of the Wasp-like Figure,
And many other sycophants
Crawled for honors queenship grants.

Some say men should study bees,
For a moral will impress;
Not for me the bitter lees
Of a fair queen's fickleness.
Tho' a drone I fain would be,
I prefer my queen for me.

One day thro' the jungle walking
Over leafage rank and vast,
Him a lion came a-stalking
For a civilized repast.
As he heard his heart-beats pound,
Came a snapping, flapping sound;
In a Venus-fly-trap lying,
Was the writhing monarch dying.
'Twixt our aim and our achievement,
What a chasm lies between us!
For a many roaring lion
Still is caught by lovely Venus.

Gaudy were the birds that floated
O'er the tropic flowered cañon;

As he caught the silver-throated
Singing from a leafy banyan,
Suddenly he felt a stinging
Blow: unconsciousness came o'er him,
And he wakened to the swinging
Of three anthropoids that bore him.
Bore him where he was discerning
Bright huts in the sunset glancing;
At the cry of their returning,
Came a troop of damsels dancing.
Damsels, ah, so fair, entrancing!
How could fathers e'er be sponsors
To a marriage right a-granting
Such ourang-outang-ish monsters.

Here he learned in a fortnightal
From these first heraldic hewers,
That they bore the tribal title
Of the "Mighty Earth-Subduers."
And that formerly more ape-like
In a chimpanzeeic shape-like
Were they; but thro' intermarriage
With the ever title-seeking
Auriprendians, with good reeking,
Now, more manlike was their carriage
And in phases of inanity
They now surpass humanity.
Of the titles maidens drew,
I'll enumerate a few.
Here were:

Baron-the-First-Tree-Climber ;
 Lord-Chaser-of-the-Parrots-and
 Plucker-of-their-Golden-Feathers ;
 Duke-Lover-of-the-Dancing-Squirrels
 And Waster-of-the-Paternal-Acorns ;
 And the Marquis-Flim-Flamingo-Chaser.
 Here were also the renowned
 General-Killer-of-the-Baby-Elephants ;
 Major-Disperser-of-the-Buzzing-Gnats ;
 Colonel-Decimater-of-the-Sleeping-Penguins
 And Captain-Annihilator-of-the-Conies.

Came a damsel named Tubaska
 Something, to his hut, to ask a
 Right before the door a-waiting,
 Blushing, bowing, hesitating,—
 Came to ask him,—don't disparage,—
 Ask him for his beard in marriage !
 Then he learned it was the fashion
 (Fashion to all climes has flitted)
 To insert a bunch of whiskers
 In the bride's heel that they slitted.
 And the toe-walk got that way
 Is the height of style to-day.
 He declined to, as appeared,
 Make a foot-mat of his beard.

One day Runnelstoke went fishing.
 As he entered the canoe,
 Suddenly it went a-swishing

And a-down the river flew.
 Bent to find why thus he hastened,
 Did his eyes the water scour;
 In a wicker-basket fastened,
 Fishes were his motive power.
 And they brought him with a splatter,
 Where he heard a giant clatter;
 But this feminine-like tension
 Was a parrot-age convention.

First, one bellowed like a calf,
 Then the whole concourse would laugh
 As another, bowing gravely, said:
 "Your Highness."

Then another, on a log,
 Went a-grunting like a hog,
 And the concourse, nodding gravely, said:
 "Your Lordship."

Then another, standing by,
 With a green and glassy eye,
 Great solemnity did deign
 As he uttered oaths profane;
 Mimicking, the concourse gravely said:
 "Your Worship."

Then another strutted dowdy,
 In demeanor of a rowdy,
 Said all gravely as before:
 "Your Excellency."

Now there came a trumpet's blare
 And the ones they mimed were there.

Squawking loud the parrots flee,
 Barely time to climb a tree
 Had our breathless hero, when
 Hove in sight the Peacock-men.
 Blare of trumpets—gilt of kings—
 All the vultureship that brings—
 Thousands cheered with lucr'd glee
 For the rogues of royalty.
 Then Who-Did-He-E'er-Make-Happy?

King, with kingly vanity
 Touched a kneeling figure

And improved on God's humanity.

"Sir Knight, I dub you

Prince of the Red Eyes."

And to another: "Sir Knight, I dub you
 Duke of the Royal Paunch."

And to another: "Sir Knight, I dub you
 Lord of the Improvident."

And to the last: "Sir Knight, I dub you
 Peer of the Noble Dearth."

Then a deep-toned yelping veering
 From a pack of wolves a-nearing,
 Helter-skelter o'er the ground,
 Nobles, princes, dukes were found,
 In a frenzied mad endeavor
 From all knighthood to dis sever;
 And the very first who ran
 Was that peerless Peacock-man.
 Majesty? O Heaven, hark us!

How it ran to save its carcass!
Runnelstoke, when all had fled,
Quickly down the tree-trunk sped,
And as promptly sought protection
In the opposite direction.

Thus he wandered on, nowhere,
Till a fragrance filled the air;
Till 'mid herbs and briar-tree
Came he on a heronry.
Egrets scattered far and wide
In their chastest plummy pride,
Like a white lace fairy-land,—
Countless numbers without end.
And they had the wondrous power,
Breeding, hatching, every hour;
But tho' thus they fret and race,
They can never keep the pace
Of the stern decrees of style;
For the savages beguile
Them, and for their white plumes bled them,
As the egrets wept to shed them.

And with stylish figure bent there
Was a missionary sent there,—
Sent there to convert the savages
From their fashionable ravages.
Like a harmless caged canary
Is a foreign missionary;
Missionary to, indeed,

Where their brains have gone to seed,
Where the greatest goodness shown
Is in leaving them alone.
But some folks from sin will win them
If they have to shoot it in them.

Runnelstoke, now somewhat lanker,
Hailed with joy a ship at anchor,
And her name and home-port station
Was our hero's destination.
So I chronicle full pleasant
No disasters for the present.

CHAPTER II

THE MEASURE OF ELITENESS

BEING

SOME JAUNTINGS

AMONG THE

AMBERGRIS-EATERS.

Fog of the feathery flake!
Bridge of bridges nearing!
Minarets that make
Dinner shadows, peering
Over the billowy sea,—
Sea of the finest down,—
And home again are we,
Home in New York town!

Now, in the earliest white,
Straight in the harbor steaming,
Maybe in sleep's delight
Some one of us is dreaming;
Maybe, too, some we loved
Won't be there to greet,
Maybe to-night, those lights so bright,
Won't shine for us so sweet.

Maybe, too, ships that sail
In the uncertain flashing,
Out in the howling gale,
Out in the billows lashing;
Think, too, of ships at home,
All anchored, free from strain,
And maybe they pray that they, too, may
Come safely home again.

Silently up the bay,
Never a whistle blowing,
As if on this Christmas day
We are a part of the snowing;
For 'tis the dawn we love,
And now the plank is down,—
Yes, on the pier is some one dear,—
“Home in New York town!”

Runnelstoke again was home.
But his ship will come no more.
Strewn was she in flotsam chunks
On the Dahoméan shore.
From the city's throngs that toss,
Up the winding steps he hies,
To report the utter loss
Of his Gold Coast enterprise.
Malgazar, his chief, was there
And a stranger one beside;
With grey beard and snowy hair.
Wisdom he personified.

Maps whose colors were a babel
 Covered every nook and table.
 On the wall, the Frost-King's palace,—
 The aurora borealis,—
 Twinkled on the bergèd hills
 With a green that brought the chills;
 But his greeting was full hearty,
 When recalling this same party
 Left a fortune (hist'ry teaches)
 On a dozen different beaches.
 "Runnelstroke, you devil daring,
 Shake hands with Professor Herring,
 Who a captain bold is wanting
 For a pleasant Polar jaunting."
 Often afterwards, when came
 Days that terror-racked his frame,
 Wished he that he ne'er had met
 Herring dried or Herring wet.
 Now, howe'er, he took the proffered
 Hand, and just as hearty offered.
 But evinced he no elation
 At this Herring's destination;
 For the Pole is no fit topic
 For a man just from the tropic.
 But the plea that fame adds lustre
 To a name imperishable,
 Wakened hopes that would not muster
 To aught else, how cherishable.

"Tell me," said our Runnelstoke,
 "And I want a fair expounder,
 What escape would fame evoke
 If the 'darned' old ship should founder?"
 Then they had a laughing-storm,
 As they led him to a corner,
 Pointed to a curious form,
 "That," said they, "is our rejoinder."
 Like a diving-suit in show,
 Only twice as large it was:
 Herring touched a spring, and lo,
 From it came a curious buzz.
 Huge as mail of Luna's duke,
 Gutta-percha or caoutchouc.
 In which Runnelstoke took station
 To the others' admiration,
 Touched a spring, shown by the two,
 And the helmet onward flew;
 Then another, was he dreaming?—
 Now he toasted, now was steaming.
 Runnelstoke again unsealing,
 Herring all his joy revealing,
 Said: "Of suits a few will do,
 One for me and one for you;
 If the ship should sink at sea,
 Safe and dry we two would be."
 Runnelstoke due homage paid,
 In his language not quite Sapphic;
 And the bargain then he made
 We will simply say was graphic.

Six months later and we view
 Runnelstoke, and Herring, too,
 On the "Viking" restlessly
 Gazing on frigidity
 Liquified, and on for aye;
 Far behind was Baffin Bay.

Then the sun in beauty shone
 On that sea of icy green,—
 Region of the vast unknown,—
 For far to the north was seen
 In a rough and broken stack,
 Glaciers of the Polar pack,
 Whitened in their crystal bed
 By the snows that centuries shed.

Then there came an icy wearing,
 Like a berg submerged were tearing
 Thro' her keel and thro' her rudder,
 And the ship gave one great shudder.
 Barely time to touch the spring
 That his head was helmeting
 Had our hero, Runnelstoke,
 (For he, by a lucky stroke,
 Had his new suit in position,
 By a curious premonition)
 When he felt the Polar sea
 Merge around him icily;
 Saw a horror-stricken face
 Of the crew, then not a trace.

Anguish eases much in sharing,
So our hero looked for Herring.

Then he felt a heavy shot
On his head where it was not,—
On his helmet, I should say,—
Like an arquebus display.
Turned to see whence came the gunning,
Whether friend or an oppressor,
Like a porpoise on a sunning
Up and down bobbed the Professor,
Who had thrown the leaden tether
That the two might be together.
Then they touched the jars caloric,
And they dozed in warmth soporic
Thro' the day and thro' the night,—
Paroxysm of delight,—
Till they almost cursed the breaking
Of the day that brought awaking,
And that shoreward safely cast them
From the wreckage that swept past them

There they saw a snowy mound,
Like a cabin underground.
With the hopes that hardships merit,
Like a gopher or a ferret,
In the snow they dug a gash,
Where they found an Arctic cache;
Rifles of an antique pattern,
Powder of an ample measure,

Books that even Zeus or Saturn
 Would have loved to read with pleasure,
 Blankets white and warm and woolly,
 Bacon, flour, naught neglected,—
 Ah, the cache could not more fully
 Have been planned had they selected.
 Only in the quick unpacking
 Noticed bullets they were lacking;
 But their joy showed no transition
 At this trifling great omission.
 Then did Runnelstoke, our hero,
 With the weather under zero,
 Make the crisp air grow emphatic
 With the odor aromatic
 Of the sizzling bacon, then
 Fit for gods and fit for men;
 Which with flour cakes, hot grated.
 Soon the castaways were sated.

When the dawn was just a-peeping,
 Runnelstoke, in soft wool sleeping,
 Heard his name, amid commotion,
 Called by Herring from the ocean.
 Quickly dressing, out he went,
 Greeted by astonishment.
 Tiny, laughing jets of flame
 From a massive iceberg came,
 Sparkling on the Arctic sea
 With a wondrous brilliancy.
 "Diamonds!—from a deep-sea station!"

Herring cried with admiration.
 Then with chisels holes they drilled,
 And the holes with powder filled;
 With a cap and fuse of string,
 And a giant thundering,
 Shoreward came a chunk that drew
 Diamonds to a peck or two;
 But the berg was seaward blown,
 Where in splendor long it shone.

Somewhat later to the north
 Both our heroes ventured forth
 On a hunting expedition,
 With some nails for ammunition.
 In a hole, a walrus sleeping,
 Bravely came our hunters creeping,
 And before he gave a sniffy
 They dispatched him in a jiffy.
 Then upon the face of Herring
 Wonderment was plainly told,
 Which our Runnelstoke was sharing,—
 For the tusk and teeth were gold!
 But with professorial merit,
 Doubting it was eighteen caret,
 Broke a tooth to find its rating,
 And the gold was but a plating.
 Then, while Herring fell to musing,
 Runnelstoke, with joy enthusing,
 Of a golden mint was dreaming
 And to get it soon was scheming.

Herring, then, with due decorum,
 (Wisdom likes not Laughter's forum)
 Said: "Somewhere within this cold
 Is a lake of liquid gold,
 Warm to a degree and minute,
 And the fauna wallow in it."

So upon this exploration
 Went they with some trepidation,
 When a barking loud they heeded
 Just beyond a peak upraising,
 From whose summit where they speeded
 Was a spectacle amazing.
 Walruses, sea-lions, too,
 And of seals a countless few,
 Bobbed and dove and swam and rolled
 In a lake of purest gold.
 And there was the intimation
 That they had a hint of station,
 For the animals disporting,
 In their golden wave cavorting,
 Showed as greatest they were rating
 Whose tusks had the most gold plating.
 So, a narwhal glittering,
 Of aristocrats was king;
 And the power that he sways
 No kind fortune gave as due him.
 But by tusk and tusking ways,
 More gold naturally clung to him.

But the Carboniferæ
 That Time's clock was backward winding,
 Were a joy to our Professor
 Greater than the Pole's first finding;
 And while notes he made of flora
 For his colleagues in Podunks,
 Runnelstoke swam in and bore a
 Ton of gold ashore in chunks.
 Tho' in gold and diamond treasure
 No king was so rich a type,
 They'd have given golden measure
 For tobacco and a pipe;
 And, as Herring drily told it,
 As he bore the gold home, grunting.
 That in bullets they could mold it,
 And would have a golden hunting.

One day in a deep ravine
 Hunting, a musk-ox was seen;
 And with wile that caution got him,
 Runnelstoke soon stalk'd and shot him.
 Then our hero almost fainted,
 For the beast's breath bore the sainted
 Delicate fine jasmine smell
 That our hero loved so well.
 And if Herring had not hissed it
 I'm afraid he would have kissed it.
 Then our unimpressed Professor
 Took a knife and made a pass
 Thro' the ox, and from his stomach

Took a pinkish soft white mass;
Murmuring: "As I expected";
Jasmine plainly was detected.
Said our Runnelstoke a-swearing,
"As much wisdom now I'm sharing
As before you slashed the ox.
'Tell me what this mass unlocks?
What and where, indeed, is this?"
Answered Herring: "Ambergris,
And it comes from fossils grand,
 Long extinct, and sweet perfumed
 By the flora, ages doomed,
Somewhere in this cold, cold land.
And the fauna feed upon it,
And the odor, thus they don it."
Eager for a quick solution
Mystery a-seeking spurned them,
And they showed no diminution
 Of the science-love that burned them.
Then they came upon a spot
On a hill they ne'er forgot.
Vast extending pinkish beds,
 Balmy clime, some Esquimau
Wondrous floral growth that sheds
 Perfume on the beds below.
And the people live on this
Various scented ambergris.
Then in converse, held by signs,
 With the various tribes they found
That the odor borne defines

The eliteness here around.
 The skunk-cabbage ambergris,
 Fetid to our nose, I fear,
 To the eaters gave the bliss
 Of the fashion-setters here.
 And the grade down, they were told,
 In the social scale, behold :

The Worm-wooders ;
 The Snake-rooters ;
 The Thistle-downers ;
 The Cockle-burers.

And lower down in caste :

The For-get-me-not-ers ;
 The Meadow-rue-ers ;
 The Night-shade-ers.

And last :

The Jasminers.

But the Jasmine, sweetest one

 Of the flowers here bespoken,

Was the odor that they shun,

 And of outcasts was the token.

Runnelstoke, all unaware,

Rubbed some on his beard and hair,

And he learned his caste selection

By his manner of ejection.

Herring, one remark terse made he,

Bearing on a chorus-lady.

For a long six weeks or more,

Out their cozy cabin door

Never once they dared to peep,
For the snow was falling deep ;
But, alarmed by feeling motion
Like the rocking of the ocean,
With a shovel one bright day
Thro' the snow they dug their way.
Then our heroes almost swooned,
For they found they were marooned
On a huge berg icily
Floating on the open sea.

Then there came a vicious growling,
From an Arctic monster prowling,
And they turned around to find
A large Polar bear behind.
Runnelstoke, to get his rifle
Ran, for 'twas no time to trifle.
Bullets missing, no spare time, and
For a bullet rammed a diamond.
Then, returning in a hurry,
For his partner in a worry,
The Professor fleet he spies.
Winner of the Arctic prize
For the fastest foot-race spanned
Over bleak and barren land.
But the bear, as Fortune willed,
Runnelstoke now shot and killed ;
And the skin could well be handsome
That had cost a kingly ransom.

The flesh, too, was palatable,
 Tho' some was unmalletable.

In a warmer current shifting,
 Daily southward they were drifting;
 Daily appetites grew taller,
 Daily, too, their food grew smaller;
 And—what they could not help thinking—
 Daily, too, their berg was shrinking.
 Then came many curious things;
 Fish with rare and golden wings,
 Hornèd turtles, pearly shells,
 Crabs of which no hist'ry tells,
 From the ice where they had got
 In an era old and shellish;
 Which, when toasted in a pot,
 Were a rare and dainty relish.

Then a tiny speck appears
 On the dim horizon's sky
 And they fired wood in tiers
 To attract the passerby.
 E'en their coats they took and waved them
 On long poles,—and that's what saved them,
 For the steamer stopped and rounded,
 And their joy by naught was bounded
 When a boat from off the "Nord"
 Came and took them both aboard.
 Oh, that hour was divine,
 Banqueting and drinking wine;

Then our Runnelstoke was frantic
For his coat and diamonds, too,
Were adrift on the Atlantic
On a derelict of blue.
And disconsolate was Herring,
For his precious notes, all bearing
On the trip, were now a joke
With the coat of Runnelstoke.

CHAPTER III

THE SEAT OF AUTHORITY
OR
BUTTERFLIES WILL FLY
AND
FISHES WILL SWIM

The ripples play o'er the sunlit bay,
But they do not play for me;
The white gull screams o'er a land of dreams
But the dreams I never see.
The ships go by with their sails that fly,
For their docks they leave the sea;
And some heart-beat waits there to greet,
But there's no heart-beat for me.

Alone on steeps where the great tide sweeps
Out of the Golden Gate,
I see ships sail in the evening gale
From the fairest land of Fate:
And some sail out that ne'er return,
And would I, too, were one
That sailed away from that golden bay
Out in the setting sun.

Now again was Runnelstoke
Weary of life, people, shore, all:
For he heard the waves that broke
On some far Pacific's coral,
And he felt the keen salt air
In his nose and in his hair.

Then, too, read he of Samoa
In a land of floral glory,
Of the maids that longed to show a
Fondness (so beguiled the story)
For some daring rough old sinner
That would dare to be the winner.
And he pictured himself swaying
In a hammock in the sun
While a maiden was displaying
Ankles, arms, convention none.
In a set of subtile dances
To his loving, burning glances.
And of work, thought Runnelstoke,
Never would he do a stroke;
For the maiden that would woo him
All of that and more would do him.

So he bought the bark desired
And a cut-throat crew he hired;
While he pictured to each daring
Candidate what luck was sharing
In some fair divinity
Of dusky femininity.

Three months later,—many miles,—
 Sailing in the South Sea isles,
 After yellow snakes and red
 Many times they saw and fled.
 One night, ere the gull could fly
 That was perching, masted high,
 Came a tidal wave stupendous,
 Like a giant hand tremendous,
 And upon a mountain's dent
 Left them high and dry, and went.

Now again when morning broke
 Forth went dauntless Runnelstoke,
 Giving orders on his trip
 That his men stand by the ship;
 For if maidens there were many,
 He should have first choice of any.

O'er the mount he went not far
 Ere he heard the sound of war:
 Saw a cohort that could swerve a
 Cannon-ball or e'en Minerva:
 Lovely damsels marching, partial
 To the garb of kilties martial,
 And with epaulets, I wager
 None of lesser rank than major,—
 And above their martial things
 Each had butterfly wings.

Now before our Runnelstoke
 From astonishment awoke,

He, a prisoner to their charms,
 Was put under guard and arms.
 Then they led him by a trail
 Winding over hill and dale,
 In and out and up and down.
 Till they came to a great town,
 Where they saw a palace splendid
 Which a fount its beauty lended;
 Where they entered by a portal,
 Runnelstoke, his guard, in short, all.

Shone a marble hall, while blared
 Trumpets, and the snare-drums snared;
 From each nook of damask dowry
 Came a laughing, dancing houri,
 Who showed quite an animation
 In their eager admiration:
 For they had an intuition
 Runnelstoke was the fruition
 Of what they had dreamed and waited,
 Though they often shammed they hated—

Man!

Men were (learned he with surprise)
 Never in this paradise:
 But where fickle men ne'er fooled them.
 There a queen of fashion ruled them:
 That Tithæa was the name
 Of the present ruling dame.
 And she ruled there like a Solon
 In her feminine dominion;

Still, if one could keep a poll on
Her fair colleagues' sweet opinion,
They would oft have heard it hinted
That her virtue was half minted.

Ah! All virtue is a thing
Of a dim and snowy wing,
Hovering round the owner's head,
Seen by her alone. 'tis said;
For all others note with culture
That our virtue is a vulture.

Now when they had long debated—
Round the compass, back to zero—
Who should have the antiquated
Still unmated, grinning hero,
They determined to the queen,
That her wisdom might be seen.

When the queen was on her throne,
Then a thousand mirrors shone:
And each lady in her hand
Held a curious magic wand,
Studded and all gemmy hued
That made true each wish and mood.
Then their dresses change and blend
Over silks that never end,
In the fret of flowers fragile
And the run of colors agile:
Yellow moons and argent stars,

And the tiger's splendid bars,
With each brilliant stone and shell
Whereon Fancy loves to dwell.
For a lady's mood to change
Here is not considered strange,
But 'tis calumny to name
One that ever is the same.

Said Tithæa: "Who are you?
Of what race and with what guile
Come you o'er the ocean blue
To debauch our happy isle?"
Then our hero to the queen,
Knowing she had never seen
Man, said: "I am come from Mars
And I visit many stars;
For I have a strange invention
Which is not for me to mention."
Here he seized the damsels nigh
Ere the twinkling of an eye,
And he juggled kilties bright
Till the air was plaided quite;
Till the queen believed the fellow
Was a sly old Martian dweller,
While the tales he told fictitious
Like a salad, were delicious
To the ears that listened sedulous
To a world of naught incredulous.

"Come," said she, "and shout and sing,
Let us make the stranger king;

Let the nuptial gold-bell peal
 For my happy hymeneal.
 Every one shall share the pleasure
 Of observing love is nihil;
 For each kingly cherished measure
 Shall be bended but to my will."

So it was acclaimed, and all
 Started for the wedding ball.
 How their feet on gold stairs tinkled!
 Down and down, while round them twinkled
 Stars that sprinkled columns Doric
 In a shower meteoric;
 Down, while sparkled ocean vista,
 Down, where deep-sea life is centered,
 To a mighty amethyst, a
 Ball-room now, in which they entered.

Then a train of faery misses
 Brought a thousand frothing blisses:
 Pears from whitened powder peeping;
 Plums in precious liquor steeping;
 Desserts creamy, dainty berried;
 Kisses crumbly, saucy cherried;
 And of things whose scents and tints
 He caught but the faintest hints.
 So they taste of viands spicy,
 And they sip of liquors icy,—
 But of nothing to satiety,
 But turning, ever turning;
 For the essence of propriety

Is to provoke a yearning,—
To maintain a subtle yearning.

Then when music's lavish charms
Fell like dew on lips and arms,
And the chandelier imprints
Everywhere its lilac tints,
Often as the dancers glide,
Flashing by the pane outside,
Were the glaring eyes and gape
Of each thing of deep-sea shape,—
Red and yellow, green and blue,—
With an octopus or two.

Here were:

Star-Fish,
Gar-Fish,
 Mullet and flounders,
Sword-Fish,
Lord-Fish,
 Perch, twenty pounders.

Dog-Fish
Hog-Fish,
 Sturgeon and Trappers,
Lion-Fish,
Flyin'-Fish,
 Anchovy and Snappers.

Pipe-Fish,
Stripe-Fish,

Porcupine and strange Eels,
Rabbit-Fish,
Nab-it-Fish,
Jew-Fish and Angels.

Some fish swim because their fin
Wiggles out and wiggles in;
Others swim because their nose
Pokes a hole where'er it goes;
Others still because their tail
Pushes so, they cannot fail.

With a glorious grand finale
Now is gone the ball-room's folly;
All sat staring thro' the pane
With burning wish on wish:
But butterflies are butterflies,
And fish are always fish.

Next day heard he from a scribe
How their wisdom they imbibe;
For he saw a wondrous school,
With for every maid a stool
(And Dame Gossip was the title
Of this school where they learned quite all),
With their caps and with their gowns,
And a thousand pretty frowns,
Titters and grotesque gyration
With excessive exclamation,
Why the inmost secret knowledge
Was unfathomed in this college.

Nothing here is ever stable,
 Joy to last is never able;
 Spires that gleam and glow and glisten;
 Bells that ring and never listen;
 Birds that coo and woo and whistle;
 Flowers that sigh and cry and thistle;
 Trees that brim with tears and laughter;
 Butterflies that hurry after
 Some illusive fair phantasm,—
 Bubbles floating o'er a chasm;
 And on leaf and sweet bud wrinkled
 Is a yellow pollen sprinkled,
 Like a gold volcano must
 Have thrown over all her dust.

Some time after, when was seen
 With what happiness the queen
 And the king bore wedlock's fiat,
 There were others that would try it.
 And with justly indignation
 To her came a delegation,
 Telling how she used to flout it
 When they had to do without it.

Said a butterfly: "We've heard
 Of the blessings men conferred
 On our down-trod sex, before
 Reason opened Freedom's door:
 That a single hour uxorious

Is worth a life laborious
 Spent with sages, daft and dafter,
 On the here and the hereafter.
 On the morrow let us ply
 To the turquoise isle near by,
 Where the fountains spout champagne
 And in revelry men reign,
 And by force of moral suasion
 End their frightful dissipation;
 Thus obtain a man for each,
 That our doctrines we may preach.”

But Tithæa showed no pique
 'Cause the butterflies should seek
 Such a potion; having drunk it,
 She decided on the junket.

Next day bright and early beams
 On a hundred gay triremes,
 With gold chain and silver hawser
 (Such as Croesus never saw, sir)
 And with splendid silks and satin,
 With a Persian rug or mat in;
 While at every oar a maid
 All her loveliness displayed,—
 For they all had costly dresses
 And the least were baronesses;
 While beside their Name-Creator
 Every title was far greater.
 So they row and so they smile
 Till they reach the turquoise isle.

Then the Moon of Venus rose
 Like the blush a maiden shows
 When the wasp of Love's within,
 And her face is one pink grin.
 Over hill and valley then,
 Where the butterflying men
 Lay at rest, shone Venus' moon
 And a gale arose eftsoon.

Maids of sere and yellow leaf
 Went pursuing, like a thief,
 Cowering wretches that lay hid
 'Neath each leafy pyramid.
 And tho' oft aloft they fly,
 They cannot escape the eye
 Of the maidens, chasing clamorous,
 For their sweet concessions amorous.

Big men, little men, rude men and courtly,
 Sly men, shy men, thin men and portly,
 Naïve men, grave men, stolid men and
 fretters,
 Cheerful men, tearful men, bad men and
 betters,
 All of whom the women seized
 And quickly put in fetters;
 And when to the queen they led,
 Fair Tithæa gently said:

“Who is man that should protest?
 When we know we know what’s best
 To make him the happiest.”

Here the maidens, as they giggled,
 Bore the men, who chafed and wriggled,
 To their boats,—each precious burden,—
 For ’twas Love that ever spurred on.

Now, when all of this occurred
 And they just had left the shore,
 Why, there came a giant bird
 Such as ne’er was seen before,—
 Such as with a couple flaps
 Could have spanned a mile, perhaps,
 And in colors of a tropic
 Blend of hues kaleidoscopic,
 Which (said Runnelstoke between us)
 Must have surely come from Venus;
 And with warning not a note
 Seized him by the nape of coat,
 And before our hero found
 Whether waking or had seen a
 Phantom bright, he was a-ground,
 On the Isle of Catalina.

“Now,” said Runnelstoke, “I wonder
 If the mates I left down yonder
 On that isle, since I came from it,
 If they ever crossed the summit.”

CHAPTER IV

THE ISLE OF DINOSAURS,
OR
THE ANTIQUITY OF COWRY

Beside the sea, the marauding sea.
Oh, the sea of a thousand moods!
I watch the pour of the waves that roar
From the ocean's solitudes.

Where the wave hath swept, I have mourned
and wept,
And laughed and sung and glowed;
For my love or hate was small or great
As the huge tide ebbed or flowed.

Birth, life, death, after,—all are deep,
As deep as the soundless sea;
So may I rest on the ocean's breast
When the last tide ebbs for me.

One day came to Runnelstoke
An astronomer who spoke
Of some meteors that fell,
Made of purest platinum,

So the spectroscope did tell;
And their value was a sum
Which made Runnelstoke so dizzy
That he wondered whither is he.
And by dint of mental frolic,
The astronomer explained,
With their angles parabolic
And the spot from which they rained;
Where they fell he quickly reckoned
To the fraction of a second.

Now for money, as was fit,
Runnelstoke cared not a bit;
Still, when he had weighed and thought
Of the good that might be bought
With the money that was fretting
For our hero to be getting,—
Such as giving books instead
To the poor who wanted bread,
Or of building a fine college
For who never wanted knowledge,—
(As if all the lore of schools
Could make fools aught else but fools)
He determined he was in it
And was ready in a minute.

So one morning rose the sun
On the mighty Amazon,
And shone on the schooner, too,
Of our Runnelstoke and crew,

In the land of sudden thunders,
And the land of wingèd wonders.

Dainty floating butterflies
In the deepest of blue skies;
Snowflake wings in silver barred,
Azure tipt and slender flow' red,
All the brilliant greens and reds
That the tropic splendor sheds,
Deep magenta, orange spotted,
Moons of pink, all jet-black dotted,
Crescents of a pale light green
With a bronze-green star between,
Crimson circles on pale grey,
Dull brown blots on blue so gay,
Tortoise-shell streaked, olive blotched,
Marble blue-veined, silver notched,
One surprise upon surprise,—
With a million dragon-flies.

While the beautiful blue toucan,
Hoarser in his cry than you can
E'er imagine, weirdly mellow,
But with beak all scythed and yellow,
Flew o'er ibis, pink and black,
Wandering in their countless track.
Splendid birds of gaudy plumes
Richer far than Persia's looms,
Flitted here and flitted there,—
Drops of color everywhere.

Then the vines that hang and fall
 From the trees, and over all
 Twining, shining seem to be
 Dark-green water serpentry.
 While at two-hour intervals,
 Thro' the quiet night there falls
 Tolling time, the hoccas' shrill
 From his peacock-hooded bill.

Now by careful computation,
 The astronomer decided
 They were near the very station
 Where the meteors collided
 With the earth; when with a jar
 Even's sun fell like a star.
 Then upon the quiet river
 Broken only by the quiver
 Of the fireflies, or far light
 From the bright Brazilian starlight,
 Came a feeling deep and awesome,—
 As to mortal comes that saw some
 Phantom,—for the ship was moving
 When she lay at anchor; proving
 Some occult cause was the reason,—
 Either that or there was treason.

Up and down and in and out,
 Runnelstoke ran with a shout;
 In and out, up, down, I guess;
 Learned no more or learned no less.

For the ship went on careering,
As if some unknown were steering,
Never port or never starboar'
Straight into an island harbour.

Here in bondage soon were led men
And our hero by the redmen,
Who lived here as cowry dealers—
Nature's noblemen of stealers,—
Here in idleness a-sunning,
Often showing human cunning:
Petting monkeys, eating parrots,
Which they swallowed down like carrots,
Or in hunting porpoise-whales
With round heads and with square tails,
Twenty times a porpoise longer,
Eighty times a porpoise stronger,
Somewhat species-cousin linked
To the late sea-cow extinct.
This they deem the greatest booty.
And they catch by stout ropes juty,
One of which had caught the schooner
In its sucker, and far sooner
Than a porpoise in a drag-net
Drew her in the capstan's magnet.

Now these savages atrocious
Did delight in deeds ferocious:
Such as maining multitudes
In their wars and petty feuds

(For the way their clubs were knocking
 Modern science would say shocking),
 While from what they trapped and baited
 They would feast for days unsated,
 Missing, in their uncooked cutting,
 All the luxury of glutting.
 And that they in health might stay,
 Tho' they knew no illness, they
 Dug for roots, and climbed for shoots,
 And dove deep for green sea-fruits,
 Which they swallowed with distress
 And enjoyed in sicknesses.

But their measure of earth's pleasure
 Was this cowry that they treasure.
 Cowry shells in cowry sacks,—
 How they strive to gain huge stacks!
 How they jumble! How they tumble!
 Giving knocks and taking whacks!
 If an earthquake should deep earth it,
 What in all the world were worth it?
 For this cowry is the shekel
 Of a world from which they reck all:
 Drinking hell in fiery waters,
 Buying wives and selling daughters,
 Burning up life's two-point tallow
 For the charms of vice they hallow,
 E'en the number of death's bells
 Being but a one of shells.
 Cringing, begging, lying, stealing,

Coveting and double dealing,
All to win the paltry dowry
Of a couple hundred cowry.

Nothing here is what it seems,
Visionary, all but dreams.
Truth is only theoretic,
Everything is antithetic.
While the sport they like immensely
Is to love or hate intensely:
That is, if to hate one's brother.
Or to love the wife another
Has, is joy; as if the earth
Here apologized it gave some birth.

Every act they did was bent
By a king called Precedent.
Somewhere in a lonely woodland,
Rules he bad and rules he good land.
From the cradle to the grave
What a tribute him they gave!
True, no one had ever seen him,
For the dinosauri screen him;
But let rise one daring fellow,
How the dinosauri bellow!

Then did Runnelstoke, the savior
Of his chief's son (Fate will lead 'em
Who are worth her fine behavior),
Gain for every man his freedom;

And the astral man computed
In a manner not refuted,
That the meteors had slided
Where the dinosaurs resided.
So upon that dread ascent—
And the platinum—they went.

Then they came upon a wood
Where the beasts in conclave stood.
And behind some bushes hid
They observed all that they did.
Said the Lion: "Let us ape
Man and let us play man's shape."

Said the Rabbit: "I am Right
And in justice I delight;
Peaceful am I in my manners,
Deprecating evil-planners."

Said the Jackal: "I am Law
And I have a hungry maw.
Right should always sweet Law follow."
Here he gobbled with a swallow
Up the Rabbit, in a thrice,
While the beasts winked once or twice.

Said the Jaguar: "I'm Wealth
And I have a golden health,
Even tho' I am black-spotted
By the evil deeds I've plotted."

Here he swallowed up the Jackal
 Furry hide, nose, tail, legs, back, all;
 While the Lion laughed with glee
 At the other's revelry.

Said the Lion: "I am Might
 And I love Wealth, Law and Right."
 Here he ate the Jaguar,
 Tho' his yelling sounded far,
 Then the Lion with a gallop
 Went, for he had eaten all up.

Now our hero with great humor
 Cared he not a bit for rumor.
 Always if you seek what's prior
 Rumor is a fickle liar,
 Adding to each later trial
 Till it is its own denial.
 So had rumor heard deep growling
 From some dinosauri prowling,
 For no matter how directed,
 To the mount, one was detected
 By some hideous and gory
 Furious, growling dinosauri.

Thus went forth this force courageous,—
 Bravery is oft contagious,—
 And our hero's fearless bearing
 All his company was sharing.
 So all day they talked, full sated,

Of the greeting that awaited
Monsters; when they heard a patter
On the leaves, how they did scatter!
Here and there, and helter-skelter,
Some ran e'en a mile for shelter.
Runnelstoke alone showed glory,—
And of course he tells the story.
'Twas a rabbit from them scaring,
Which when learned restored their daring.
Then when dark they heard the nightly
Roaring of some monster mighty,
Till to scatter was a habit
At each noise of dove or rabbit.
And a panic so unmanned 'em
That they found the mount at random,
Where they learned with quaking knees
Monsters are all effigies.

There each entrance facing forth,
West and east and south and north,
And between each to and from pass
Like the figures on a compass,
Were two rampant dinosauri,
Relics of an era hoary;
Carved of agate leoparded,
But of green the spines and head,
With a gleaming crimson gem
In the eyes of each of them.
While upon each marble column
Perching, silver-white and solemn,

Was the aeronaut earth lacked, till
Came the winged pterodactyl.

Lo! The king in gold and ermine
Slumbering 'neath a sweet narcotic,
As where seeds of death will germ in,
Flaunts an orchid's rich exotic,—
Sitting on a bright pink throne
Jeweled and all fluor-sparred.
On a dais whither shone
Snowy crystal, silver-starred.

Then they saw in palace kitchen
Many dainties it was rich in;
Pots of wine of vintage rare,
That would sparkle in the air
Like the lustre that is shed
Thro' a goblet garneted;
Pots of spices; pots of honey;
Pots of curious golden money
That would tinkle in its fall
To the marble pedestal;
Pots of jams that showed the tint
Of their precious berries' mint;
And of fruits that bloomed their span
Ere earth's histories began.

But the only sound they found
Was the sound of owl that hooted,

And the bittern's travail suited
To those who think that life lore-ward
Should be in the past, not forward.
But upon a tablet near
Was the earth's five-thousandth year,
Graven in a mystery
That a sage of tongues to see
Would have given gold high stack-ward,
For the text was reading backward.

Still in palace nooks and dells
Everywhere were cowry shells;
In gold boxes and fair vases,
Cowry shells in all odd places,
As if cowry were the worth
Of the greatest pearl on earth.

But the platinum they found,
Fully forty feet around,
Which they hammered, sawed and melted,
Till each man a fortune belted
In his pouch; then sly back sneaking,
When they showed the redmen lazy,
Such a laugh they gave, loud shrieking,
That each thought the other crazy.

Then embarking all their treasure
Home they sailed with greatest pleasure,
And had nearly reached the bright house
Of our Sandy Hook's own lighthouse,

When the ship struck and went under
In a sudden squall of thunder.
Runnelstoke alone was saved;
How our hero stormed and raved
As he thought how Fortune's potion
Had been swallowed by the ocean.

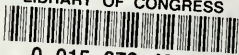
Now of Runnelstoke I end,
Runnelstoke, my bosom friend,
Runnelstoke, the crafty ranger
Who has tasted every danger;
And if any deed or word
Done, or read about, or heard,
Is impossible,—a joke,—
My reply is,—Runnelstoke.





MAR 20 1912

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 015 873 432 1